

NOFA offers farm and garden tools training on April 26 in Middletown

The Messenger-Gazette By **The Messenger-Gazette**

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As warm spring days approach, farmers and gardeners are itching to turn the soil and start producing food in the Garden State. Unfortunately, many could end the season with back, hip, wrist, and hand strain due to repetitive motion and traumatic stress injuries while using hand-held tools. The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey (NOFA-NJ), a statewide organic food nonprofit, is offering a farm and garden tools training workshop, designed to increase effectiveness and decrease injury while working with these tools, on Sunday, April 26, from 2-4 p.m., at Oasis Therapeutic Life Centers' Farm in Middletown.

The training is targeted for new farmers, gardeners, and farm interns and employees who are interested in correct hand-held tool use and maintenance. The trainer, Tony Sloan of Oasis TLC, will cover how to pick the right tool for the job at hand, how to maintain and care for tools, and how to reduce injuries while performing common tasks in the field. The training will take place out-of-doors and will end with a hands-on, participatory demonstration of the material.

"We're so happy that Tony and Oasis have agreed to teach this training," said Justine Cook, NOFA-NJ's Director of Farm Operations. "We work with a lot of wonderful farmers and gardeners who are dedicated to protecting the environment - we want to make sure that they're protecting themselves, too! It's easy to hurt yourself when you're moving and working with soil and it's not about strength, it's about education and experience."

The registration fee is \$15 for NOFA-NJ members and \$20 for non-members; pre-registration is required and discounts are available for NOFA-NJ farm and business members. To learn more about NOFA-NJ or this workshop, visit **www.nofanj.org**.

To learn more about Oasis TLC, a nonprofit farm community that provides continuing education and housing for people with autism, visit **www.oasistlc.org**.

The Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA-NJ) is dedicated to supporting organic and sustainable food, farming, and gardening in New Jersey through education, technical assistance, and policy action. NOFA-NJ is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. For more information, visit **www.nofanj.org**.