A Guide to the Pomona College Organic Farm: An Introduction to the Farm’s History and Basic Gardening Skills and Techniques

Adam J. Long, Pomona College

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Reader 1
Richard Hazlett

Reader 2
Char Miller

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Abstract
It was almost four years ago when I first visited the Pomona College Organic Farm and since then I have learned everything from the basics of gardening to the complex steps required to organize students for events and activities. As I learned more and saw so many students come and go, I saw a need for written documentation that would allow future generations of students to benefit from the skills that my peers and I have learned in our time at the Farm. The value of the Farm is grounded in having a vibrant physical space, and right now the knowledge to maintain and improve this space is only passed down from person to person. I hope to eventually combine the disparate bits of knowledge that I have accumulated over the years into a single guidebook. This thesis project, which is the first major section of that guidebook, covers the Farm’s history and basic technical skills like soil preparation, planting, plant maintenance, weeding, pest control, and tool use. This is a living document and will be constantly updated as the Farm changes and grows and as new information comes to light. Although the Farm has come a long way over the years, it still has a lot of unrealized potential, and I hope that this document both facilitates and records the great changes that are soon to come.

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The main reasons farmers state for wanting to farm organically are their concerns for the environment and about working with agricultural chemicals in conventional farming systems. There is also an issue with the amount of energy used in agriculture, since many farm chemicals require energy intensive manufacturing processes that rely heavily on fossil fuels. Organic farmers find their method of farming to be profitable and personally rewarding.

Why Buy Organic?
The Pomona College Organic Farm was created by a group of three friends in 1998 in order to create an atmosphere suitable for relaxing amongst the complexity and stress of Pomona College campus life[citation needed]. Masanobu Fukuoka’s book The One Straw Revolution provided the initial inspiration. The project began in 2001 following a visit by an EA50 class (Introduction to Environmental Analysis) to CalEarth in Hesperia, where students learned about earth architecture[disambiguation needed] from renowned architect Nader Khalili. Following this visit, a group of students and community members built an earth dome at the farm during spring and summer of 2002.