

# Another Conservation Success Story...

## Dekalb County, Georgia

August 2012



Joe Reynolds speaks to field day participants about appropriate cover crops.

conservationist with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Lawrenceville, the relationship was a great match.

Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) cost share funding, Reynolds planted cover crops to control soil erosion and established a nutrient management plan that allowed him to schedule nutrient applications for optimum crop yields. Reynolds was approved for a high tunnel house to extend his growing season.

"We grow approximately 60 types of

vegetables," said

Reynolds. "For us, the rotation and form is how we make it all work (what we grow). My rotation is designed based on botanical plants or what crops go together – what plant families' work well together. The cost share assistance we received through NRCS has been so helpful in protecting the soil, reducing our expenses and allowing our business to be more profitable" said Reynolds.

"Joe is an outstanding EQIP participant," said Brown. "His dedication to sustainability is an example to a growing field of young small-scale farmers."

As a young farmer, Reynolds and



Shitake mushroom log inoculation

Winfrey embrace the benefits of locally grow sustainable agriculture and wish to share the message with their community by hosting field days and food events. Their 'rock-star' following and creative growing practices

**"For us, the rotation and form is how we make it all work,"— Joe Reynolds.**

have made them formidable voices on local sustainable farm and food initiatives.

"Everybody agrees that the food grown closest to them tastes better and has a higher nutrient value and it looks better when it gets to you. It's grown in a manner that's most consistent with our natural resources and agrees with mother earth," said Reynolds.

### EQIP Helps DeKalb County Organic Farmer

By Karen Buckley Washington, Lawrenceville

On any given day, you can find DeKalb County farmer Joe Reynolds busy, caring for his crops.

Reynolds and his partner, food activist Judith Winfrey, are the operators of Love Is Love Farms. Gaia Gardens, a 1.5 acre certified organic farm owned by East Lake Commons housing community, is nestled in the heart of a residential area in urban, Decatur and has been Reynolds' host farm since 2011.

Reynolds diverse selection of soil-based crops include broccoli, cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, collard greens, eggplant and even Shitake mushrooms and honey, which they provide to a 110 member Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program as well as to local restaurants and the East Atlanta Farmers Market.

"I was an employee for a farmer at the very beginning," said Reynolds. "I worked for Crystal Organic Farm in Newborn, a certified organic farmer for 4 years. Then I started my own farming operation and this is the fifth year that I've been in business as Love is Love Farm."

Reynolds is a skilled farmer and conservationist, possessing advanced knowledge of plant families, crop rotations and cover crops. So, when Reynolds sought assistance from Jerome Brown, district



Reynolds' soil-based planting methods determine his crop rotation.

 **NRCS** Natural Resources Conservation Service

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**Dekalb County Soil and Water Conservation District**

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