Locust Grove Selected to Participate in Kentucky’s Industrial Hemp Project

It seemed to be a long shot, but it worked. Last December, Locust Grove’s Gardener Sarah Sutherland applied for Locust Grove to be a part of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture’s (KDA’s) Industrial Hemp Project for the 2015 season.

“I stressed that, although our hemp plot would be small, Locust Grove gets thousands of visitors who will get the chance to see hemp being grown and processed,” says Sarah. “I went to a special meeting, signed a lot of papers, and we were in! I’m now a deputy of the KDA during the Pilot Project.”

Locust Grove’s Executive Director Carol Ely believes that Sarah was the key to Locust Grove’s successful application. “We received permission to grow hemp on an experimental basis because we have a skilled professional gardener in charge of the project — Sarah Sutherland,” says Carol.

“Sarah’s knowledge of working with heirloom varieties and organic 19th century methods provides a whole new research aspect to the KDA’s efforts to reintroduce responsible hemp cultivation in the Commonwealth.”

But that was the easy part. Then Sarah had to obtain hemp seed — which is still technically illegal in the United States and not readily available.

“We found ourselves in a Catch-22 situation,” says Carol. “We had permission to grow hemp, but no way to legally obtain the seeds! Sarah spent a lot of time searching for a seed source — time when we should have been planting.”

Sarah contacted Mose Putney, who is the founder of Kentucky Hemp Industries, LLC and also in the Pilot Project. “Mose split off enough seed for my little 480-square foot plot from his large order — all with the approval of the KDA,” says Sarah. “We got our seeds in the ground just in time.”

Then the learning curve began. “I fenced off the hemp so the deer wouldn’t enjoy it, but didn’t know about the mourning doves. They love hemp seed!” laughs Sarah.

So she filled in the gaps made by the doves — and the unseasonable torrents began. “Little seeds and sprouts are still being washed down the hill,” she says. “Other growers are having just as bad a time, but we still have plants that look robust.”

Hemp was one of the most important crops in early Kentucky, contributing to the prosperity of the Bluegrass region. It was familiar to the settlers from Virginia, where it was grown on many farms, including those of Washington and Jefferson. And it was preferred over flax because it was stronger and more pest-resistant.

Hemp fibers were used for making rope and twine and were woven into canvas for bags, clothing, and sails. The seed was used for oil and animal feed. While hemp grows well in Kentucky and has few pests, cultivating, harvesting, and processing hemp was heavy, intensive work that relied on the labor of enslaved workers.

By the mid-19th century, competition from other hemp-growing regions and from other fibers, combined with the end of slavery, led to the industry’s decline in the region. Hemp cultivation in the U. S. was outlawed in 1937 due to confusion about its relationship to marijuana. That ban was briefly overturned during World War II and then re-instated.

Locust Grove’s tiny hemp crop is the first to be legally planted in the city of Louisville since the end of WWII.

Locust Grove celebrated “all things hemp” — clothing, foods, rope, other items, plus live music and a video — during its first Hemp Festival in August.

‘Prepare the River Fields for a Crop of Hemp’
— George Croghan

Hemp was not the same as marijuana. Modern industrial hemp has negligible amounts of THC and cannot produce a “high.” Hemp is indeed Cannabis Sativa, the same species as marijuana. But it is a different cultivar that has been bred for fiber or oil. It’s like the difference in dog breeds between a Great Dane and a poodle — same species, very different genetics. Hemp is legally grown in Canada, which is the source for most hemp products sold in the U.S.
Locust Grove’s New Summer Activities Keep the Grounds Full and Visitors Delighted


This year’s major experiment was “Locust Grove Thursdays,” a variety of programs offered in the early evening every Thursday to entertain and inform. Events introduced guests to aspects of Locust Grove’s farm life in the early 1800s — hearth cooking, its dairy, its woods — as well as book collecting, beer-making, and photography.

“We learned that theatre is definitely appealing,” says Program Coordinator Brian Cushing. “We’ll continue with Kentucky Shakespeare and also explore other groups. Next year, we won’t have so many of the events and site improvements possible.

The small shed at the back of the garden is being patched and repaired to prepare for its transformation as the site’s new farm distillery.

Locust Grove’s event sponsors underwrite the costs of the entertaining and educational programs we offer this summer — such as Rainbow Blossom Natural Foods, whose early enthusiasm for our August 9th Hemp Festival helped to convince us that it was indeed a viable idea.

