



# DUKE CAMPUS FARM

## 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

CATALYZING POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE FOOD SYSTEM





**DUKE CAMPUS  
FARM**

This report was designed by Erin Keleske, MEM '23

# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Hello friends,

This has been a big year for the farm, and for Duke. Our small team is growing and changing, and the launch of Duke's Climate Commitment holds many new possibilities for the work that we do.

It's bittersweet for lots and lots of folk that Emily McGinty '13 will be transitioning out of DCF in early 2023. As an undergraduate student at Duke, Emily was critical to DCF's launch in 2010. She has been at the farm's core ever since, and, for many people, Emily is synonymous with our program.

Emily's ready for new adventures, and is staying just long enough to welcome our inaugural Sloss Fellow, Maia Matheny '22. Through this position — named after DCF's founder, Emily Sloss '10 and earmarked for a recent graduate — we hope to continue to cultivate more of the kind of imagination and commitment that Emilies Sloss and McGinty both represent.

I'm not sure the undergraduates who made this farm happen would have imagined that one day we'd be invited to join Duke's Executive Vice President's Office as part of its new Administrative Leadership Team. With the help of DCF's stalwart student crew, our Field Education Manager Izzy Brace, and soon a new Assistant Director position, we're navigating this bigger purview onto campus without losing sight of our student-centered ethos. We're finding new paths forward, with your help.

Take good care,  
Saskia

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Saskia'.



# ACADEMICS



We welcomed fourteen courses to the farm for academic collaboration this year including “It’s a Bug’s World,” an entomology and writing course taught by Dr. Sarah Parsons, MEM ‘12 and a DCF crew alum! Students pictured here are examining insects collected in an aerial net, and comparing data collected by their peers across Dr. Parson’s courses past and present. This student research will help DCF understand whether its pollinator garden expansion and integrated pest management strategies are increasing insect biodiversity and the presence of insect allies at the farm over time.

## A selection of academic course collaborations at DCF:

- CulAnth 102, American Indian Nations Today (Dr. Courtney Lewis)
- French 308, Manger (Dr. Laura Florand)
- GSF 89S, Critters: An Introduction to Animal Studies (Dr. Gabriel Rosenberg)
- UNIV 102, Let’s Talk About Climate Change (Dr. Norman Wirzba & Dr. Emily Bernhardt)
- Duke Medical and Nursing School Elective: Moral Movements in Medicine (Dr. Jennifer Lawson)
- ENG 590, Environment in Literature, Law and Science (Dr. Priscilla Wald)

# 14

courses and more than 300 students visited or collaborated with DCF as part of credit-bearing coursework in 2022





DCF's 7 ft. soil pit offers opportunities to discuss the visible, and invisible, histories that our land holds.



Experimental filmmaker Lauren Henschel (MFA '20) worked with both courses taught by DCF Program Director Saskia Cornes this year. To explore complex course content, all students made short films around themes of climate, food, and identity, reaching a wider audience with their projects, sharing their knowledge in new ways. and learning transferable video-making and narrative skills.



# PRODUCTION

2022 was our most productive year yet, thanks in large part to the arrival of Izzy Brace (pictured here), who took over as Field Education Manager in April. Izzy nimbly stepped in mid-season to grow over 9.5 tons of produce with DCF's student crew, mentor our new Student Field Manager, reenergize our work-trade program, and generally keep the farm humming!

DCF's Student Field Manager Position, funded by The Olsher Family Student Leadership Fund, allows us to deeply mentor a student with demonstrated interest in sustainable food systems work. Natalie Owens (MDiv '23) is our inaugural Olsher Family Student Field Manager.

**100%**

of crew members, in an anonymous program exit survey, responded that DCF "significantly" or "transformatively" impacted their sense of thriving at Duke





“Being the student manager has equipped me to pursue my dreams of revamping my family farm while integrating my degree in Faith, Food, and Environmental Justice. The best part of farming is that every day is different. The farm is always evolving, and we are growing with it.”

