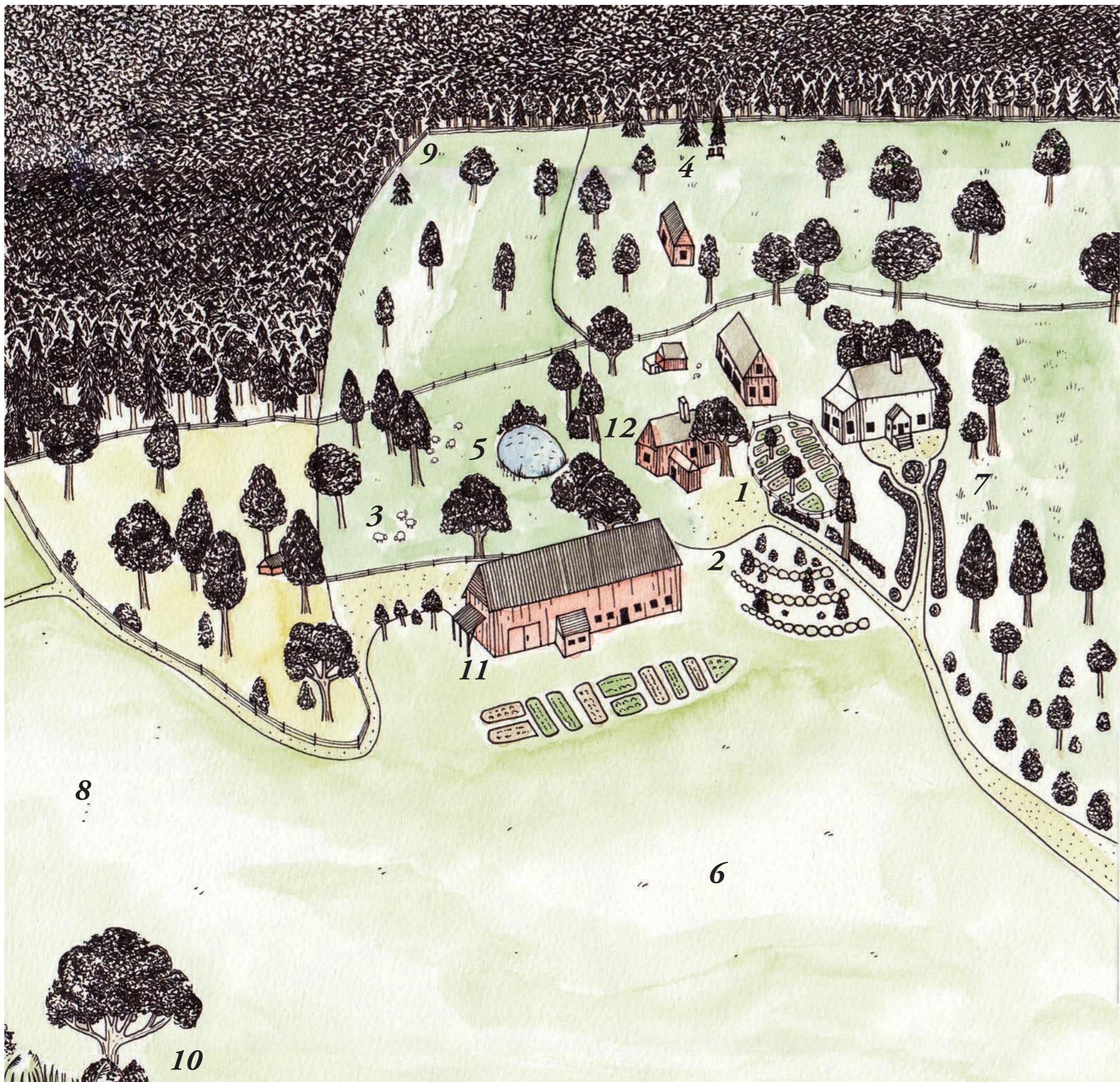


GREENER  
*Creating a Farm Sanctuary Together With Nature*

LINDEBORGS GÅRD  
*An Organic Farm And Retreat*



### *Introduction*

- 1.** The Vegetable Garden
- 2.** The Forest Garden
- 3.** The Animals On The Farm
- 4.** The Bees
- 5.** The Pond
- 6.** The Fields
- 7.** The Wildflower Meadow
- 8.** The Traditional Hayfield
- 9.** The Forest
- 10.** The Lake
- 11.** The Barn
- 12.** The Red Cottage
- 13.** Volunteering At The Farm

### *Epilogue*

## *A Warm Welcome to a Sustainable Farming Adventure*



### Text

*Julia och Carl Lindeborg 2016 ©*

### Illustrations

*Sina Schneider*

### Graphic Designer

*Victor Soldéus @ murderofmen.tumblr.com*

### Photos

*Julia och Carl Lindeborg*

*Anders J Larsson*

*Mia Kaasalainen*

*Sina Schneider*

*Kasia Iwanska*

To manage a 74-hectare farm was something completely new to us when we moved in to our 170-year-old farmhouse. Julia had previously spent many years living in London and Carl had had his base in downtown Stockholm while travelling extensively. Both of us had lived fast paced lives in city environments. Neither of us had grown up at a farm.

In 2010 our son Leopold was born. We had just built a nice house near Stockholm and lived there for a year, but getting a child gives perspective on things. We started to think about where the world was heading and how so many environmental development curves pointed in the wrong direction. What would the world look like when our son turned thirty? We could not really work it out. We saw a lot of challenges and complexity and we saw things moving too slowly. But as we thought more about it we also started to see opportunities to contribute to the solution.

We decided to leave our comfortable house and embark on a project of a bigger scale. We had a dream to create a wonderful place where our children could grow up, a place where we would be quite self-reliant when it came to food and energy. But also a place that could serve as a farm retreat and an inspiration centre where we could experiment with sustainable solutions for the future and open up a meeting place where new thoughts, learning and meaningful conversation could arise.

We found the right place outside of Nyköping, 120 km south of Stockholm. The farm is located at the end of the dirt road in a beautiful

countryside landscape with forest, lake, fields and pastures surrounding the farm centre. Time had been standing still here for a long time so during the last four years we have taken many steps to restore, renew and develop the farm into a more abundant and rich ecosystem. Sometimes it feels like we take two steps forward and one step back, but if we compare where we started and where we are today it is satisfying to see that there is a great difference.

In this book we would like to share our journey so far with you. We would like to share something about how we are working to create a more organic and diverse and productive ecosystem, how we work with soil, plants and animals to infuse more life and system connections everywhere. We would also like to share our thoughts for the future, as we are now ready to move on towards our vision by transforming the farm's old red barn into a green demonstration building and farm retreat.

The book is organized as a farm discovery tour where you will experience the different parts of the farm and learn how we develop them and how we see them contributing to the richness of the whole farm ecosystem. We hope that you will get a lot of inspiration along the tour. We also believe that many of the things we have done can be applied on any natural system level, from a balcony sized growing bed or a villa garden, to a large-scale operation.

Once again, a warm welcome to our farm!

*Julia & Carl*



*“...and is it not amazing how much more taste that you get in the veggies you grow yourself compared to the ones you find in the supermarket?”*

## THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

*There is something magical about the whole process of planting a seed, nourishing a plant, waiting, waiting, waiting and then finally savoring the reward.*



**W**hat can be more delighting than eating sun warm tomatoes right off the twig or making a pesto for the pasta from a bunch of aromatic herbs harvested just a minute ago? There is something magical about the whole process of planting a seed, nourishing a plant, waiting, waiting, waiting and then finally savoring the reward. And is it not amazing how much more taste that you get in the veggies you grow yourself compared to the ones you find in the supermarket?

We have two veggie gardens at the farm. The smaller one we established immediately to produce vegetables for family, farm helpers and guests. The larger one we are right now developing in front of the big barn. It will supply fresh

produce to our future farm restaurant, directly from soil to table. Here the chefs will be able to choose from great tasting veggie varieties that you could never find in a store.

### *Getting Ready to Plant*

The garden in front of the barn is now in the same state as the smaller vegetable garden was three years ago. The smaller garden, today a colorful vegetable oasis, used to be nothing more than a green lawn.