Did your family take advantage of the Cultural Pass this summer? We could not have scheduled more sessions.

We thank them all — and the others who are not mentioned here — for what they’ve helped to create here at Locust Grove.

Locust Grove has been keeping its visitors busy with a variety of programs and activities throughout the summer. From Shakespeare performances to outdoor events like the Annual Antiques Market, there’s always something for everyone to enjoy.

Locust Grove saw one of the busiest and most exciting summers ever, with a variety of programs and activities keeping visitors engaged and entertained. Events introduced guests to aspects of Locust Grove’s farm life in the early 1800s, such as hearth cooking, its dairy, and its woods. Programs were offered in the early evening every Thursday to entertain and inform guests about Locust Grove’s history and culture.

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Thirst? The Story of Louisville’s WaterWorks

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1 PM

In the 1800s, the Louisville Water Company was marketing a product not many used and even fewer saw the value of—a safe, reliable supply of drinking water. Louisville Water Company’s Kelley Dearing Smith will share the history of Louisville’s water with stories, memorabilia, film, and photos. You’ll learn how Louisville moved from being the “graveyard of the West” to the city with the “best-tasting tap water in America.” You’ll never look at a glass of water the same way again!

Traditional Irish Foodways

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1 PM

Delve into Locust Grove owner William Croghan’s Irish heritage and learn about the rich and tasty heritage of Irish cooking from Irish native Michael Reidy and his wife, Siobhan, owners of The Irish Rover. They will talk about traditional Irish foods and customs and give us an insight into what William Croghan might have requested for Locust Grove’s dinners.

Daniel Boone: An Intimate Portrait

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1 PM

Join Kent Masterson Brown as he chronicles the life of Daniel Boone—his successes, failures, and serious personal losses—and the impact all that had on him. Kent will provide insight into Boone’s character and what made him so memorable and worthy of emulation. Kent Brown is the president of Witnessing History, which produces films documenting the history of America. His documentary, Daniel Boone and the Opening of the American West, was KET’s top-rated program when it aired in May.

You are invited to An Evening With Mark Bittman

To Benefit The Berry Center and Locust Grove

Wednesday, September 9, 2015 at Locust Grove

Come celebrate local food—and those who create it, and create with it.


It will be a night of good food and good discussion about food, farming, and the challenges and successes of growing, buying, and cooking local. Come eat, come listen, and go get involved.

Cocktails begin at 5:30 p.m.

Come for the cocktail hour and enjoy heavy hors * d’oeuvres* made with local ingredients by Kathy Cary of Lilly’s and La Peche.

Mr. Bittman will speak at 6:45 p.m.

Tickets to the event are $105 per person. To buy tickets, go to brownpapertickets.com and search “Bittman Questions.” Call us at 502-897-9845.

Fall Antiques Market

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

10 AM – 4:30 PM

This semi-annual Antiques Market features professional dealers from the South and Midwest displaying their wares on the lawn at Locust Grove. In addition to American country antiques, the show features formal furniture, books, textiles, jewelry, and silver.

Admission is $8, free for children 12 and under. All admissions include tours of the historic house museum. Food and drink will be offered for sale. Proceeds support the continued operation and preservation of Locust Grove.

18th Century Market Fair

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24 AND 25

10 AM – 5:30 PM

Revolutionary War American and British re-enactors, merchants and food vendors with 18th century style provisions, entertainers and demonstrations! (See story on the back cover.)

LG Volunteers/Friends Historic Bardstown Tour

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

Designed especially for volunteers and Friends of Locust Grove, this tour features two Georgian houses and lunch in one of Kentucky’s earliest taverns in Bardstown. First, you’ll learn about Wickland—home of three governors (two Kentucky and one Louisiana) and famous for its gorgeous staircase and folding parlor doors. Then it’s lunch at Talbott Tavern—serving generals, explorers, kings (at least one), a president (as a boy), notorious robbers, and thousands others since the late 1700s. Finally, a special visit to Federal Hill, known locally as My Old Kentucky Home.

The cost is $65 per person, includes motorcoach transportation, all admissions for the special tours, and lunch.

Registration deadline is Friday, October 6. Please call Mary Beth Williams at 859-945-9 or email her at mwilliams@locustgrove.org to reserve your space.

A Christmas Carol

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 5:30 PM

The Locust Grove Chamber Musicians present an afternoon of early Kentucky and Appalachian music. Music of Heinrich, Mozart, and traditional Scots/ Irish composers.

