Living Energy Farm
June 2011 Newsletter

Living Energy Farm's Littlest Member

We've had a busy month, the highlight of which was the birth of LEF's first baby! Rosseyanka Louise (Rosa for short) is a big, healthy and happy baby, nine and a half pounds at birth, and born at home. Proud parents Debbie and Alexis are enjoying their first few weeks as a family.

Rosa was named for the Rosseyanka persimmon, a delicious American-Asian cross bred in Russia. We already have about a dozen of these trees planted at LEF and growing well.

Seed Growing Update

As we get into the heat of summer, the seeds gardens are growing strongly. The second half of July often provides a slight lull in the work of growing seeds around here, when planting and weeding is taken care of and the main harvest/processing season hasn't started yet. Produce is starting to trickle in, though- not quite enough for processing, but enough for snacking on during our work days. Highlights of our garden so far include the Black Brandywine, a very tasty tomato, and the Richmond Green Apple Cucumber, which looks and even tastes a bit like an apple.

Irrigation Without Fossil Fuels

We planted out our gardens this spring without an irrigation system set up, relying on the rains to bring up our seeds and keep the plants watered. We had a fairly wet spring, but as the rains start to slow down and temperatures keep going up, Alexis and Edmund are working on getting water from a nearby creek to our increasingly thirsty plants in the back field, using an old piston pump fitted with a DC motor that runs off of solar electricity.

Because of the short lifespan of batteries, and the toxic ingredients that go into their manufacturing, LEF aims to use direct-drive solar electricity as much as possible. This means pumping water and irrigating only when the sun is shining. This is not ideal

from a water conservation standpoint- most farmers irrigate at night, to minimize loss to evaporation. Drip irrigation uses much less water than overhead sprinklers, and is more suitable for daytime irrigation, but also uses a large amount of plastic for the drip lines. In the most commonly used systems this plastic wears out after one or two seasons. This is not in line with our values, particularly our agreement to only use goods made from or with fossil fuels that are of a durable nature. As a compromise, we set up a drip irrigation system that uses more sturdy lines, which should last us twenty years or more. In the long run, we hope to build a water tower or irrigation pond to provide us with enough water pressure to irrigate at night.

Living Energy Farm Needs Your Support!

We're still a long way from being a model of a post-fossil fuel future. Your support can make this possible. Donations of tools, materials, labor, and funds are all graciously accepted and tax-deductible. For more information see our website www.livingenergyfarm.org, or contact us at livingenergyfarm@gmail.com or 434 409 6006.