

Profile: Matt Rapposelli

"Fresh. Flavorful. Hot." Those are the three words that comprise the cooking philosophy of Ohio University Executive Chef, Matt Rapposelli. You can find him behind-the-scenes at the newly renovated Shively dining hall, wearing his white uniform and grey chef's cap that make him look like he just stepped out of a French bistro.

"I am a food consultant," he says of his role at Ohio U. Although his title conjures up images of what one might see on a cooking show—the slicing of fresh tomatoes and cilantro, a steaming pot of garlic-infused mussels—much of what Rapposelli does is administrative. His primary duties are to oversee training, baking operations, the food warehouse, and vegetable preparation.

Rapposelli has been immersed in food traditions and preparation his entire life. He grew up in an Italian family of food connoisseurs. He studied at the New England Culinary Institute in Vermont and owned his own Athens-based bakery called Big Chimney, which closed in 2006. Food matters to him because, sustenance aside, "Food is universal," he says, "it will bring anyone together."

The food culture of Ohio University was a new challenge for Rapposelli when he arrived four years ago. He feeds 8,000 students multiple meals a day, the sheer scale of which required a different approach than his small-scale bakery.

Despite the magnitude of daily dining demands, Rapposelli does what he can to purchase and produce food sustainably. He feels that buying locally is the best way to reach his overarching goal of providing fresh and flavorful food to Ohio U. diners. That is why he partners with the Chesterhill Produce Auction, located about 30 miles northeast of Athens. The auction enables the university to buy large amounts of seasonal, local foods, such as tomatoes, corn, and melons, by connecting to a network of regional farmers.

Rapposelli regularly communicates with vegetarians, vegans, and people with special dietary needs so that he can integrate their food choices into the Ohio University menus. To him, some of the best parts of his job are the personal connections he makes with young people through those conversations.

In addition to cooking, Rapposelli says that his other favorite activities are eating and riding motorcycles. "I can never get enough of the three of those," he admits, and says that all his vacations revolve around those passions. When enjoying local eats, he goes for the homemade pies at Millie's Restaurant in Middleport, Ohio or the "weenies" at Hillbilly Hot Dogs near Huntington, W. Va.

Does he ever tire of cooking? "Never. Never ever, ever!" he exclaims with a laugh and a contagious smile.

By Annah Korpi

Photo by Rick Fatica

Visit ohio.edu/food for more on dining at Ohio U.

Wild OHIO

Going native at the Ecohouse

Tucked in a hollow southwest of the Ridges on Dairy Lane lies an old brick home adorned with solar panels. It bears the name OHIO Ecohouse, and since 2005 has housed Ohio U. students, giving them the opportunity to practice living sustainably.

In addition to adopting daily habits, such as composting and monitoring energy use, each cadre of caretakers attempts to lower the ecological footprint of the house by spearheading projects of their choosing. Past projects have included fitting the Ecohouse with a 2.4 kilowatt solar photovoltaic array and solar thermal water heating system, improving the house's energy efficiency by adding insulation, installing new windows, and working to expand the residents' vegetable garden.

This year, residents Joe Brehm, Molly Shea, and Alana Dakin are throwing the spotlight on landscaping. Their focus, in particular, is on working native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants into the Ecohouse grounds. Collaborating with Ohio U. grounds supervisor Susan Calhoun and her crew, Ecohouse tenants have planted native tree species such as pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) and magnolia (*Magnolia sp.*), blackberry and raspberry bushes, and herbaceous plants such as wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*) and black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*).

Each native plant fulfills an important ecological niche. Pawpaw trees produce large, edible fruits valued by a variety of mammals (including humans) and birds. The perfumed pink and white blossoms of magnolia attract a variety of beetles in search of protein-rich pollen. These insects in turn supply a portion of the diet of native songbirds, such as the scarlet tanager (*Piranga olivacea*), the chorus of which Ecohouse residents delight in during the summer.

In addition to their roles in preserving an ecological balance, native plants are more adapted to local climates and generally do not need to be watered as often as non-native plants. Furthermore, they require no assistance from pesticides, as natives have evolved their own chemical defenses against insect predators.

"Thinking about where to place each plant forces us to learn about the habitat requirements of each species. In this way, the project is educational to the residents and also to those who tour the Eco-

house," says Molly Shea.