Archaeologists Continue ‘Hotspots’ Research

This summer, Locust Grove and Corn Island Archaeology have been following up on our archaeological survey of the grounds by continuing to investigate a “hotspot” of artifacts. It’s near the junction of the alley and the gravel drive, north of the main house. The archaeologists used ground-penetrating imaging plus conventionally dug pits. Unfortunately, the results were inconclusive. It looks like there was once a building there, dating back to the early years of Locust Grove—but how large it was, its use, and when it was built couldn’t be determined.

We’re looking forward to receiving the final report and artifact analysis from Corn Island Archaeology in the next few months.
Friends of Locust Grove

Thank you.

For some 26 years, Nancy McFarland has been hard at work, doing what she loves—volunteering at Locust Grove. From docent to duster, Board member to book sorter, Nancy has served in just about every position available for volunteers.

“Nancy’s long-standing dedication to Locust Grove and the many ways in which we help her out are the reasons why the Volunteer Starter Committee chose Nancy in this quarter’s Spirit Award Winner,” says Mary Beth Williams, Locust Grove’s Curator of Collections and Education, as well as leader of the site’s volunteers.

Back in 1987, Nancy’s husband, Doug, took a job in Louisville, moving from Cincinnati where Nancy grew up. “I did not want to leave my family, friends, and the good job I had,” says Nancy. So she continued working, commuting back and forth from Cincinnati.

“I finally had enough of the driving and retired,” she says. “Knowing my love for history, Doug said he had a ‘fantastic place’ to show me. It was Locust Grove.

“So when I stopped working outside the home, I started life at Locust Grove,” Nancy adds. She began in the garden then decided to become a docent. She served on Locust Grove’s Board of Directors, the Volunteer Starter Committee, and has worked on the Gardener’s Fair from its start.

Nancy has long been a “Hysterical Duster” with about five other volunteers who help keep the historic house clean. Last year, she stepped down from her regular docent duties. She now helps to sort books for Locust Grove’s semi-annual Used Book Sales, is one of the “Lecture Ladies” for the First Wednesday Lectures, and serves as a docent for special events.

“I’ve worked with Nancy over the past seven years and see first hand her many contributions to Locust Grove,” says Mary Beth. “Her long-time commitment to the Gardener’s Fair—one of our biggest special events—is invaluable.

“Throughout the fair, Nancy can see everywhere—helping at concessions, as a docent in the house, working the silent auction, and anywhere else she’s needed,” Mary Beth adds. “Locust Grove is certainly fortunate to have Nancy as a volunteer.”

Nancy says she’s the fortunate one to have Locust Grove in her life. “I have many close friends here at Locust Grove. The best things about volunteering here are the friends I’ve made and the wonderful 19th century house that I fell in love with back in the 80’s.”

"In Memory of Jeanne Litterrell Vezee
Barbara Qualls & Jim Lieve
Lynn S. Renau

In Memory of Barbara Safford
LaMar Gaston Jr.

In Honor of Mr. Marcus Edwin
Mary Hunter

In Honor of Barbara Telford Junior League Garden Club
AUGUST USED BOOK SALE

MEMBERS’ PREVIEW SALE:
THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 5 PM — 7:30 PM

PUBLIC SALE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 10 AM — 7 PM
SATURDAY & SUNDAY, AUGUST 22 & 23, 10 AM — 4:30 PM

The printing of Grove Gazette is contributed by Publishers Printing, Shepherdsville, Ky. Thank you!

18th Century Market Fair

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24 AND 25 — 10 AM — 4:30 PM BOTH DAYS

Bright orange leaves above and underfoot, red and blue uniforms everywhere, fire and smoke by tents and on the fields. The past comes alive during Locust Grove’s 18th Century Market Fair. It’s a great fall festival with something for the whole family.

Chat with American, British, Hessian (German), and Scottish soldiers and their families as they show what soldiering life was like during the Revolutionary War. Watch them demonstrate their skills during mock battles — filled with noise, guns, cannons, and smoke. Buy 18th century-style hearty fare, treats, and scores of household goods that fit today’s lifestyle.

Enjoy singers, jugglers, puppeteers, and a fortune teller, and maybe even a pony cart. Watch demonstrators doing 18th century tasks and crafts, perhaps including a weaver with her sheep.

Admission for adults is $8 and children $4. Spend the day — it’ll be hard to leave!