

Shepherd Project
Summer Solstice Celebration
June 21, 2023

On Wednesday, June 21st, a group of Veteran Farmers and community partners gathered at the Orting Veterans Farm, situated on the WA State Department of Veterans Affairs' Soldiers Home campus in the Orting Valley, to celebrate the first day of summer and to share resources and skills with each other. The gathering included cohort members of the FVC's Shepherd Project, farmers growing on the Orting Farm, community partners, and other Veterans interested in learning about the projects. The event was hosted by GRuB's Veteran Programs coordinators, Jennah Kemp and Beau Gromley, and Carrie Little, the farm manager of the Orting Veterans Farm.

The goal of the event, in addition to celebrating the first day of summer, was to finally have members of our Shepherd Project get together and meet in person and for interested Veterans to hear about the abundant resources available in Washington State for Veteran Farmers. These in-person events and occasions are critical to our goal of fostering relationships and creating a stronger community of Veteran farmers in Washington State. This was hopefully just the first of many such opportunities to come!

During the event, Carrie Little led a tour of the farm, where we got to witness the amazing work being done by the Orting Veteran farmers, including Terry and Regina Strong; Juanita and Osvaldo Chavarria and their two young daughters; and Juul Quick. A final treat along the farm tour was getting to see the happy bees buzzing back and forth around the new Orting Farm apiary site! The Orting Veterans Farm is now an apiary site for the new Veteran beekeeping support program, [Healing Through Hives](#), and will be a site for upcoming beekeeping events and workshops.

The day closed out with special presentations from Juanita Chavarria, Carrie Little and Jake Dailey. Juanita, with the help of daughters Selah and Rhema, gave a presentation on growing microgreens and told us about how she and her family have been able to successfully cultivate and sell monthly microgreens subscriptions through their farm business, [Baby Chavs](#) in Tacoma. Jake Dailey, a Shepherd Project cohort member, gave a presentation on the importance and powerful impacts of regenerative forestry and told the group about his organization, [Rake Force](#). Jake brought along some biochar as an example of a value added product that can be produced through these sustainable, regenerative practices. Finally, farm manager Carrie Little, who also runs and operates [Little Eorthe Farms](#) in Orting, gave a presentation on how to successfully capture a swarm of honeybees! Each presentation was fascinating and it was so inspiring to hear about other's experiences and huge successes along their unique farming journeys!

The Shepherd Project, run by the Washington chapter of the Farmer Veteran Coalition and GRuB, supports Washington-based Veterans access training, resources, and mentorship as they start farm businesses. This project wouldn't be possible without the support and funding

provided by Boeing and their Our Heroes initiative. Because of Boeing's incredible support and funding for Veteran farmers and entrepreneurs, the Shepherd Project is able to provide holistic, one-on-one support and mentorship to beginning Veteran farmers. [Click here](#) to learn more about this project!

