**Natalie Owens, (MDiv '23)**  
**Olsher Family Student Field Manager**



## THOUGHT PARTNERSHIPS

The Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes conference asked us to showcase our innovations in humanities teaching and research by hosting an international delegation during their visit to Durham. Alongside colleagues in Duke Forest, we shared our work on soil as archive and on pedagogies of praxis. A short piece on this experience is forthcoming in the Summer 2023 issue of the academic journal *Agricultural History*.

To use Carmichael Roberts' words, DCF has been “soaked” in Duke’s Climate Commitment and its four pillars of education, operations, climate justice and community partnerships. We were also thrilled to be part of Duke’s first University Course on climate, offering a formal lecture in Goodson Chapel, inviting students to share in the work of regenerative agriculture at DCF, and exploring the role that the humanities, sustainable agriculture, and students have to play in addressing climate change.



# COMMUNITY



Abijah (Resilience Corps member, at left) and A.yoni Jeffries (Occaneechi Band of the Saponi artist and facilitator, at right) shared stories and the farm's first pawpaw with first year students during orientation programming.

Before completing his two-year term at DCF in July, Abijah Gattis hosted "BIPOC Seed Stories: Regenerative Agriculture and Ancestral Practice." Participants read poetry from Dungy's *Black Nature*, transplanted seedlings in our Cackalacky Heritage Garden, and discussed how to move institutional land acknowledgements from theory to practice. Abijah's creativity and commitment to expansive justice frameworks will have a lasting impact on DCF.



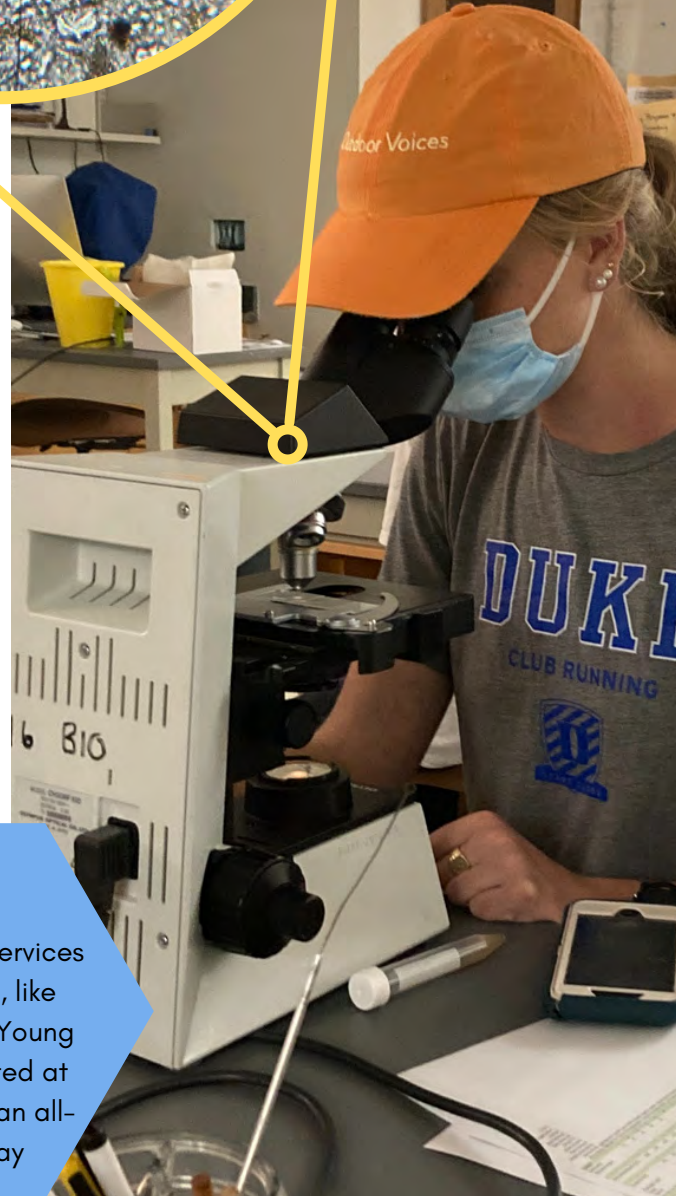
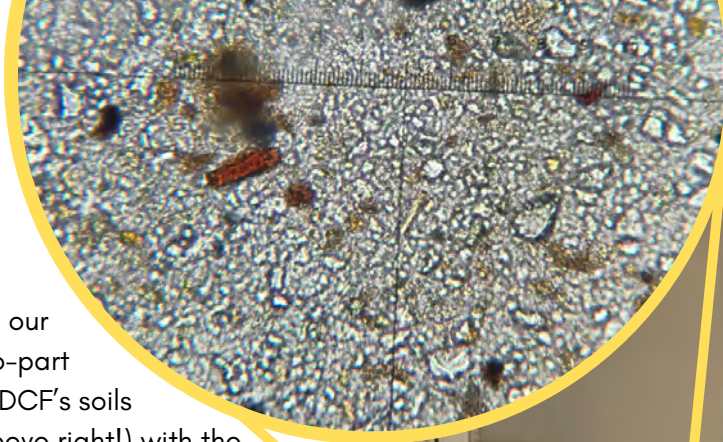