*“...you establish the beds in such a way that nature does the work for you and you do not have to turn the soil every year.”*

To quickly convert the lawn to fertile soil ready for seeding, we let Olga and Olivia do all the hard work for us. We did not have to pay them. They loved it and just could not stop working. Olga and Olivia are pigs of the heritage breed “Linderödsvin”. They quickly turned the soil and ate all the grass including the roots. Looking out of the kitchen window, it was a happy sight to see our “pig tractors” in action and after a couple of weeks there was no trace of the lawn. Instead we had got perfectly turned soil with natural fertilizer included.

As a next step we created garden beds. We wanted to do it the “no-till” way, which means you establish the beds in such a way that nature does the work for you and you do not have to turn the soil every year. Is that not a relief?

This requires an initial investment of heavy work that you cannot really delegate to the pigs. We use a method called “double digging”, which loosens the soil two layers down to improve drainage and aeration. The plants can then develop a deeper and stronger root system,

which provides the plant with more nutrients and water. The result is that we get healthier and faster growing plants without the heavy work of turning (and disrupting) the soil every year. There is basically only one holy rule in our veggie garden: do not step on the garden beds. We really want to keep the soil loose so we do not have to do that digging again.

The garden season in Sweden is relatively short. We usually start seeding the first crops indoors sometime in March. In May the days finally get warmer and we can start to seed and plant outside. However the chance for night frost is not completely over until early June.

The garden season ends sometime in October. This time of the year we harvest vegetables like pumpkins, kale, jerusalem artichokes and winter lettuce. The leek we can leave all the way to the first snowfall. The garden beds are now prepared for winter, and we kind of tuck them in for a long sleep with a gentle cover of autumn leaves, sheep wool and excess straw and hay.

### *Secret and Sacred Veggies*

At the farm we only grow organic. This means that we do not use any synthetic fertilizers or chemicals like pesticides, fungicides and herbicides. The seeds we use are also organic and some of them we harvest ourselves at the farm. To take your own seeds are easy for a number of vegetables, for instance tomatoes, chilies and cucumbers. The seeds you harvest yourself are of course free of cost, but more importantly, after just a few veggie generations the seeds start to adapt to the local soil and weather conditions and you get more resilient and productive plants. Just watch out for the hybrid seeds that the big seed companies have developed. The plants coming from these seeds now lack the ability to produce seeds that actually will grow.



A fun and meaningful thing to do is to help preserve our vegetable heritage. The seeds from old varieties are a real treasure to explore and take care of. Have you for instance ever seen a purple carrot or maybe a pink potato? Then they are likely to be of an older vegetable variety. These beautiful but almost secret crops may often have other shapes, forms and tastes than what you are used to. They may sometimes give a lower yield, but they often adapt much better to a rough climate and they are excellent to use for seed production.

originating

cover

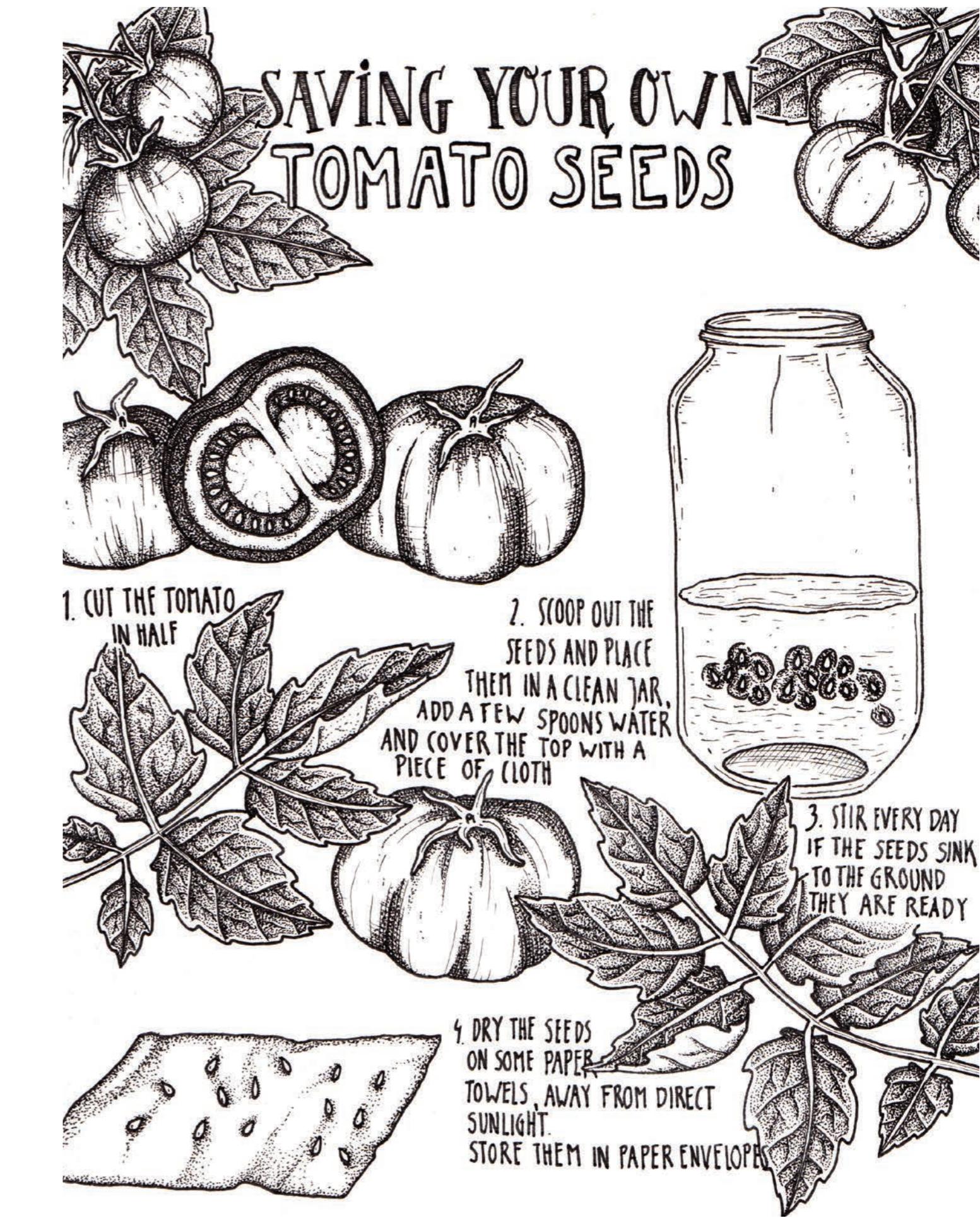
a real treasure to explore that breaks down and provides the plants with nutrition and organic matter. We mix straw from the animal beds and compost. We also use autumn leaves and grass clippings. This covers the whole vegetable bed, in a 10 – 20 cm thick layer, except where the plants are popping up of course. It works exactly like nature. If you walk in a forest you will see that the ground is always covered. Nature continuously protects and enriches the soil.

Is it not crazy by the way that you can buy a hundred different toothpastes in the store but often only one type of carrot? That is like having access to one kind of wine that should go with everything always. Through the generations we have been growing so many different types of carrots with different sizes, shapes, colors and tastes. There are probably thousands of varieties.

But we can only choose the one variety that has been developed to maximize volume production and transportability. What about choosing a carrot for its unique taste or for its beautiful appearance, like a wine? The same story basically goes for all vegetables and many fruits and berries too. At the farm we find great joy in moving in the completely different direction – to maximize edible plant diversity.

### *Building a Living Soil*

During the year we provide extra nutrients for our plants using nettle water, our own compost and mulch. To mulch is to cover the soil with organic material



# 30 DAY

# COMPOST



Anytime you take your garden practice closer to how nature would do it you save energy and get more efficient. Mulching is a great tool to do just that and probably the most underestimated garden activity there is. It reduces the watering needs dramatically, basically takes away the whole boring thing with weeding and it gradually releases nutrients to the plants. It also creates a great meal for our dear friends the earthworms that help us aerate the soil.

One of the biggest challenges at the farm when it comes to vegetable production is the heavy clay soil that we started off with. It is especially difficult for the root vegetables to break through the soil and to develop enough roots for healthy growth. An important task is therefore to transform the heavy and hard clay into a loose soil, rich on organic matter. Next to the mulching, the composting plays a big role in this development.

Our favorite way of making compost is the

30-day compost. As the name indicates the soil should be ready after only thirty days, if you get the blend and the process right that is. As farmer novices we thought it would take forever to get the soil we needed, or at least a year, but we have seen that you can greatly speed up this process.

