

Published Articles

NOFA NEW HAMPSHIRE



SEPTEMBER — OCTOBER 1994

NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER OF THE NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION



THE VOICE OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

On October 8th

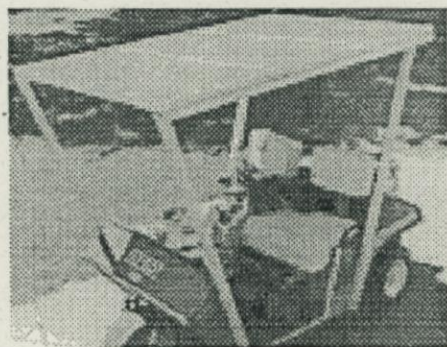
Corn is believed to be over 5,000 years old. It may have first been a wild, seed-bearing plant with tiny, one-inch-long ears. Today corn is the major crop in the world. Most of it has been grown from hybrid seedstock and has been developed by giant seed companies. Many natural varieties of corn are being lost each year.

NOFA-NH and the Mt Kearsarge Indian Museum in Warner will sponsor a lecture on Saturday, October 8 at 7 PM by Carl Barnes that will be of interest to growers and non-growers alike. Carl is a Cherokee Indian who has been saving and preserving Native American corn varieties for the past 50 years. His work has been featured in major publications (like National Geographic).

The Mt Kearsarge Museum has one of the largest private collections of Native American artifacts around. To find the Museum, take I-89 north to Exit 8 and follow the signs. If you wish to attend, please let the Museum know by calling ahead: 456-2600. This talk promises to be very interesting, thought-provoking and possibly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Admission is \$5.

TWILIGHT MEETING — SEPTEMBER 21 ON SMALL FRUITS & SOLAR GOLFCARTS

Why operate a 2-ton pickup truck to do the job that a solar-powered golfcart could do? Like all farmers we have many transportation needs on our farm: tools, materials, produce and customers (for our PYO operation). We have been using Garden Way carts, wheelbarrows, a jeep, tractor and pickup for hauling heretofore. We got to thinking: does this make sense? Inspired by a request for a proposal from Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (formerly LISA), we requested funds to retrofit a used golfcart so it would be powered by photovoltaic (solar) batteries. We knew a solar vehicle could do many of the tasks which now require fossil fuels. There were several issues here: increase in farm safety due to low speed and low center of gravity, use of renewable energy, reduction of farm-generated pollution, reduction of farm costs, reduction of soil



This solar-powered golfcart was funded in part by a grant from USDA's SARE program (formerly LISA).

compaction through use of a lighter vehicle, and improved access for our disabled and elderly customers.

Fortunately, the project was (partially) funded. We created a "Solar Surrey" (or PVEV—photovoltaic electric vehicle) using a used EZ-GO golfcart with 6 six-volt batteries (\$500), 3 100-watt photovoltaic modules mounted on steel supports (\$2100), and connected it to a charge-controller to prevent overcharging (\$180). We have been using the cart since June 6th without needing to use an electric charger. The cart can run for about 45 minutes each day on its own solar power. It doesn't use power when the vehicle is not moving because there is no idling. We hope to use it into December with weeding, mulching, pruning, etc., and save about 50 gallons of gas this first year. We want to add a rack on the back so we can take full advantage of its 700-pound payload. We've discovered that we could have been using the cart three times as much as we do each day. (We've used it for 822 minutes — 13+ hours — through the end of July.)

If you are excited by this idea and would like to know more about its functioning, come visit us at Berry Hill Farm (61 Heights Road, Stratham. 772-6646) for a meeting on September 21 at 4:30 PM.

At this meeting there will also be a presentation on growing quality berries with an emphasis on pest prevention and control options with UNH Extension specialists, Alan Eaton, Bill Lord, Cheryl Smith and Stan Swier.

Pesticide credits have been requested for attending this session.

VOTE!

If you can't attend the NOFA-NH annual Membership Meeting on November 1, then use the ballot inside for Board elections.

— Caroline and Buck Robinson
Berry Hill Farm, Stratham