

Bounty of the County

You probably don't associate Westchester County with farmland, but these working farms may change your mind.

Photographs and text by Leslie Long



Barnyard animals, seasonal crops, overflowing farm stands. When you think of Westchester, these are probably not the first images that come to mind. Still, there are a number of working farms within our county. Often hidden behind a large main house or down a scenic dirt road, the farms of Westchester produce a number of crops—heirloom varieties for discerning chefs, vibrant flowers, medicinal herbs, pick-your-own vegetables. There are even alpacas and their ultra-soft yarn. As spring turns to summer, now is the perfect time to enjoy Westchester’s bounty.



(Opposite page): Lindsay Cochran of Kitchawan Farm in Ossining enjoys mixing it up in her garden design, making fast friends between flowers, vegetables, and herbs. Here, a colorful combo creates a radiant row of yellow marigolds between deep and brighter greens.

(Above): Stuga is Swedish for “little house”—and what a charming little house it is. The Stuga is Kitchawan’s farm store, where you can choose from flowers, annual and perennial plants, culinary and medicinal herbs, and an ever-changing array of fresh-from-the-farm vegetables. Crafts, duck eggs, and other surprises often appear, too.

(Right): While the adorable alpacas of Faraway Farm appear to be straight out of a picture book (Dr. Seuss, perhaps?), they actually reside in Yorktown Heights on Leda Blumberg and Steve Cole’s Faraway Farm. Blumberg grew up here and returned over time, deciding to breed these gentle creatures. In various tones of amber, brown, black, white, and gray, their fleece is spun into yarn and sold at the farm’s lovely store, along with alpaca garments, toys, and handcrafted items.

(Previous spread): Ossining’s Kitchawan Farm.



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ith white barns, silos, chickens, and rows of crops, this classic Yorktown Heights farm is pure

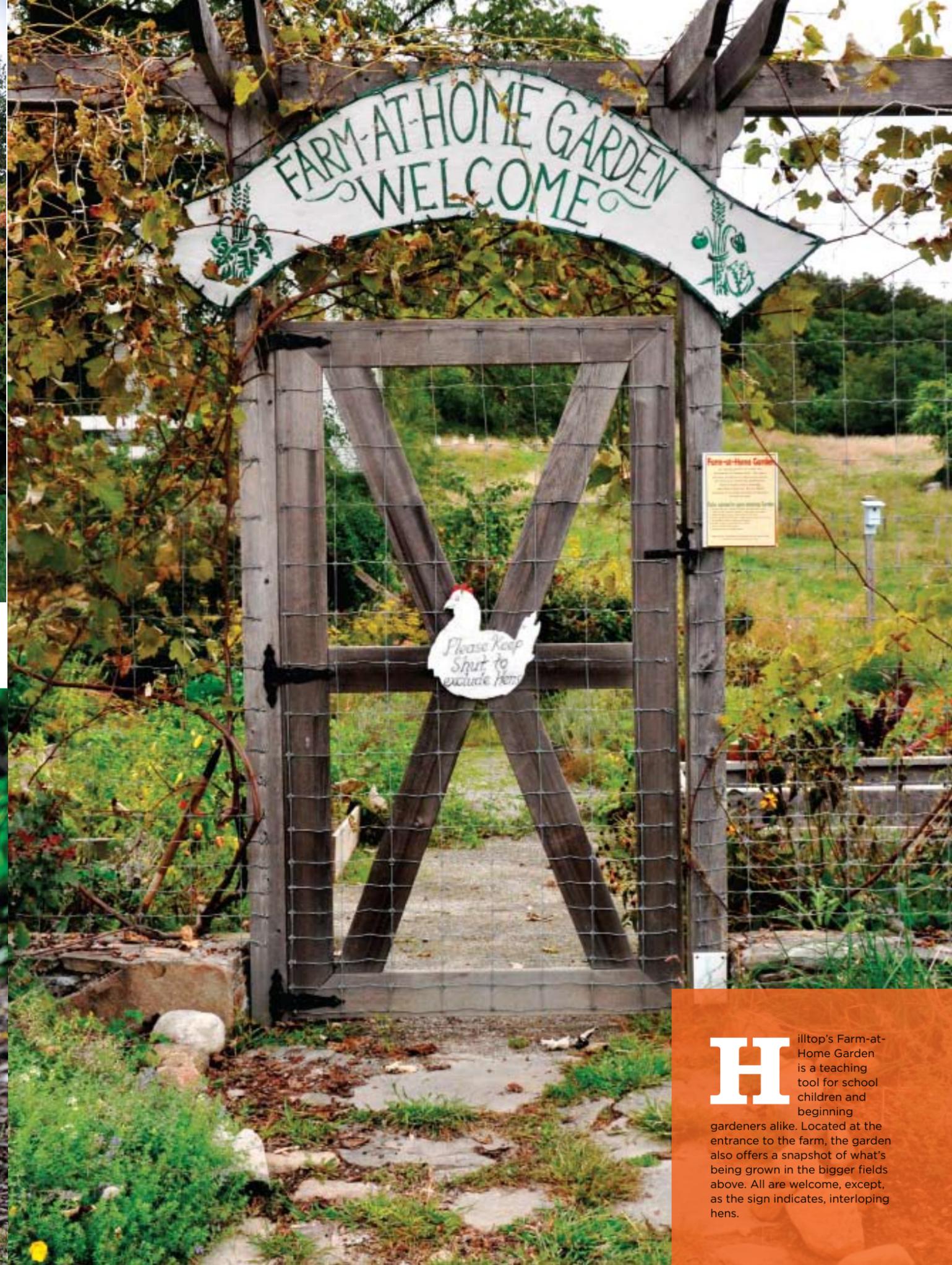
Americana. A former dairy farm dating back to the 1600s, Hilltop Hanover Farm is now a regional education center teaching small-scale farming techniques. Scheduled groups are welcome, and there's a lot here for individual visitors, too. Enjoy miles of woodland trails, pretty picnic areas, U-pick vegetables, and, after June 1, a bountiful farm stand.