Like a cake, this compost is made up of layers placed on top of each other adding up to a big pile. We bake with straw and other dried organic materials from our garden, fresh green material such as leaves, grasses and clovers, a magical manure mix from cow, sheep and chicken, and some woods shavings from the chicken house. The art of composting consists of finding the right ratio of carbon rich materials such as the wood shavings and nitrogen rich stuff like manure. If you hit the 25:1 carbon-nitrogen ratio you are off to a promising start.

Once complete, the pile is watered and then

covered with a tarp. After three days we turn the steaming compost all over and water more if needed. The pile gets extremely hot in the middle. You can actually use the compost pile to heat water for your shower if you put a pipe through. We keep turning the pile a few more times and after about a month we have perfect dark compost, loaded with nutrients and helpful microorganisms ready to get to work in vegetable beds.

And as you bend down to take in the scents of aromatic herbs, or pick a dark red beet, you hear the sound of bees, insects and birds all around. You get intensely aware of how everything is alive and connected.

In our garden we mix edible flowers, aromatic herbs and vegetables. We also choose vegetables that fascinate with beautiful colors and forms. You can see chard in poppy pink, golden yellow and dark red next to carrots in orange, yellow or white.

*A Garden of the Senses*  
To us a vegetable garden is so much more than a simple production area. Gardening is like a therapy for mind and soul. It is a place to get centered and practice awareness of nature and yourself. The perfect vegetable garden is a place where all senses get stimulated. Imagine losing the sense of time and space, completely absorbed in colorful arrangements that catch your eye.

The vegetable garden can become a celebration for all senses if you blend and mix taste, scent, form and color. This is what we are striving for. Every new season we try to surpass the garden of the previous year and we have great fun experimenting.

### *Good Neighbors*

In the garden you can find radishes next to carrots, spinach between the parsnip lines and tagetes next to cabbage and kale. Just like humans thrive in the company with the right partner, so do the vegetables. The right veggie partner can help the companion in many ways, for instance to confuse pests and to provide shelter and nutrients.

So far we have discovered that these plants like it next to each other:

cabbage & tagetes  
radishes, carrots & spinach  
TOMATOS & GARLIC  
onions & beetroot  
PARSNIP, CHARD & SPINACH

Over time we have set a stronger focus on growing flowers in our vegetable garden. Not only because we think they are beautiful but also because they are delicious in a meal. Did you for instance know that all the flowers from our common kitchen herbs are edible?

Nowadays we use flowers in our food most days during summer. We let our lunch salads become an even greater feast for the eye and the mouth as we decorate with rose, thyme flowers and calendula. Some of our other favorite edible

flowers are dahlias, monks cress, borage, sunflowers, tea mint and mallow.

We also dry flowers and have them as tea in the winter. They give you hope on a rainy, dark and muddy day. But flowers are good for so much more. For instance tagetes and summer savery are perfect as bed border. A lot of pests do not like their scent, and keep away. With more flowers in the garden we also welcome butterflies, honeybees, bumblebees and other useful insects. Here they can find a home and plenty of food.

### *Amazing Herbs*

You can find all sorts of herbs in the garden. Some of these aromatic herbs stimulate the mind with their enchanting scent. Others look simple but carry strong healing powers. Like edible flowers, herbs also attract bees, butterflies and other insects. The vegetable garden is one loud buzz during a warm summer day.

We really enjoy using the herbs. It is a complete treat to start the morning gathering some fresh lemon balm, mint or parsley for a green smoothie. We also use fresh or dried herbs in tea.

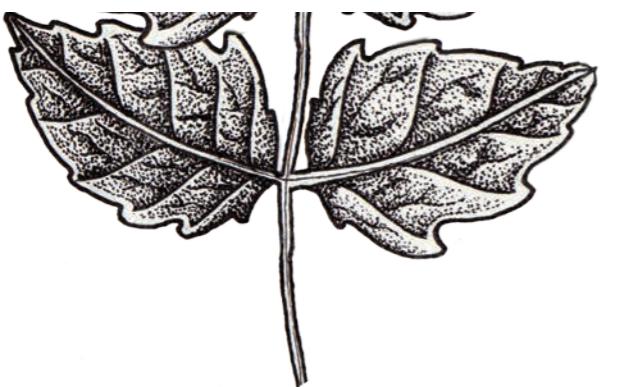
Every summer we dry lots of herbs and fill up the spice cupboard for winter. We also preserve them in oil and make herb salves. Besides what would a real farmers garden be without herbs and their healing powers. Nettle and birch leaves for spring detoxing, wormwood, chamomile and mint for stomach troubles and thyme, sage and hyssop to beat a cold.





## THE FOREST GARDEN

*Imagine walking into a forest, in which all plants were berry shrubs,  
fruit trees, herbs, vegetables or flowers.*





*"By design, the garden is now a largely self-maintaining system, mimicking nature."*

**D**oes it not sound like a dream? It did to us when we first heard about the concept of a forest garden. This is a garden basically imitating a natural forest in the way it is built up, with a ground covering layer of herbs and perennial vegetables, a middle layer of berry shrubs and nut trees and a taller layer of fruit trees.

The farm's forest garden is located in an area that used to be completely overgrown and actually full of junk. However it is a great location for a garden since it is a slope that is directly south facing. Here the soil warms up early in spring and the growing season expands with a few weeks.

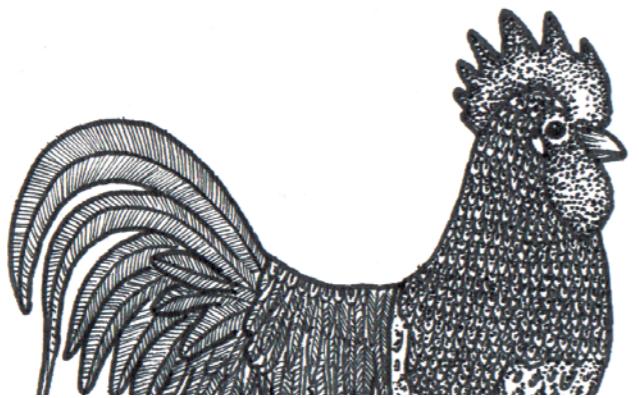
The transformation started by us taking a trailer of junk to the dump station. We then let the pig tractors loose again, clearing the soil from weeds, before we filled up with soil from the pond excavation and created large terraces using big stones. The stones are great heat accumulators. They release heat during the cold nights and create beneficial microclimates around them, ideal for heat loving plants.

We then covered the soil with a half-meter

deep layer of fresh green manure from the fields, and finally planted lots of herbs, shrubs and trees. Almost all are edible and some are quite rare in this climate, like the goji berries. The few plants in the forest garden that do not give you anything to put in your mouth have support functions in the system. They help the producing plants for instance by fixating nitrogen in the soil.

A few years after we established the forest garden it is a natural ecosystem with loads of beneficial relationships. Many plants produce edible crops while others attract beneficial insects, birds and butterflies and improve the soil. It is a beautiful, diverse and high-yield garden. By design the garden is now a largely self-maintaining system, mimicking nature.

The concept of the forest garden has so many advantages in a world where farming and gardening is much about mowing, weeding, ploughing and spraying. By imitating the structure of a forest we use the soil more efficiently and let nature do the work. It is quite amazing how much yield you can get out of so little work.



## THE ANIMALS ON THE FARM

*In March and April the lambs are born. It is amazing to see their mothers' care, how fast the lamb grows and how they love to play.*



*"It was not at all obvious that we would have our own animals."*

**B**efore we got our own farm we volunteered at a farm in New Zealand. This farm had three thousand sheep and hundreds of chickens. Even though this was an organic farm, we literally waded through the chickens every day to collect their eggs. Julia was pregnant and her job was to clean and polish the eggs every day. The smell in that room was not great for somebody pregnant.

Carl, who had no previous animal experience, helped making sure the right sheep was in the right place during the sheering (bear in mind there were three thousand of them). One day he had to gather a large number of lambs, take them away from their mothers, and put them on a big truck, which would take them to slaughter. After our first real farm experience, it was not at all obvious that we would have our own animals.

Over time however we started reading up on Swedish heritage breeds. As the heritage breeds have been around for hundreds of years, they can stand the Swedish climate, they are not too prone to disease and they are great at finding their own food. We decided to go for these heritage

breeds, because we think they fit the kind of farm we like to create and that they are also good at providing more eco system services than just food for us humans. We also find it meaningful to help preserve these old breeds for the future. Today we are part of heritage gene banks for sheep and chickens.

