

# Thomas Jefferson MONTICELLO

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## Heritage Harvest Festival

THE TENTS STRETCHED ACROSS the West Lawn and into the orchard filled with eye-catching seed displays, cashmere goats, a Jersey dairy cow, and red, yellow and striped heirloom tomatoes. Weavers spun yarn, toddlers banged on drums and shook maracas with musicians, while avid taste testers sampled varieties of watermelons and apples.

This fall, thousands shared Thomas Jefferson's passion for food and gardening at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Heritage Harvest Festival, sponsored by Monticello and Southern Exposure Seed Exchange. The festival, held September 11, had a record attendance of more than 3,050 visitors.

Visitors enjoyed a new setting for the festival – Jefferson's Vegetable Garden, the West Lawn, and the Thomas Jefferson Visitor Center and Smith Education Center. The move from Montalto allowed

organizers to accommodate more visitors and increase program and workshop offerings, while interweaving educational tours and demonstrations in Jefferson's historic garden.

During his retirement years, Jefferson recorded when his crops would "come to table." His garden 'Kalendar' provides a detailed description of seasonal cycles of gardening, planting, transplanting and harvesting at Monticello. The 7<sup>th</sup> Biennial Historic Plants Symposium kicked off the festival, with the theme "Come to Table," featuring acclaimed food historians such as Sandy Oliver, William Woys Weaver and John Martin (Hoppin' John) Taylor. Demonstrating cooking traditions of Monticello's enslaved African-American community, Leni Sorensen, Monticello's African-American historian and culinary expert presented "For Sustenance and Profit: Provisions from the Slave Gardens at Monticello."

Guest speaker and garden and food writer, photographer and landscape designer Rosalind Creasy kicked off the Heritage Harvest Festival during a special dinner program featuring local foods. The topic for the event was



"edible landscaping," the practice of using beautiful fruits and vegetables and ecologically sensitive gardening.

Festival-goers had more than 40 programs and workshops to choose from, including premium workshops like 'Virginia Cider Making,' 'Mushroom Cultivation' and 'Chickens for Eggs and Meat.' Free workshops included topics on planning a sustainable vegetable garden, edible landscaping and growing vegetables in cold weather.

