

Join us Today!

Noon, Thursday, July 17, 2014

Tiny Greens Farm Autumn Berry Inspired, LLC Tour!



Host:

Dustin Kelly
2314 N. High Cross Road
Urbana, IL 61802

<https://goo.gl/maps/XZ45d>

Parking: Follow the drive in and the parking lot is on the left, in front of the farm building.

Thursday, July 17, at 12 noon, CCNet will be touring the Tiny Greens Farm, home of Autumn Berry Inspired, LLC. Tiny Greens is a certified organic farm located in North East Urbana, started in 1986. For over 25 years, Tiny Greens grew a wide variety of sprouts and baby micro-greens, while expanding into fresh garden produce and even value added products like pesto, tofu, and sprouted wheat tortillas for selling at farmers markets in Urbana and Chicago. A heavy encounter with the US FDA caused the farm to cease production in 2012 and enter a transitional phase to where it now functions as a food and agricultural business incubator.

In 2011, our guide for the tour, Dustin Kelly, began researching the wild berry that grew from a short tree that had thickly spread across over 5 acres of the farm's land. This tree, the autumn olive, turned out to be a non-toxic, nitrogen fixing, delicious nectar and fruit producing, intentionally introduced species that now resides across most of the wild areas of North America north of Tennessee and East of Missouri. The tree had served as a restoration tree, and had since aggressively spread across marginal lands and into nature preserves. The tree was declared invasive and an expensive and unending battle began against the autumn olive tree. Recent research by the USDA and other parties found the fruit to be high in anti-oxidants, including lycopene. Dustin aims to raise awareness of the situation and proposes a more ecological and profitable solution that includes harvesting the fruit, clearing alleys through dense thickets, multicropping with native species, and turning this tasty but problematic resource into healthy food products for people. The oil pressed from the seed also proves to be appealing and have potential health benefits as well. In 2012, he started Autumn Berry Inspired, LLC with his wife, Chenxi, and has been selling at local farmers markets and other outlets. ABI is one of the four companies currently operating out of Tiny Greens Farm.