Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello

“Tho’ an old man, I am but a young gardener.”

Thomas Jefferson to Charles Willson Peale, 20 Aug. 1811

The Heritage Harvest Festival at Monticello is a celebration of revolutionary gardener, Thomas Jefferson.

Jefferson, America’s “first foodie,” championed vegetable cuisine, plant experimentation and sustainable agriculture. The Heritage Harvest Festival, hosted by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation in partnership with Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, is a fun, affordable, family-oriented, educational event, promoting gardening, sustainability, local food and the preservation of heritage plants. The venue for the festival is the verdant landscape of Monticello. Participants enjoy tastings, workshops, hands-on demonstrations, interpretative walks and a variety of garden tours and exhibits. Experts, including the Master Gardeners, come from around the country to share knowledge and volunteer their time to run the festival.

Local food, sustainable farming, and a heightened interest in the flavor and diversity of traditional fruits and vegetables have captured the imagination of gardeners and consumers throughout the United States. Educational programs are at the heart of the festival, with such topics seed-saving, botanical medicine, heirloom varieties, sustainable agriculture, compost production, organic gardening, integrated pest management, edible landscaping, regional cookery and other aspects of sustainable living. Southern Exposure Seed Exchange and organizations such as the Piedmont Environmental Council collaborate to offer festival goers samples in the “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” tasting tent.

These exhibits provide a focal point for festival participants to meet farmers, educators and non-profits at the center of the local food movement. Monticello is a superb venue for the festival, which last year attracted over 3,000 attendees from across the United States. In 2016, the tenth annual festival will include a hundred educational programs, artisan vendors, hands-on workshops, garden tours, an organic, local food marketplace and much more.

Monticello is a National Historic Landmark and the only house in the United States designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. Monticello welcomes 450,000 visitors each year.
2016 Heritage Harvest Festival Keynote Speaker

PATRICK O’CONNELL
Chef & Proprietor, The Inn at Little Washington