### *Åsenfår – the Sheep*

Our sheep are of the heritage breed "Åsenfår". They come from a small village in Dalarna, called Åsen. This is further up north and the breed is known for its hardiness and also for being good mothers.

In the summer the sheep feed on grass, herbs, leaves and sprouts. When we took over the farm the pastures were overgrown in many places. Our sheep's task is now to keep the landscape open around the farm, which benefits a number of plant species.

We practice a rotational system, learnt from innovative farmers in America. This means that we divide the larger pastures into smaller sections using electric movable fences. Then we move the



sheep to a new section every day or every other day. It benefits both the sheep and the land. The sheep are happy since they regularly get fresh tasty grass. It keeps the parasite levels low in the pastures, which gives healthy sheep. We also see that the soil gets more productive since we avoid overgrazing which typically lowers the soil's ability to hold water and deplete it of nutrients.

In winter the sheep have their headquarters in the barn but they can always go out when they want where they have access to a fairly large winter pen. This time a year we feed the sheep hay from our own fields and organic grains.

In March and April the lambs are born. It is amazing to see their mothers' care, how fast the lamb grows and how they love to play. We try to spend as much time as possible with them, both because it is a lot of fun but also to make sure that the flock remains tame. In late April the sheep are moved to the first pasture with green grass. This really turns into a running contest where we try to go first to show the sheep their new place, but the sheep are so excited so they run and jump behind you and you really need to keep up the pace not to get overtaken.

#### *Hedemorahöns – the Chickens*

Our chickens are of the heritage breed "Hedemorahöna". Just like the sheep, they also originate from a small town in Dalarna. Tales say they were popular bride-gifts. These chickens have been at the farms around the Hedemora-district for as long as people there can remember.

They come in a variety of colours from blue,

black, white, to brown, grey or mixed. Because of the severe weather conditions in Dalarna during winter, the breed has developed a thicker plumage than normal. Hence, we hardly ever need to put on extra heating in the chicken house. These are a tough bunch of chickens.

It quite often happens that the guests staying at the farm have the chickens visiting their garden, as our chickens range freely around the farm. During the night however we need to keep them in, since the fox is always happy for an evening meal.

The chickens are fed food scraps from the kitchen and grains from the fields, but they are also great at finding their own food in the garden. The earthworms are never safe. As far as we have seen the chickens basically eat everything except onion and lemon.

Our chickens tend to hatch ones or twice per year. It takes 21 days for the very small chick to develop inside the egg, before it is ready to come out into the world. Our baby chicks are brought up naturally by their mother hen. It is a great joy to observe the mother hen and to see how serious and protective she is in her role as a mother, as she helps the little ones to find food and keeps the other adults on a distance.

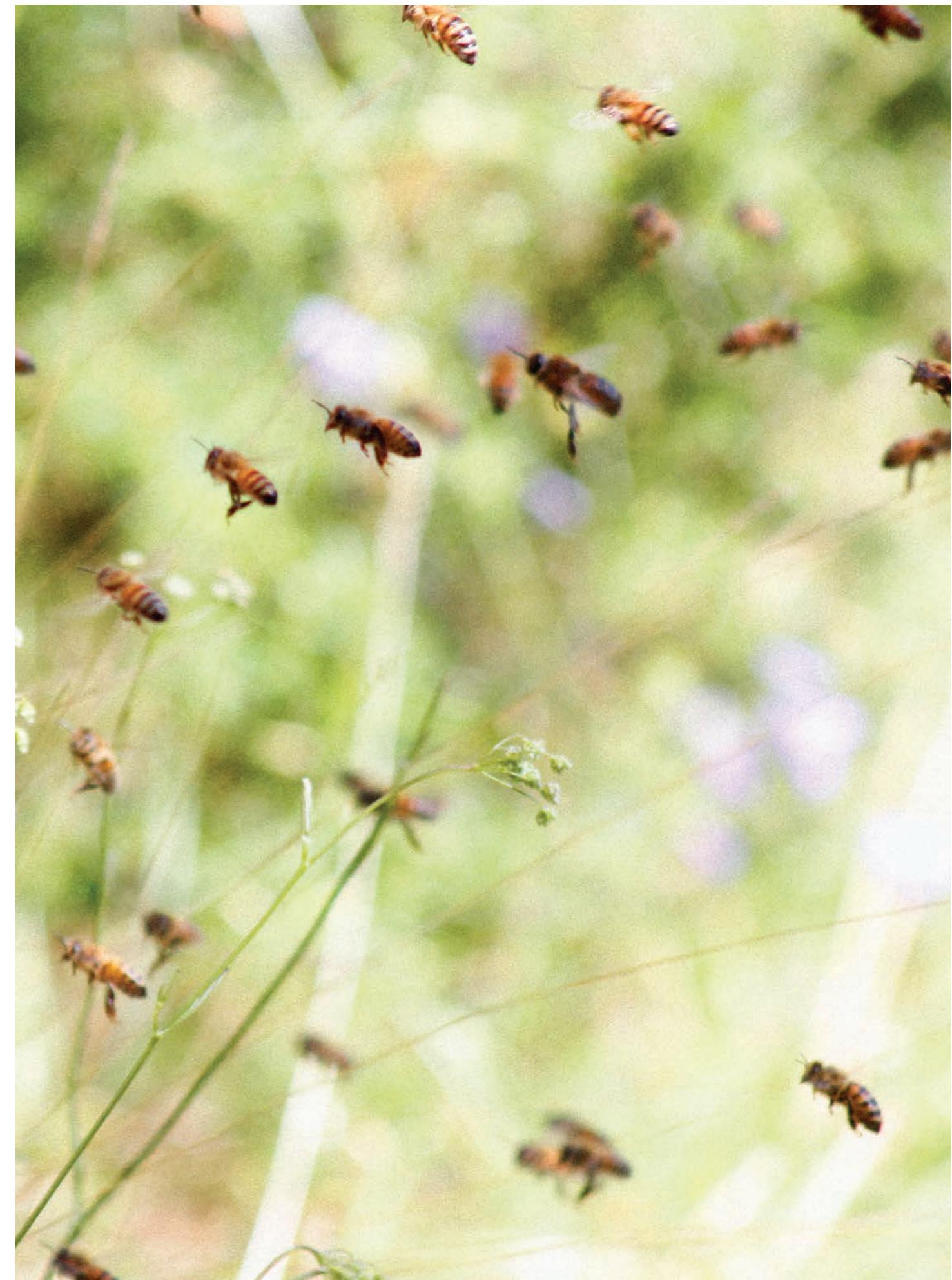
Chickens benefit the farm eco system in many ways. Of course they provide delicious eggs, but they also help fertilize the soil and to reduce some of the pests threatening the vegetables. It is fun and relaxing to just sit and observe how the chicken society works. There is always something going on. They are also easy to manage and perfect even for a villa garden.





## THE BEES

*For us, beekeeping is so much more than just the honey.*





*"We have become truly fascinated by the bees and will get more hives. That is for sure."*

The most important workers at the farm are the bees. Our beehives are placed near the farm centre and especially on a warm summer's day you can hear a constant buzz from this area.

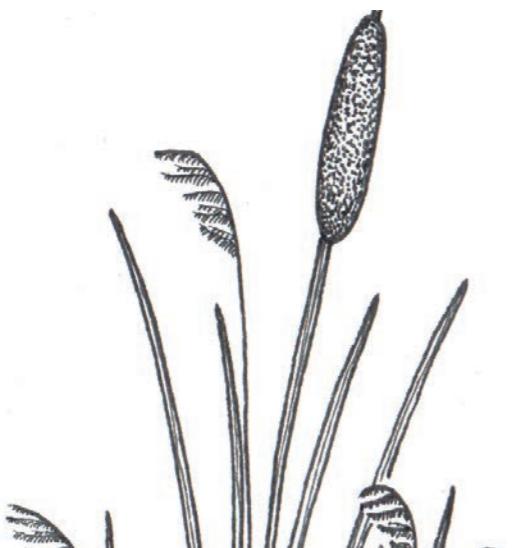
The bees fly over the surrounding forest, fields and pasture. To help the bees find delicious flowers full of nectar and pollen, we have planted a large range of plants that the honeybees like. This includes herbs, wild flowers and flowering shrubs and trees. It is important that the bees will have something to collect from early spring all the way into autumn.

