



SOUTHEAST

TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

April 2026

RIVER & ROOT FARM: ORGANIC STEWARDSHIP OF THE LAND, WATER, AND COMMUNITY

Driving just north of Gainesville on East County Road 225, a blue sign marks the entrance to River & Root Farm. Turning down the quiet lane, visitors are immediately greeted by long, orderly rows of bright green blueberry bushes stretching across the open field to the right, neatly protected by an electric fence. To the left, dense Florida forest lines the drive, amplifying the sense that this farm is not carved out of nature, but carefully stewarded within it.

Spanning approximately 30 acres along the upper Santa Fe River in Alachua County, River & Root Farm is a place where working farmland, perennial crops, and wild Florida landscapes coexist. Blueberries have been grown here since the 1980s, and established bamboo groves—some planted in tidy rows and others forming immersive, towering stands—add both beauty and utility to the land. Together, the contrast between forest, field, and perennial plantings creates a peaceful, productive oasis that reflects the farm's guiding philosophy: stewarding land with care, patience, and respect.



Rebecca Fox and David Tuthill at River & Root Farm.

Stewarding Healthy Land for the Long Term

In July 2025, River & Root Farm was purchased by Rebecca Fox and her partner, David Tuthill, in collaboration with their families. While the land has a long agricultural history, this transition marked a renewed commitment to organic land management and reconnecting people to the farm. The property has not used synthetic inputs since early 2023 and is currently refining its management systems as it works toward organic certification.

Rebecca, originally from Connecticut, brings a background in law, environmental advocacy, and conservation work to the farm. David, a fifth generation Floridian, carries deep ties to the cultural and ecological legacy of the state. Together, they share a belief that farmers are on the front lines of one of the most important



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revolutions of our time: rebuilding soil fertility, biodiversity, and strengthening resilient local food systems for future generations while honoring the agricultural traditions that shaped Florida.

Growing Organically, Growing Intentionally

River & Root Farm is currently home to roughly five acres of blueberry production, alongside established bamboo plantings and perennial gardens. Rebecca is committed to organic growing methods that mirror natural systems – building soil health, supporting biodiversity, and minimizing harm to both people and ecosystems.

For her, organic agriculture is not solely about certification, but about responsibility. That responsibility lies within the fields and across the surrounding landscape. One of the farm's most important considerations is protecting the Santa Fe River, which flows gently through the wooded edge of the property.



Blueberry fields managed with attention to soil, seasons, and sustainability.

Learning, Mentorship & Community Connection

River & Root Farm is also a site for learning and collaboration. On March 26, the farm hosted Organic 101 for Extension Agents & Service Providers, welcoming Florida Organic Growers (FOG) staff, agricultural extension agents, service providers, friends, and family. The on-farm workshop provided



The Organic 101 for Extension Agents & Service Providers workshop brought shared learning directly into the field.

hands-on insight into organic transition, farm planning, and served as a living example of a farm implementing organic principles while navigating the complexities of perennial production.

Rebecca is a mentee in FOG's Southeast Transition to Organic Partnership Program (SE TOPP), working closely with mentor John Bitter since September 2025. With support from the program, she is developing a farm plan that aligns ecological stewardship with economic sustainability. As Rebecca shared during the workshop, a central goal of the farm is to “set an example to other growers and the community as to what is possible.”



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For the Planet, Grown by Community

Looking ahead, River & Root Farm's vision extends beyond production. Plans include u-pick blueberries each spring, value-added products made with on-farm kitchen equipment, and small-scale agritourism that invites people onto the land. Rebecca imagines a future where guests can stay in tiny houses on the property and experience firsthand what life is like on a working organic farm – deepening their understanding of land stewardship and what it takes to grow food responsibly.

The farm's focus on direct-to-consumer sales, education, and meaningful connection between the farmer and consumer keeps food systems local and transparent. River & Root Farm is both a productive agricultural operation and a gathering place—one that honors the legacy of Old Florida while cultivating a more sustainable future.

Still in its early years of stewardship, Rebecca describes the farm's path as intentionally fluid. Surrounded by a supportive community in nearby Gainesville and strengthened by partnerships with mentors, educators, fellow farmers, River &



Rebecca at her farm, standing in the blueberry fields she manages and stewards.

Root Farm is becoming an example of how organic, community-centered agriculture can protect the land, water, and community well-being.

Along this quiet stretch of the Santa Fe River, the farm is cultivating more than organic blueberries - it's nurturing a future grounded in care, connection, and respect for the earth. Here, healthy soil and healthy people grow together.



Blueberry fields at Rebecca's farm during the growing season.



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