Joe Brehm has also been working to augment the vegetable garden with prairie species that grow well in open areas. In addition to raspberry and blackberry shrubs, he has planted butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and prairie coneflower (*Echinacea sp.*). Butterfly weed, in particular, is a favorite nectar source for a great many butterflies, such as the tiger swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*), monarch (*Danaus plexippus*), and great-spangled fritillary (*Speyeria cybele*).

"It is just fun to think about more butterflies visiting the garden because of the work we are doing now," says Shea. Dakin looks forward to seeing the fruits of her labor in the future. "When I come back in five or ten years to visit, I'll be able to look at the pawpaw trees in the yard that will be bearing fruit and know that I had something to do with that."

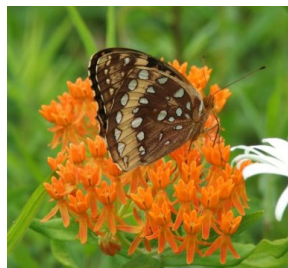
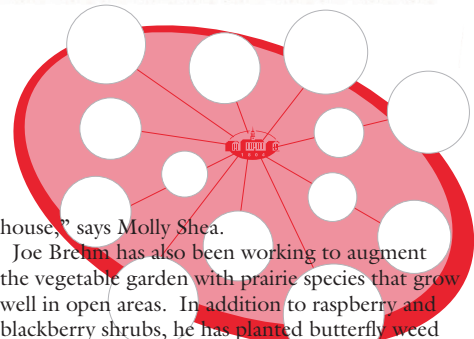
Not only is it important what species of plants are added to the Ecohouse landscape, but also what species are not. Many invasive species such as Japanese and bush honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica* and *Lonicera maackii*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), and autumn olive (*Eleagnus umbellata*) escaped from cultivation or were purposely used in cosmetic landscaping. These plants invade natural areas in southeast Ohio, including swaths of land surrounding the Ecohouse, and have the potential to significantly reduce biodiversity by displacing native flora.

Calhoun has enjoyed collaborating with residents on this project, citing the Ecohouse as "the perfect place to experiment with sustainable landscaping." Calhoun and her crew have been testing plots elsewhere on campus, maintaining a "no mow" patch of prairie on Ohio U.'s golf course and another near Porter Hall. Such landscaping projects are not primarily about looks, Calhoun points out, but about the ecological function of each plant community.

When thinking about sustainability and reducing one's ecological footprint, native landscaping may not be the first thing to come to mind. But perhaps it should be. Cultivating native plants is a simple yet powerful way to reconnect local ecosystems.

By Joe Brehm

Picture: Great-spangled fritillary on butterfly weed. Visit ohio.edulecohouse for more information.



Sustainability Plan: proposed goals



LEADERSHIP

Ohio University will be a leader in campus and community sustainability.



JUSTICE

All members of the Ohio University community will have equitable access to and responsibility for environmental amenities and disamenities.



EDUCATION

Ohio University will actively promote ecological literacy and citizenship among its students, staff and faculty.



STEWARDSHIP

Ohio University's operations will be grounded in ecological stewardship and will support healthy and diverse ecosystems.

Visit ohio.edu/pacsp to learn about the President's Advisory Council for Sustainability Planning.

Not a spectator sport: 10 years of RecycleMania

It began as an experiment in the residence halls, an attempt to excite students about recycling. RecycleMania, the brainchild of Ohio U.'s own Recycling and Refuse Manager, Ed Newman and Stacey Edmonds Wheeler at Miami University, has in ten years time become a continental phenomenon. This year, over 600 colleges and universities in North America are competing to see who will be crowned the Kings and Queens of their waste streams.

Newman has been inspired toward competitive recycling since his youth. He recalls a contest in his junior high school to recycle the most newspapers. Even then, Newman wanted to have the biggest pile.

When it comes to waste, however, Newman has always aimed low, with a whopping zero being the ultimate goal. But his aspirations for RecycleMania keep getting grander and his enthusiasm more contagious. Last fall, Newman helped to launch a pilot program for K-12 level schools called Ohio School Recycling Challenge. Over 60 schools statewide entered the competition in its first year, including Athens County's own Plains Elementary. Other states are already look-



ing to copy this model, which could mean state school systems competing against each other in the near future.

Now the Greeks want a piece of the action, too. This spring, under Newman's leadership, sororities at Ohio U. will compete against each other in the first Greek Life RecycleMania.