Collecting fresh honey at the end of the season is one of the farm highlights for all ages. We have watched the bees' activities all spring and summer and visited now and then to make sure all is going well in the hive. When the day comes to

harvest the honey, the children are also involved. It is a special moment to see the honey flow through the honey extractor and get a first taste.

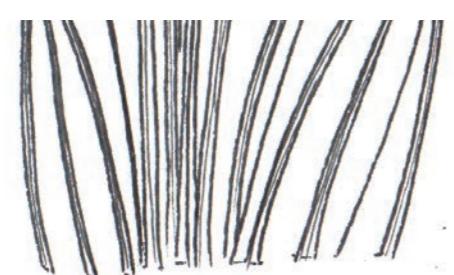
Approaching the end of the season we leave plenty of honey in the hive for the bees' winter storage. For us, beekeeping is so much more than just the honey. It is about doing something meaningful for nature, and creating a garden full of life and blossoms. Through the pollination of many millions of flowers the bees increase the harvest from a huge number of fruit trees, shrubs and other plants. In their turn, these plants provide nutrition for many other insects, birds and animals, making the bee the world's most important farm creature in our view.

We have become truly fascinated by the bees and will get more hives. That is for sure.



## THE POND

*The first pond inhabitants that we could see were the water striders running across the water surface.*



*"Even a small birdbath in the garden can make a difference."*

**W**ater in the landscape plays an important role in any ecosystem.

It serves as habitat for fish, frogs and insects, and as water hole for many animals and birds. It also brings plant diversity and can serve as a water reservoir that can be used for irrigation during dry periods. We think it also gives a sense of tranquility and perspective. Even a small birdbath in the garden can make a difference.

Unfortunately many natural aquatic environments have been made dry to create more growing space and many old manmade water sources, such as ponds and open ditches are not maintained over time.

The previous owner of the farm told us that he as a child used to play with dragonflies by the farm pond. However the pond had not been maintained and the area was now covered with such a thick layer of organic matter that we could stand on it.

As we wanted to bring back the water to the farm centre and recreate that beautiful picture

of dragonflies flying over the surface, we let an excavator restore the old pond. It was located in the sheep pen and measured 200 square meters. We made it 2 meter deep at the deepest level and then varied the depths from that level to quite shallow sections. The natural clay soil provides enough sealing and it is holding water well. This was really an experiment and we were lucky that we did not have to use expensive and less environmentally friendly plastic or rubber materials.

The first pond inhabitants that we could see were the water striders running across the water surface. The dragonflies have also returned. We are now introducing more life to the pond. First we will put in grass carps that eat organic matter. This will keep the surface open and help avoid that the pond over time turns into a swamp again. The second fish that will move into the pond is perch, which is a common Swedish freshwater fish. We hope it will multiply and this way the farm will have access to fresh fish from a perfectly sustainable and very local source.





## THE FIELDS

*We will choose varieties that taste great, that are resilient to disease and extreme weather, and that adapts to the local conditions over time.*





*“Our aspiration for the management of the fields is not to necessarily maximize production, but to maximize the value to the whole ecosystem.”*

**S**urrounding the farm centre are three arable fields where we grow the main part of our crops. When we took over the farm the soil had been farmed conventionally for many years, using artificial fertilizers and herbicides, pesticides and fungicides. There had been limited crop rotation. The clay soil felt quite dead with little activity by microorganisms and very few earthworms to be seen. It also held water poorly since the organic matter in the soil had diminished over time.

To help restore the soil and make it come alive again we started off by establishing a perennial cover with a mix of many different kinds of plants. Together they produce tons and tons of “green manure” for the fields every year. Normally we mow the fields two times per year and leave the grass and the leaves to break down into new organic matter, enriching the soil.

Each plant also plays an individual role. For

instance clovers and birdsfoot trefoil fix nitrogen; chicory and yellow melilot have strong roots that break the clay apart and improve soil structure; and bluebell is a favourite of bees and bumblebees.

Our aspiration for the management of the fields is not to necessarily maximize production, but to maximize the value to the whole ecosystem. That means balancing several different ambitions such as storing carbon dioxide in the soil through increased organic matter content, contributing to increased biodiversity, minimize the leakage of nitrogen and phosphorus, and of course to produce high quality food that tastes great.

A first receipt that we are on the right track was our first harvest of organic oats. We grew the oats in our best field and got a good quality harvest of 6 tonnes per hectare, which is comparable to conventional farming. We were happy to deliver the oats to Saltå Kvarn, which is a leading

*"The day when we are able to do all these steps on site will be a very good day and the result of many different initiatives coming together."*

Swedish company when it comes to organic food. Saltå's vision is to contribute to a healthier Baltic Sea by encouraging farmers to minimize nitrogen and phosphorus leakage and to do a number of other important initiatives for the environment.

#### *From Farm to Table*

Organic farming builds on a rotational system where you rotate different plants in a way that balances the cycle of nutrients in the soil and that makes it difficult for weeds to spread and flourish. When we next year move into the rotational system after having progressed sufficiently with restoring the soil, we will most likely rotate oats, a diverse mix of green manure plants, barley, leguminous plants, rapeseed and rye.

We will choose varieties that taste great, that are resilient to disease and extreme weather, and that adapt to the local conditions over time.

There are some great alternatives among the old heritage varieties that have been grown in Sweden for many hundred years. We also would like to experiment with plants that are very uncommon here, such as millet, buckwheat and quinoa.

To be able to take care of what we produce, we are planning to build our own storing and drying capacity for crops, as well as to establish a process to convert part of the grains into fresh flour, bread and other products. In this process we need machines for sorting, peeling, polishing, grinding and rolling. The output will be served fresh in the farm restaurant and of course sold in the farm store. The day when we are able to do all these steps on site will be a very good day and the result of many different initiatives coming together.



*"Imagine that every home's garden had a small blooming meadow patch.  
What a difference it would make in terms of increased biodiversity."*



## THE WILDFLOWER MEADOW

*This is not only a haven for us; it is also a butterfly and bumblebee  
restaurant, buzzing with colors and life.*



**N**ear the farm center is our favorite place in early summer, a meadow full of wild flowers. This is not only a haven for us; it is also a butterfly and bumblebee restaurant, buzzing with colors and life.

A hundred years ago there were most likely meadows full with flowers near every farmhouse in this area. And that together with the vegetable patch made up the common country garden. Lawns like we know them today came later to the countryside. In the meadows there was a multitude of flowers and grasses enjoyed by hundreds of insects, providing food and a habitat for all of them. People cared for them manually and they were mowed with scythe in the middle of the summer. The cut grass and the flowers then became food for the animals during winter.

It is the great variety of species that makes the meadow unique. One square meter can have up

to 40-50 different kinds of flowers and grasses. This in turn provides a feast for loads of different insects, benefitting the ecosystem. It is also a great hideout for snails and birds.

Our meadows therefore help us increase both beauty and biodiversity at the farm. It is a way to help protect our cultural heritage and a number of endangered plants, insects and birds that are struggling to find their place in a monoculture farming landscape.

### *Getting Started*

If you just have a few square meters of land you can create a wildflower meadow, enriching nature, pleasing the senses and maybe also saving you time since the meadow is mowed only once a year. The challenge is that this is one of the few places in the garden where the soil should be as poor as possible.



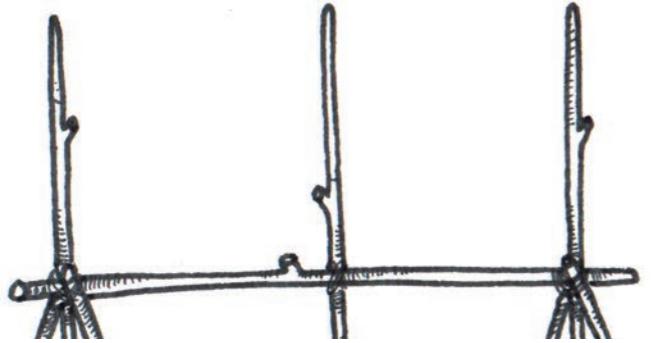
The perennial wild flowers thrive when there are very little nutrients in the soil since this keep the grasses at bay.

When we created the meadow near our house, we first let Olga and Olivia, the pig tractors, have a go at the lawn that was there initially. When the grass was gone we planted potatoes on the patch. This gave a good harvest, but the point was really to use the potatoes to suck up the nutrients from the soil. We then raked the whole area and seeded a mix of up to a hundred different kinds of wildflowers and wild grasses.

