

Finding passion through the pandemic



By Haydee L Thillet, Clinton Field Office district conservationist

Heather Tackett is an entrepreneur at heart who grew up helping at her family's garden, where she discovered her joy of working together with other people. This drive served her well working at both a realty company and at her own beauty salon.



In 2019 she moved to a bigger farm in Andersonville, Tennessee, which had been primarily used for hay, and developed it into The Homestead at Mill Creek, where she grew a variety of produce. Due to the global pandemic in 2020, she was forced to close her salon, and decided to focus on marketing the vegetables she had been growing and expanding her operation.

During our first visit, Heather was very eager to learn more about conservation and she quickly implemented suggestions that had been discussed during our visit. In these desperate times when people had been isolated and were in dire need of connection, she decided that the best way to help others would be to utilize her business savvy and, beginning with an overabundance of home-grown tomatoes, started to deliver her naturally grown produce directly to people's homes. It was clear that Heather had found her true passion during the COVID-19 pandemic.



In December 2021, Heather installed a high tunnel system at her farm and quickly started to plan how to best serve the community and expand her vision for The Homestead. Beginning with a microirrigation system to utilize water more efficiently, and composting manure from her horses, she strived to increase her vegetable production. She is working to increase egg production, improving pollinators habitat, and started teaching classes at the homestead.

Nowadays at The Homestead, you can find different varieties of hydroponic lettuces, chives, kale, zucchini, squash, trellis-grown cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, and herbs. All the produce is grown utilizing techniques such as no-till, mulches, and companion crops.

When you visit The Homestead at Mill Creek in Andersonville or visit the farm's social media pages you can clearly see the love and dedication of both Heather and her mother. They will always greet you with a smile and they are always eager to show you their hard work and share their knowledge and experiences. Heather's mother is so proud of her hard work and all she has accomplish during these difficult times, especially now that she can see how Heather's passion is now inspiring the community to embrace a vision of eating more locally sourced fresh food.

Top photo: View of the high tunnel system and garden.

Middle photo: Heather Tackett harvesting kale for delivery.

Above photo: Hydroponic lettuce grown at the Homestead at Mill Creek.