# SOIL STORIES

In October, DCF's soils took center stage in an event series focusing on our soils and their communities. In a two-part Living Soils workshop, we looked at DCF's soils under a microscope (real sample above right!) with the aim of "meeting" DCF's microorganisms, knowing that their well-being and community dynamics are vital to our farm's thriving. The accompanying Soil Stories event approached soils as sites of memory and meaning-making. With our communities, we sought to honor the stories that our soils witness, keep, and maybe even foretell.

## SOIL STORIES PARTNERS

- Bass Connections Soil & Spirit Team
- Molly Haviland of Earth Regeneration
- Vilgalys Mycology Lab
- Georie Bryant, community activist, descendent of Stagville Plantation, chef, and farmer
- A.yoni Jeffries, Afro-Indigenous interdisciplinary artist, farmer, and citizen of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation
- The African American Dance Ensemble



# 25

NSOE Student Services staff members, like Erika Lovelace-Young at left, connected at DCF as part of an all-staff workday



# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

DCF hosted a three-day Restorative Spring Break (RSB) that emphasized supporting students of color and featured movement facilitators from Duke's MFA in Dance program. RSB students stretched, snacked, read aloud, and reflected via writing, art, and conversation.

This summer, we reintroduced Land & Listen, an evening series dedicated to sharing prose and crafts as the sun sets and we marked the return of large, in-person gatherings with Winterfest. Students took a collective exhale while sipping fireside cider and saving seeds to share with loved ones' future gardens.

## Colleagues and community partners at DCF's 2022 Experiential Orientation:

- The Pauli Murray Center, Durham Co Op Market, Student Action with Farmworkers
- Anatoth Community Garden, Blue Merle Farm, Red's Quality Acre, Waller Family Farm, Blawesome Farm, Stone Brothers & Byrd
- Geori Bryant, A.yoni Jeffries, Dan Richter
- Christina Christopoulos, Justin Harris, Sara Snyder





# WELCOMING & WAYFINDING

DCF's inaugural "Farm to Table" Orientation program brought 75 members of the Class of 2026 together to reflect on some big questions (see below), helping students connect food to familiar places and communities, and to the long and rich history of both Duke and Durham.

We also hosted over 350 additional students from Projects Wellness, BUILD, and Earth. From prepping beds and exploring our soil pit, to planting herbs and writing gratitude cards to NC farmworkers, Duke's newest students worked, learned, and connected in DCF's busiest-ever back to school week!



Where are you?

What stories  
live in  
this land?

What does it mean  
to be a neighbor in  
your new  
homeplace?



