

# FARM FOCUS: Archi's Acres ~ Sustainability Serving Veterans & Our Community

The Agrarian spirit and entrepreneurial roots of our nation are alive and well with Colin Archipley and his wife Karen of ARCHI'S ACRES in Valley Center, CA, as they innovate nurturing solutions to serve Veterans, our community, and small scale organics.

"Thomas Jefferson envisioned our country as a quilt. Every square representing not just a home, but a business as well; everyone producing a product, whether it's produce or furniture," says Colin Archipley.

A unique difference from other farms is that ARCHI'S ACRES utilizes a method of hydroponic cultivation to produce its certified organic produce, which might be less familiar to Americans, but well-known in other parts of the world like Australia and Israel.

Hydroponics is the system of growing plants without soil in either a bath or a slow stream of nutrient enriched water. In soil, biological decomposition breaks down organic matter into the basic nutrient salts that plants feed on. However, natural soil is often contaminated or does not have enough organic matter to feed the plant. With hydroponics, clean filtered water is enriched with the same nutrient salts that the plants feed on. In this environment the plants have their food directly delivered to their roots and the energy normally used to develop long roots can now be redirected to accelerate the growth of the plant.

Hydroponics takes away the ground contamination issue, plus ARCHI'S ACRES uses completely Vegan formulas, which eliminates the chance of disease. A comforting thought, given the CDC's 6/20/08 report stating "Since April, 552 persons were infected with Salmonella Saintpaul associated with Roma (plum) and red round tomatoes not still on the vine, identified in 32 states, which they consider this an ongoing outbreak." The food safety issue is just one of the important reasons to "buy local."

"Other countries use this method of hydroponic farming because of lack of space, water and affordable labor, which is just what southern California is facing right now," says Colin Archipley.

He couldn't be more on target given the report "Sober Up, San Diego. The Water Party is Over" issued in February by the San Diego civil grand jury, which concluded that permanent, mandatory conservation measures would be necessary to accommodate the realities of squeezing lots of people into an arid landscape. Additionally a recent National Geographic feature article highlights the pending threat facing western states: rapid population growth and climate change.

"Water is the next oil, and we should get ahead of it," states Colin.

"Most growers in the U.S. utilize what is referred to as run to waste growing; meaning that water which comes out of the growing container is wasted, since it drains on the ground and it is gone" says Colin. "Unlike these growers, we recapture that water, send it to a holding tank and use it again, and again. In our deep culture system, the only water we lose is that lost through the plant. No evaporation of the soil, or weeds using the water, and no water not being used by the plant, period."

Another progressive element of ARCHI'S ACRES comes from the vision of Colin Archipley and being a former Marine Sergeant who served three tours of duty in Iraq. Last year they approached Dept. of Veteran Affairs in San Diego and presented their concept of vocational rehabilitation to them, which received approval in March 2008. "We now offer a class to veterans offered through the Dept. of V.A. Compensated Work Therapy/Veterans Industries. Mira Costa College provides a certificated course through our program." Veterans learn hands on training in Organic farming utilizing both hydroponics and soil, building of greenhouse, introduction to the resources of the Farm

Bureau and employment services, as well as alternative energy in agriculture.

"We have a Veteran who was homeless, and through our program and neighboring/supporting farms, we have found him a place to live and work part time, while he completes our program. Then he will remain on the neighboring farm as he works into a full time position."

shares Karen Archipley. "Another success story is a gentleman who suffered neurological problems and because of the progress he has experienced working/learning here, the WAVE/VA clinic has extended his participation in our program. Through fresh air and exercise, and a new mental outlook, he is turning a corner in his healing!" For Veterans interested in being involved in this program, please contact Jeff Scanlon, Compensative Work Therapy Mgr.: 619-228-8007 or [jeffery.scanlon@med.va.gov](mailto:jeffery.scanlon@med.va.gov).

The recent floods in Iowa, with more than a million acres of corn and two million acres of soybeans ruined and estimates expect more losses, combined with the sky-rocketing price of oil, which affects the cost of producing crops, feeding livestock, is predicted to continue to escalate prices of other foods and products. Ahead of the curve again, the Archipleys and their friend Angelika Unzens have developed Archi's Green Machine (AGM), in an effort to bring small scale hydroponics farming to anyone; right in their own backyard or even on a balcony to set up their own growing table. AGM has 2 systems available. One of their goals for creating AGM hydroponics home garden is that it can help to feed a family of four all year round, giving them a chance to beat high food prices. Victory Gardens, a powerful movement in the past, provided an estimated 40 percent of the produce Americans ate during World War II. Besides saving money, having a home garden helps the environment and cuts down on the miles most food travels to reach you.

Archi's Acres Living Basil is available year around at Jimbo's throughout San Diego County, and at our local farmers markets of Escondido, Solano Beach, and The VA Hospital of San Diego. You can meet Colin, buy their living basil, organic avocados, and various fruits from their over 200 trees, as well as all many others for planting in your own garden at the Escondido Farmer's Market.

## Karen Archipley's Recipe for Freezing Pesto Sauce:

- 1 plant of large living basil
- 1 cup of organic cold pressed olive oil
- ¾ cup of raw pecans or sunflower seed, walnut, almond or pine nut
- 1 head of garlic peeled
- Season to taste with sea salt

Grind in a food processor to a smooth consistency. Pour into an ice cube tray and freeze.

When ready to eat use 1 cube per person. Warm up and mix in with Parmesan cheese when you are ready to use it. Pour over pasta of your choice.

See [www.lightconnection.us](http://www.lightconnection.us) for more on Archi's Acres. ([archisacres.com](http://archisacres.com))

**Jennifer Joe's interests include being passionate about organics, healing, sustainable peace and restorative practices for the people and the planet; [jjoe@eco-creation.us](mailto:jjoe@eco-creation.us)**



Sergeant Archipley and wife Karen, Founders of Archi's Acres