(Above): Old-fashioned charm abounds at Hilltop Hanover Farm. This handmade entry leads the way to a flower garden at the scenic crest of a hill. Step through it on your way down to the rows of U-pick vegetables, or just stroll up and enjoy the sweeping view.

(Below): Visit Hilltop Hanover Farm and this curious rooster just may greet you on the driveway. Known for welcoming newcomers to his domain, he often leads the rest of the flock.



Hilltop's Farm-at-Home Garden is a teaching tool for school children and beginning gardeners alike. Located at the entrance to the farm, the garden also offers a snapshot of what's being grown in the bigger fields above. All are welcome, except, as the sign indicates, interloping hens.



(Left): Have you ever seen corn with silk the color of cotton candy? According to Elizabeth Taggart's Amba Farms' experts, corn sometimes has red or pink silk during the early stage of development. This variety, known as Luscious Bicolor Sweet Corn, is used to make corn gnocchi at Café of Love in Mount Kisco.

(Below): Touchstone Gold Beets. Purple Peacock Broccoli. White Wonder Cucumbers. These are a few of the many varieties grown at Amba. This family-owned organic farm focuses on heirloom fruits and vegetables. While most of its crops are sold to local restaurants, you can enjoy Amba's beautiful produce (like this spectacular fluffy fennel so aptly named Perfection) at its farm stand and a farmers' market.



SunRaven was founded by Michael Finkelstein, MD, as a center for skillful living. For years, the farm's 20 raised beds have been cared for communally by friends and neighbors, producing 50 varieties of flowers and vegetables, including the tomatillos pictured here. This summer, SunRaven's gardens will be planted and tended by a master gardener and used as a setting for educational and inspirational programs. According to Dr. Finkelstein, "The garden is a metaphor for health."



(Left): Bedford's SunRaven is home turf for Stanley, a Blue Indian peacock famous for stopping traffic while in full-feathered regalia on the dirt road in front of the farm. Dr. Finkelstein, founder of SunRaven, recently introduced Stella as a mate for Stanley and things could not be going better. Roosting high atop trees at night and strolling the property together during daytime, the happy couple have already produced a chick.

With a family who loves to cook, writer and photographer **Leslie Long** (leslielongportfolio.com) is a regular at the Larchmont Farmers' Market, where she buys produce right off the farm. After researching this article, she now has a favorite new variety: husk tomatoes, also known as ground cherries.