# BY THE NUMBERS

**6** Land & Listen sessions brought students and community members together to unplug and engage in poetry, prose, and conversation

**40+** participants in "Peculiar Liberation," a land-based performance with Ife Michelle Dance and Duke's Laboratory for Social Choreography

**100%** of crew members responded that DCF "significantly" or "transformatively" impacted their sense of community and connection to other people

**14** participants talked with DCF guest Dr. Laura Sayre, author of "Fields of Learning: The Student Farm Movement in North America," about the past and future of campus farms

**350+** first-years worked, created, and connected during Experiential Orientation 2022 at DCF

**10** students connected over lunch and food systems career pathways with Cece Mercer (DCF alum '15), a law student and PepsiCo's Assoc. Mgr for Global Sustainability Partnerships

**4** stainless steel sinks in our new wash and pack shed keep our produce clean and cool



**21**

Field Crew members representing as many academic disciplines, ranging from Engineering to English to Law



**18,816**

lbs of vegetables grown regeneratively on one acre

**25**

pounds of green tomatoes fried by first-years during experiential orientation



**40+**

patrons stocked up on late season roots and leafy greens at DCF's first ever on-farm Holiday Market

**100+**

Duke students and Durham community members saved seeds, crafted, and sampled homemade pies at our first annual WinterFest

**5,206**

lbs of produce shared through our partnerships with Root Causes and Iglesia Emanuel



# OUR IMPACT



**BECKY DALTON**

## **DCF CREW ALUM, University Program in Ecology, Ph.D '19**

"I work in Durham as an ecologist at the Environmental Protection Agency, where I study the effects of air pollution and climate change on microbes, plants, and trees. My time at DCF gave me insight into the importance of the human experience in food systems, and importantly, how sustainability of ecosystem services are dependent on how we as a society interact with our environment. The landscapes that I have the privilege of researching now provide diverse ecological benefits to those with different knowledge systems, and I am grateful to the folks at DCF for centering the human experience in their ecological practices."

## **DCF FIELD CREW, History Major, French and Education Minors, '25**

"I always leave my time at DCF feeling thoughtful and rejuvenated. I appreciate how diverse forms of knowledge are shared at the farm, and I'm often connecting concepts from my courses to our agricultural practices. Through programs like the soil stories series to routine tasks like greens harvesting, I've made lots of new friends and reconnected with old ones. "



**GURNOOR MAJHAIL**



**CHRISTINA CHRISTOPOULOS**

## **ACTIVE WORK-TRADE VOLUNTEER**

### **Former Research Scholar at Duke Center for Child and Family Policy**

have never been more tired or more dirty than on the days I go to the farm. But I also have never been happier...my time at the farm is my therapy and meditation, not only because of the farm's natural beauty, but also because it makes me think of what it takes to feed all of us on this earth and how every one of us needs to do their part to take care of the land and of each other. For me, the farm has been a place where I learn to grow vegetables, but also a place of peace, serenity, inclusion, and growth."



# THANK YOU!

We work hard to offer tangible and visible evidence that a restorative relationship to our land is possible, and to spark new conversations about food and food systems. Your generosity is essential to sustaining our momentum and helping us grow. We welcome your financial gifts at [www.farm.duke.edu](http://www.farm.duke.edu). If you have strengths in graphic design, strategic communications planning or other arenas and are interested in donating your time, **please email us at [dukecampusfarm@gmail.com](mailto:dukecampusfarm@gmail.com)**.

## STAFF

Izzy Brace  
Saskia Cornes  
Abijah Gattis (Resilience NC  
Corps, outgoing)  
Emily McGinty

## STUDENT CREW

Jason Atwood JD '25  
Laura Brockington MEM '23  
Autumn Burton T '22  
Emma Childs MEM/MF '24  
Avery Davis Lamb MEM/MTS '22  
Logan Dye MEM '24  
Kaitlyn Elliot MEM '23

Reema Garabadu MEM '23

Addie Geitner T '25  
Sara Haas T '23  
Skijler Hutson T '24  
Gurnoor Majhail T '25  
Abby Martell MEM '23  
Maia Matheny T '22  
Olivia Olsher T '22  
Natalie Owens Div '23  
Laura Poma T '25  
Julianna Rennie T '22  
Ming Shen T '24  
Amy Yoon T '23  
Floey Zhao T '22

## INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

Duke Forest  
Duke Department of Gender,  
Sexuality, and Feminist Studies  
Franklin Humanities Institute  
Sustainable Duke  
Office of the Executive Vice  
President

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