

## **TLC The Land Conservancy of BC's Farm Holidays – Get Out on the Farm and Meet the Farmer!**

*Submitted by Paula Hesje, TLC*

Are you looking forward to getting out those gardening gloves or digging out those garden pants with the stains on the knees? Are you interested in a behind the scenes look at how organic farmers provide you with diverse local food? If you answered, 'heck ya!' to any of the above, you might like to attend one of TLC's Farm Holidays – part of their broader Conservation Holiday program . Four holidays will be offered in 2009 and they provide a unique opportunity for participants to learn about sustainable agriculture and ecology by working on a local B.C. farm. We harvest fresh produce for our dinners, cook together and often gather around a picnic table to savour the feast, talk about the day's activities and relish in the satisfaction of a job well done.

As we are still finalizing event details, here is a list of locations for our 2009 Farm Holidays:

### **Foxglove Farm on Salt Spring Island**

June

Dates: TBA

Join Michael Ableman and his wife Jeanne-Marie Herman on their stunning 120-acre farm on the shoulder of Mt Maxwell. The farm is surrounded by forest, pastures, and creeks, and borders pristine Maxwell Lake. The farm currently produces strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, asparagus, melons, greens, roots, a wide range of annual Mediterranean vegetables, as well as a new orchard of diverse varieties of peach, plum, apple, pear, quince, persimmon, and cherry. Grain production and mixed livestock are also in development. Michael and Jeanne-Marie have over 30 years of farming and market garden experience. A complete itinerary for this holiday will be posted soon at: [www.conservationholidays.ca](http://www.conservationholidays.ca)

### **Glen Valley Organic Farm Co-operative in the Lower Mainland**

July or August

Dates: TBA

This 50-acre farm is located on the south shore of the Fraser River and was purchased by the Glen Valley Organic Farm Cooperative to further the vision, "to feed and educate present and future generations by cooperatively holding, stewarding, and sustainably farming our land". The Co-op leases land and facilities to two farming enterprises, now in their second year. Chris Bodnar and Jeremy Pitchford are growing mixed vegetables and Alyson Chisolms is working her magic with chickens, goats, and salad greens.

In the southeast quarter of the property the land is forested and steep. Several springs are located on the site and provide water for the farm. There are drainage channels and ponds offering habitat for frogs, salamanders and

insects. Raptors and songbirds are also abundant, and killdeer nest in fields. A bird box has been constructed to support barn owls. Biodiversity and wildlife is further supported throughout the farm by the large variety of crops grown, the nearly 30 varieties of heritage apple trees, hedges of blackberries, and a wide mixture of cultivated fields and uncultivated grassland. A complete itinerary for this holiday will be posted soon at [www.conservationholidays.ca](http://www.conservationholidays.ca)

### **Madrona Farm**

Victoria

June 28 and September 13

If you are looking for an introduction to our Farm Holidays – these are good ones to check out as they are a day long. We had a fabulous holiday here in 2008 which was a great success due to the beautiful weather, useful wisdom passed on by farmer David Chambers and his wife Nathalie, the interesting work tasks and the feast that was prepared from produce harvested that afternoon. Gathering on the picnic tables we spoke about the beauty of the farm and participants also had the opportunity to learn about the campaign that is happening to protect the farm in perpetuity. David's extended family owns the farm and would like to sell it. *TLC* is raising funds to ensure the land has continued use for local, sustainable food production and conservation of biodiversity. For more information, please visit: [www.conservancy.bc.ca](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca) and click on Madrona Farm. Complete itineraries for these holidays will be posted soon at [www.conservationholidays.ca](http://www.conservationholidays.ca)