



SOUTHEAST

TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM



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SE TOPP MENTORSHIP SPOTLIGHT

The Southeast Transition to Organic Initiative is proud to spotlight the inspiring journey of two of our program participants from Alabama: mentor Marguerite McClintock and mentee Dr. Dana Nettles. Their story is a testament to the power of mentorship in transforming conventional farming practices into thriving organic enterprises.

Meet the Mentee: Dr. Dana Nettles

Dr. Dana Nettles, a determined and passionate farmer, joined the mentorship program with a clear vision: to obtain organic certification to grow her tea business. With a deep commitment to sustainable practices, Dana sought the guidance and support needed to navigate the complex process of organic certification.



Photo: Dr. Dana Nettles (Left) and Dr. Joesph Nettles (Right), co-founders of Dr. Nettles Natural Beauty.

Meet the Mentor: Marguerite McClintock

Marguerite is a seasoned organic farmer with over 10 years of experience in sustainable agriculture. Based in Alabama, Marguerite has been a cornerstone of the organic farming community, known for her dedication to environmental stewardship and innovative farming techniques. As a mentor, Marguerite brings a wealth of knowledge and a passion for guiding the next generation of farmers.

Navigating the Inspection Process

One of the most challenging steps in obtaining organic certification is the inspection process. Dana said that although the paperwork for applying for USDA Organic Certification is time consuming, with help from a mentor, it made the process run smoother. With Marguerite's mentorship, Dana meticulously prepared for the inspection, ensuring that all farm practices met the stringent organic standards. Marguerite's experience was instrumental in helping Dana document her practices, maintain accurate records, and implement necessary adjustments to comply with certification requirements.

A Celebrated Success

This spring, Dr. Dana Nettles proudly received her organic certification, marking a significant milestone in her farming journey. The successful certification not only validates her hard work but also opens new opportunities for her farm in the organic market.

SE TOPP is thrilled to witness such success stories. Marguerite and Dr. Dana's journey exemplifies the impact of mentorship on the organic farming community. We encourage more experienced farmers to join our program as mentors and support the growing number of farmers transitioning to organic practices.