Senior and Wellness/Environmental Chair of Sigma Kappa, Jamie Smith, is proud her sorority is working with Newman to spearhead this project. Recycling is a priority in their house year round, and she hopes that by holding their own competition Greek Life can set an example for the student body that these important lifestyle changes can fit into everyday life.

Newman, a member of the Association of Ohio Recyclers, views RecycleMania as a vehicle to reduce waste and increase recycling and hopes its success is making a case to improve the way society as a whole manages its resources. He is already thinking beyond educational institutions and wants to see businesses get involved as part of their efforts toward corporate social responsibility and for municipalities to compete against each other, all as a means to keep waste from entering

the landfill.

But in the meantime, there is a 10-year anniversary to celebrate by bringing that lovable, rust-covered trophy home to Ohio U. Just remember Ed Newman's mantra: "RecycleMania is not a spectator sport. Everyone is on the OU Recycling Team."

By Kim Criner

Visit facebook.com/recyclemania.ohio for scores and contests.

RESIDENCE 20 CHALLENGE 10

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Acid mine drainage as art

In an unexpected partnership, Ohio U. assistant professor of civil engineering, Dr. Guy Riefler and assistant professor of painting, Matthew Friday have teamed up on a project that could restore local watersheds and diversify the economic and educational opportunities of southeast Ohio.

The coal industry, once a boon to the region but now a fading trade, has left the landscape scarred from the pollution of acid mine drainage (AMD). AMD has contaminated local streams to the extent that many are orange, smelly, and void of life. Sunday Creek is one such stream running through Truettown, 20 minutes north of Athens. Its highly acidic and iron rich water has been rendered lifeless for seven miles downstream.

Dr. Riefler, along with his students, has developed a system to restore the polluted creek, where the rapid flow rate, location of the site, and extreme acidity in the water have prevented traditional remediation practices from being implemented. The process involves treating the water with limestone and hydrogen peroxide to neutralize the pH and solidify the iron into sludge, an orange by-product containing iron hydroxide.

Along comes Matthew Friday, who has been using the resultant material as a pigment to make paints and working with MFA student Bryce Brisco to create glazes for ceramics. With more research and proper processing, the iron hydroxide could be converted into powder fine enough for a variety of commercial paint applications, according to Friday. He hopes that the eco-pigment not only



be sold to support the facility, but that partnerships will be forged between schools, watershed groups, and area development organizations, such as Rural Action and Little Cities of Black Diamonds, that will provide for educational field trips. By turning the industrial waste of AMD into a useful and sustainable product, this pigment could become a "link to the economic infrastructure of southeast Ohio," says Friday.

Grant proposals have been written to fund a pilot facility in Truettown that would process the water and produce the pigment from the iron by-product.

With support, a full scale facility would be built that could process 4,000 lbs. of pigment a week. According to Dr.

Riefler, the market for brown pigment used in things like house paint is strong enough to pay off the facility in ten years and support

the management and maintenance of the site. If successful, the plan could be replicated in other mined regions of Appalachia stricken with AMD pollution.

By Lori Gromen

Pictured: Lidded jar with AMD glaze by Bryce Brisco.

FROM THE COORDINATOR: You care, what can you do?

At least a few times a week, I get an email from a student, staff or faculty member along these lines: "I care -- What can I do?"

The answer: You have the power to change the world.

"But how?" Ah, yes. You want specifics. Here are a few ideas:

- Eschew all forms of motorized transportation on campus.
- Treat your friends and yourself to food from our unique Athens eating establishments, especially those that serve local food.
- Pull usable and recyclable items out of the trash.
- Make a promise to yourself never to buy bottled water again.
- Be a manic light turn off-er. Same goes for computers and tv's.
- Get together with other residents on your hall and centralize all your food in one microfridge. Unplug all the others.
- Host a Save Rave in your common area, and party in the dark.
- Learn a bird call. Call a bird.

"I've completed the above. Now I want more." Great. Join the Green Network and be a member of a campus-wide coalition of sustainability supporters. Get weekly emails on jobs, events and other opportunities for people like you: the carers and the doers. Visit ohio.edu/GreenNetwork to learn more.

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Established in May 2006, the Office of Sustainability is committed to improving the efficiency of our facilities, greening our practices and processes and strengthening our campus-wide culture of environmental mindfulness. For campus and community sustainability initiatives, research, projects, organizations, and many other topics, please visit www.ohio.edu/PlanetOHIO.

If you have contributions or questions for Planet OHIO News, please contact sustainability@ohio.edu.