Every year the meadow develops and new flowers emerge. We just need to remember to rake it in spring and to mow the meadow with

scythe in the middle of summer. We leave the hay for some time to let the seeds drop and then we remove it, making the soil even poorer and next spring's blossoming even more intense. A wild flower meadow is really very easy to manage and the reward is great. Imagine that every home's garden had a small blooming meadow patch. What a difference it would make in terms of increased biodiversity.





## THE TRADITIONAL HAYFIELD

*The haymaking day is a big event at the farm where many people participate just like in the old days.*



*“Scything should be like a flowing, meditative movement.”*

In addition to the wild flower meadow that we created near the farm center, we have also restored a one-acre hayfield in the lake pasture. This we have done with support from the local county government.

We manage this area just like the farmers here most likely have done for hundreds of years up until the arrival of stronger tractors and more powerful tools. This means that we mow the whole field manually with scythe. Then we dry the hay on the field letting the seeds drop, before we take the hay away. This makes the soil poorer and more attractive for many of our endangered wild flowers.

The haymaking day is a big event at the farm where many people participate just like in the old days. Since the technique of scything takes

practice to master, we are lucky to have a great scything master teaching us how to get the right flow. He is even part of the national scything team.

It is quite amazing that you use very little force with the right technique. Scything should be like a flowing, meditative movement. Of course we still get warm and tired and to have something to give us the energy back at the end of a long day in the field, we finish with a haymaking feast. This is also an important part of the cultural heritage.

The drying of the hay will this year be done in a very traditional way, using long wooden sticks to create a kind of hay rack in the field. This is an experiment for us and we will see if we succeed or if it will end up as a collapsed pile of hay.



*"When harvesting trees we do it in the most careful way possible."*



## THE FOREST

*Moose, deer, boar, fox, badger and hare are the permanent residents.*

*We are the guests here.*



**B**ehind the farm centre, the forest unfolds. There is something about the forest that helps you relax, breathe and contemplate. In Japanese there is even an expression for this rejuvenating experience. It is called forest bathing, Shinrin-yoku.

Our forest is quite diverse with spruce, pine, birch, oak, aspen, alder, mountain ash and sallow. The ground is covered with green moss and wild blueberry. Moose, deer, boar, fox, badger and hare are the permanent residents. We are the guests here.

At the highest point of the forest you find an old cairn, a large pile of very big stones that have been placed here by hand. The cairn is dated pre-Viking Age, and estimated to be 2,500-4,000 years old. It could mark the grave of a chieftain forgotten a long time ago. Passing it on the narrow forest trail really puts things in perspective.

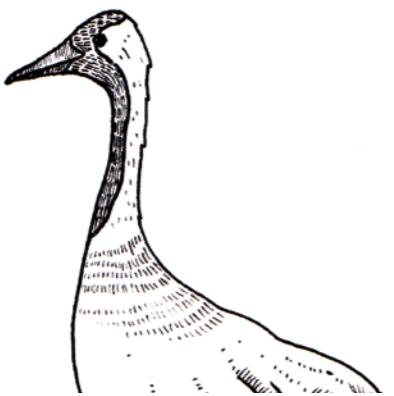
### *Careful forestry*

As caretakers of the forest we have three aspirations. 1. We would like to co-create a forest

together with nature that is diverse, resilient and natural for this place – a home for many different species. 2. We would like the forest to be a peaceful and beautiful place to experience for everyone visiting the farm. 3. We would like to use wood from the forest in a sustainable way, for instance for building projects, heating and carbon dioxide storage.

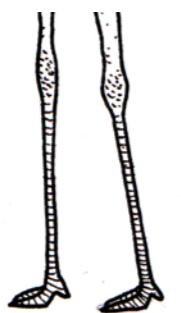
Our forestry philosophy is inspired by “close to nature forestry” where we look at the whole ecosystem and long-term strive for a forest that is diverse both in age and species. When harvesting trees we do it in the most careful way possible, selecting individual trees that fulfil a specific need and then using manual felling and horses to pull out the timber to the forest roads. The horses are amazingly strong and of the breed Ardennes. They are managed by an expert horseman, who also happens to be the Swedish champion in ploughing with horse. It is a joy to see them at work.





## THE LAKE

*Every spring they return to our lake pastures for the famous  
“crane dance” on their way to the breeding place.*





*"Leaving a border of common reeds along the water line makes a great habitat for birds."*

The farm is situated between two of the largest lakes in the area, lake Långhalsen and lake Hallbosjön.

From the farm there is a great view over lake Hallbosjön and the farm's lake pastures.

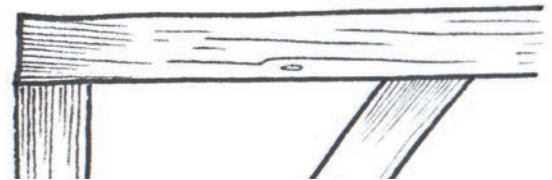
The lake and the surrounding shores have a formal environmental protection through Natura 2000, a EU network for protecting and preserving biological diversity. The reason is that the lake every year attracts thousands of birds that come here to breed and nest. There is a great diversity of species and it is a very interesting place for bird watching.

For instance it is fascinating to watch the cranes, who are said to be the messengers of spring. Every spring they return to our lake pastures for the famous "crane dance" on their way to the breeding place.

When we took over the farm, the lake pastures had not been used for many years. Shrubs and trees had started to take over, eliminating the bird friendly environment and threatening the special flora that thrives on a shore meadow. In collaboration with the local county government we have now restored the pastures and cleared them from the invasive shrubs. We believe that they will soon be pretty much as they were a hundred years ago.

Leaving a border of common reeds along the water line makes a great habitat for birds. We particularly enjoy the mild summer evenings, when we can sit on the stairs to our house, just enjoying the lake view and listening to the great sound from all the birds looking for food or hatching in their nests.

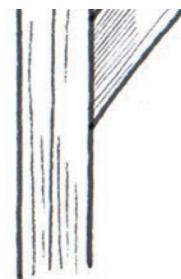
*"We believe it is possible to design systems in a way that the more a building is used the better for the environment."*



## THE BARN

*Can the old barn serve a new, higher purpose in a new era?*

*We truly believe that.*



**W**hen approaching the farm on the dirt road the first thing that you will see is the big red barn. It is located at the heart of the farm. In front of the long wooden building you have arable fields, lake pastures and the lake itself. Behind it are the sheep pastures, the pond and the forest.

The barn was built in 1907 using a wooden framework technique built out of timber from the farm's forest. The old building can tell you many tales. In the early 20th century, when a farm of this size was considered a big farm, the barn had its peak time, being the home to cows, pigs and horses and a place full of activity. The produce from the farm then supplied food and income for all the people living and working at the farm.

As the years passed, farming practices developed and one day the barn was old-fashioned and the surrounding fields no longer big enough to live from. The animals left and the barn became silent. The building slowly started to degenerate.

When we came to the farm, water was leaking through the roof of the barn in a few places but the framework carrying the building was still intact. To protect it we gave the barn a new roof. Life also came back as our sheep move in.

### *Thoughts of transformation*

We see a big potential in the barn, although it is very worn down. The location and the view are amazing and the beautiful wooden framework and the height inside create a cathedral-like feeling.



Over time we started to see the barn as an opportunity to once again make the farm a social place full of activity, and as a mean to help us make a difference in the world. Could we transform the building into a green inspiration centre housing a multitude of different functions all supporting each other, a unique retreat and getaway connecting people with sustainable farming and the origins of food? Could we make it into a great meeting place for big thoughts, learning and meaningful conversations? Can the old barn serve a new, higher purpose in a new era? We truly believe that.

Since January 2015 we have been working with White Architects, which is a leading architect firm in Sweden, to prepare for the transformation of the barn into a green retreat. The building will contain a classroom for meetings, workshops and yoga, a farm to table restaurant and cooking studio, a winter garden, rooms and studios to stay over in, places where you can relax and of course a good old Swedish sauna.

It is important for us to keep contact with the original expression and the roots of the building. Hence, it shall still be the old traditional Swedish red barn that you will see when you get here. Opening the doors and stepping in, a world will open up where new design meets old tradition. We want to create an inspiring environment where the natural elements speak.

