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## The Next Step of the Lafayette Food Revolution

By *Sophie Braccini*

Linda Riebel and husband, Brad Wade, install protection around their tomato plants. Photo Sophie Braccini

Linda Riebel sees her garden as a place to experiment with ways to increase her self-food-reliance, and she strives to make her food choices as harmless to the planet as possible. As a member of Sustainable Lafayette's Food Group, Riebel, along with Allison Hill and Janet Thomas, hope to gather a group of interested Lafayette community members to share knowledge and resources, and to take the next step in the green 'foodprint' revolution.

"The local food group of Sustainable Lafayette started the farmers' market and the community garden. I thought that we needed the community to deal with other aspects of sustainability and food," says Riebel. "There are many topics to think about, such as eating less meat, growing more of our own food - or raising it - getting to know local farmers and growers, and more. It is a huge subject and we are launching the Sustainable Food Committee to continue our process."

The group's main objective is to help people wean themselves from industrial agriculture. "I don't expect anybody to be completely free from industrial agriculture," says Riebel, "I don't expect to be completely self-supporting. But we want to move in that direction and also influence industrial agriculture to be less destructive to the

environment and human health." Riebel points to a recent Time magazine cover story about disappearing bees, and how neonicotinoid insecticides could be the culprit.

In her book, "The Green Footprint," Riebel discusses food issues, and how it is impossible to know everything and foresee all the consequences of our consumption decisions in an increasingly complex world. "We want to help everybody to make their food choices, whatever their preference might be," she says, "even if you eat meat or fish, you can do certain things to reduce your footprint."

The first meeting of the committee on Sept. 16 was very productive. "We had an enthusiastic discussion and generated a list of interests long enough to keep us busy for years," said Riebel. The top four topics were the creation of a community of gardeners, organization of regular meals/meetings, tours of local farms, and education.

The second meeting and potluck will be held at Riebel's home around mid-October. The group will also participate in the Lafayette Community Garden Harvest Festival on Sunday, Oct. 20, and link this to the national event, Food Day.

"My goal over the next 20 years is to just continue to progress," says Riebel. Those interested in attending the next meeting should contact Riebel at [linda@sustainablelafayette.org](mailto:linda@sustainablelafayette.org) for directions and discussion.

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