#### *A Green Demonstration Building*

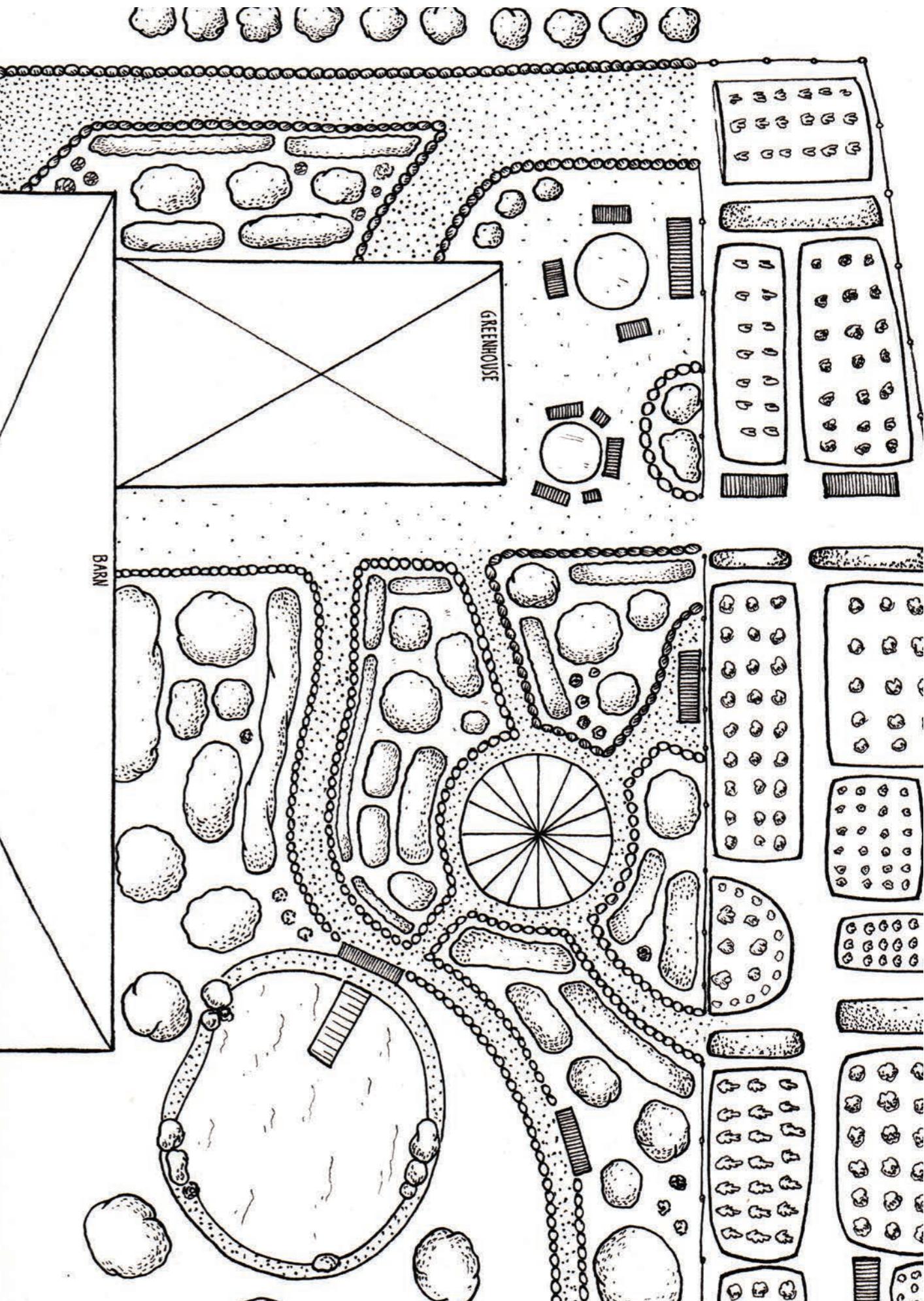
Part of the vision is that this will become a unique demonstration building that contributes positive-

ly to surrounding ecosystems. We believe it is possible to design systems in a way that the more a building is used the better for the environment. The barn will become such a building. We hope that the solutions and systems that we put in place also can inspire many others to choose more green technologies and materials when building. Below are some of the most important sustainable solutions.

The barn will be rebuilt using our own timber from the forest. The logs have been pulled out by horse to avoid ground damage and converted into construction wood and planks by a local saw mill. Using a lot of wood in the building makes the building itself a carbon sink, storing carbon dioxide ( $\text{CO}_2$ ).

In addition to wood we will use as much other renewable and natural materials as possible. The insulation in the walls and in the ceiling will be made out of sheep wool and linen and the insulation in the foundation will consist of recycled glass that is puffed up with air.

The heating system will be carbon dioxide negative, which is quite unique in the world. This means that the more we heat the building, the less  $\text{CO}_2$  in the atmosphere. This is done through a process called pyrolysis, in which organic matter, such as oat shells from the fields and wood chippings from the forest, are decoupled into heat gas and biochar. Biochar is basically what you use in the grill in the summer. The heat gas heats water that will circulate through a radiator system warming up the whole building. The biochar contains all the  $\text{CO}_2$  from the wood.





*“We will have a big focus on high quality plant based food.”*

So instead of releasing it back to the atmosphere, which is normally what happens when you burn wood, we can now add it back to the soil. The soil then stores the CO<sub>2</sub> for hundreds to thousands of years while new trees grew up in the forest absorbing more CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere.

The barn will have its own electricity production, partly using solar power and partly using sterling engines. The sterling engines run on the heat gases from the pyrolysis process. They have a maximum effect of 10000 watt per engine and are able to power the whole farm operation.

The water cleaning system will be biological.

We use a new technology that fulfills the strictest rules and regulations while still using plants to clean all the grey and black water from the building.

The organically certified farm to table restaurant will use absolutely fresh and local products from the farm. We will have a big focus on high quality plant based food. There will be a processing chain in the barn to make fresh flour from the grains we produce and a green house attached to the kitchen so green produce will always be available to the chefs, even wintertime.





## THE RED COTTAGE

*In front of the house you can see the lake and the fields and behind  
are the sheep's pastures and the large natural pond.*



*"If you like to stay at the farm, we would love to welcome you here."*

**W**hat is more Swedish than the little red cottage with white trimmings? All through the year we are incredibly happy to welcome people from all over the world to stay at the farm in our Red Cottage. The cottage is more than a hundred years old and used to be the place where the people taking care of the farm were living.

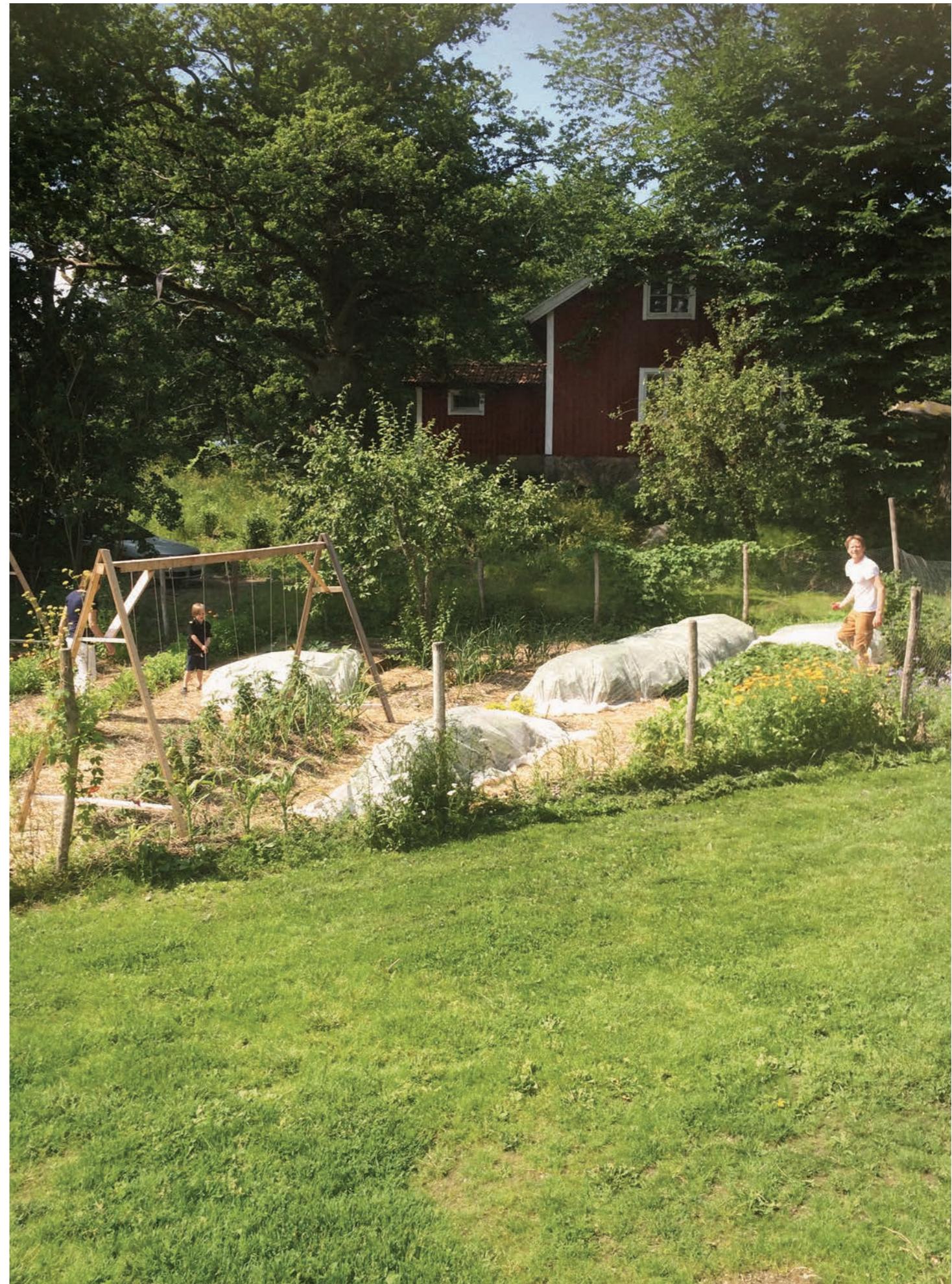
For Swedes, red painted buildings are part of our cultural heritage and for many of us a traditional red cottage is simply associated with a countryside holiday, letting go of the high pace and the stress of everyday life. It is a place to be

with family and friends, a place where you play, relax and recharge.

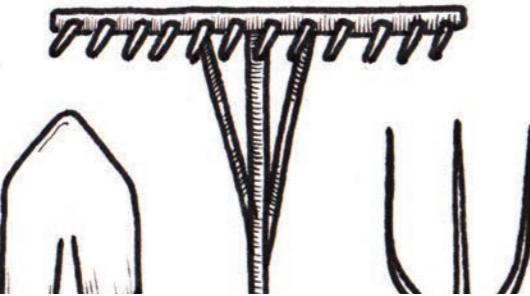
This is also the purpose our red cottage, which is located at the centre of the farm beside a great old oak tree. In front of the house you can see the lake and the fields and behind are the sheep's pastures and the large natural pond.

The house has been renovated in a way to keep the "red cottage spirit". It has two bedrooms, a fully equipped kitchen and a brand new bathroom.

If you like to stay at the farm, we would love to welcome you here.



*"We realized that we did not know much about farming,  
and especially not about animals."*



## VOLUNTEERING AT THE FARM

*We know it can be a real adventure to volunteer at a farm.*



**W**hen we started thinking about selling our house outside Stockholm and move to a farm, we realized that we did not know much about farming, and especially not about animals.

We thought that this is the kind of thing you cannot really learn by reading a book, you need to do it. So during Carl's parental leave we took our 1,5 year old son with us and relocated to an organic New Zealand farm for a few weeks of both inspiring and challenging farm work practice.

We got this opportunity through WWOOF, which stands for World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. It is basically an exchange where you exchange workdays at the farm for accommodation, food and knowledge transfer.

Since our second year on the farm we have

welcomed WWOOFers from April to September. Many are students between 20-30 years old who wants to learn more about organic farming practices and at the same time spend their holiday in Sweden. It is just wonderful how the farm this way turns into a social and international place. We have had people coming from all over Europe, the US and even China.

We continue to thoroughly enjoy this exchange and to get to know people and cultures from all over the world. Just like we experienced in New Zealand, we know it can be a real adventure to volunteer at a farm. It can be both challenging in terms of the fairly physical work and many new tasks, but for sure it also gives a lot of learning and a lot of fun.

If you are interested you can read more and apply via WWOOF.



## *Meet the farm team*

### *The Journey Continues*

We are happy that you have spent a little time with this book and hope that you have found something that have inspired you.

There is this saying that when a butterfly flutters its wings in one part of the world, it can eventually cause a hurricane in another. This comes from Edward Lorenz and his research on complex and chaotic systems. The meaning is that a small cause can sometimes have a very large effect. Nature rarely exhibits the characteristics of a linear system, where you know for sure that if you do this you will get that. Nature often behaves in a more complex and sometimes even chaotic manner.

The fact that nature is an ever changing and sometimes quite unpredictable system fascinates us. You never really know what to expect. So even if our actions at the farm only may seem to affect a limited geographical area, potentially these changes can have a much bigger impact on the greater scheme of things. And if you have a balcony or a garden where you live, as you do things to build a richer ecosystem, as you increase biodiversity, this will almost for certain create

positive effects way beyond your garden bed that you cannot fully grasp. Keeping that in mind makes gardening so much more fun and meaningful.

We see our adventure at the farm as a life journey, a journey to create the most diverse, sustainable and productive ecosystem possible and a journey to create an inspiration and learning center that will create ripple effects way beyond the farm borders. We feel that we have taken a number of vital steps on the way, and many of them we have shared with you in this book. But so much more remains. There are so many opportunities and exciting things to do. There is so much more to learn and so many more moments to savour. And the good thing is, it never ends.

We are deeply grateful for your support along the way and we really hope to see you at the farm one day. So please keep in touch and thank you for spreading the word to others who you think believe what we believe.

*Julia & Carl*



*Julia Lindeborg*

Julia has a bachelor degree in communications and marketing. After having studied in London she was working for MTV Networks International. While living in London she discovered yoga and trained as a yoga teacher. Today Julia runs the farm guesthouse. She loves to connect with the visitors and to make everyone feel welcome. Julia is a trained beekeeper and permaculture designer. She is also a certified Iyengar yoga teacher. She looks forward to develop workshops and retreats around cooking, gardening and yoga at the farm. She wants to collaborate with really skilled chefs to organize inspiring cooking classes at the farm.



*Sina Schneider*

Sina was a WWOOFer at the farm to begin with, but with her bachelor of science in organic agriculture and strong interest for vegetable cultivation she was perfect for the farm and stayed on as an employed gardener. Sina is originally from South Germany. She is responsible for the gardens at the farm, and she also has a strong interest in wild edible plants, which she loves to share her knowledge about. Sina is amazing at rustling up the most delicious wild salad. She is also a gifted illustrator and has made all the drawings in this book. You can check out more of her work at [instagram.com/threehazels](https://instagram.com/threehazels) or [threehazels.blogspot.se](http://threehazels.blogspot.se)



*Carl Lindeborg*

Carl has a Master of Science degree from Stockholm School of Economics. Upon graduation he embarked on a career as management consultant for McKinsey & Co. Having worked hard for a few years he took time off to travel the world and think about what was going to be next.

Since his return in 2004 he has been working as a trainer and consultant focusing on inspiring a more purpose driven and sustainable leadership in organizations. In this work he collaborates closely with Oxford Leadership and Stockholm School of Economics Executive Education. Carl has also written two books about personal leadership that are available in Swedish.

At the farm Carl likes to apply a system perspective and to focus on how we can improve the soil, to make it more alive and more fertile since this is the foundation for everything at an organic farm.

One of Carl's long-term aspirations is to be able to show how human systems can learn from natural systems and to make the farm into a true learning and inspiration center, a creative environment for great conversations.

### *Follow us on*

- [www.lindeborgs.com](http://www.lindeborgs.com)
- [info@lindeborgs.com](mailto:info@lindeborgs.com)
- [www.instagram.com/lindeborgsfarm/](http://www.instagram.com/lindeborgsfarm/)
- [www.facebook.com/lindeborgsfarm/](http://www.facebook.com/lindeborgsfarm/)
- [www.airbnb.com/rooms/2153395](http://www.airbnb.com/rooms/2153395)
- [www.wooof.se](http://www.wooof.se)

