

# Green Business Recognition Program

August 17, 2017

Wall Township Environmental Advisory Committee/Green Team



**Greg Wolek of Wolek's Garden Cottage**

Left: Deputy Mayor Tim Farrell, Hance Sitkus, Chair Wilma Morrissey, Greg Wolek, Mayor Nick DiRocco, Freeholder Tom Arnone, with WTEAC Members



**Lew Thompson of Thompson Brothers Farm**

Left: Chair Wilma Morrissey, Lew Thompson, Hance Sitkus, Freeholder Tom Arnone, and Deputy Mayor Tim Farrell with WTEAC Members



Freeholder Tom Arnone



Deputy Mayor Tim Farrell, Lew Thompson, and Freeholder Tom Arnone

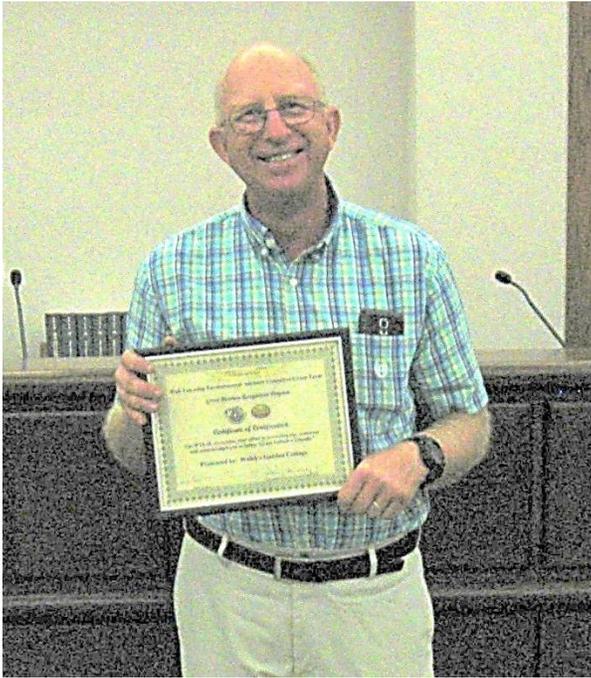


#### **Lew Thompson of Thompson Brothers Farm**

Thompson Brothers Farm grows hydroponic lettuce year round in a **controlled environment greenhouse**. We sell to local restaurants, farm stands, and at farm markets.

The greenhouse is climate controlled using a computer to make sure that only the most necessary devices are turned on at any time. This helps reduce and maximize our electric and heating usage. We use a system called NFT to grow our lettuce hydroponically. The system recycles the water letting us use up to 90% less water than conventional lettuce growing operations. The system also allows us to harvest ten times the amount of crops per area compared to conventional outdoor growing.

We do not use any pesticides or herbicides in our operation. We use OMNI approved cleaning solutions when cleaning in the greenhouse. We package our lettuce in re-usable plastic containers that our restaurants and farm stands return to us each week which eliminates the waste of cardboard boxes. We compost any discarded lettuce and, in return, use that compost in our outdoor vegetable fields.



### **Greg Wolek of Wolek's Garden Cottage**

Wolek's Garden Service, LLC, with its Garden Cottage, located at 3217 Atlantic Ave, Allenwood, NJ is proud to continue the tradition of growing/supplying various plants, vegetables, and other home grown items to the local area. Greg Wolek, owner, has a BS in ornamental horticulture and among other things teaches at Rutgers University and is part of the garden club circuit. They grow and sell organic and native plants at their Allenwood farm, complete with a garden cottage that is open 10 am to 6 pm Tuesday to Saturday (Sundays 10 am to 3 pm). Greg has a host of Jersey Shore customers where he goes out and efficiently designs, plants, and maintains a landscaped area. He is often called upon to evaluate landscapes, and to make a more sustainable environment. He helps to ensure that appropriate plants are being planted and cultivated in a given area, while using diverse plants so spraying is minimal to none. He promotes "beneficial" insects in lieu of spraying and implements soil amendments.

Wolek's Garden Service LLC offers garden design, installation and maintenance. They artistically design utilizing sound horticulture principles. Also important in design is ensuring plant biodiversity to naturally control pests and diseases. Using organic fertilizers and amendments for optimum plant health, integrated pest management of pest control is our preferred method on ornamentals. Vegetable gardening is handled organically.

Greg and his wife Michelle have had a green thumb for most of their lives. In fact, the very farm they operate in the center of Allenwood has long been a center of agriculture (formerly part of the Woolley-Tatum Farm). With Allenwood trying to hold on to perhaps its last remaining "open space" and farming roots, Greg and Michelle know that their farm is something special. The Woleks grow and sell a variety of open pollinated and organic plants (no GMO) for the seasons either through the Garden Service or at the onsite Garden Cottage. Greg is also rain garden certified. He and his wife Michelle share their wealth of gardening and "best practice" knowledge to customers, patrons, and anyone who will listen.

Woleks recently added chickens to the farm, who eat the vegetable scraps and organic feed. A compost is kept nearby too. The bike path that goes through the farm is often used by customers and employees. They even support local food pantries with various deliveries, often by employees who are still on the clock! Although their "footprint" may be small, their impact to the community is large. They certainly have a variety of plants, vegetables, ornamental floral arrangements, and other items for sale at the Garden Cottage. It's the same structure that customers patronized over 50 years ago! Even the well on the farm could be marshaled into use to keep things irrigated. They give back to the community through the sharing of knowledge, providing beautiful holiday decorations to the General Store and Enameling Building at the Historic Village at Allaire, and partnering to sell Lew Thompson's lettuce and other items from local farms!

### **Green Business Recognition Program**

The Wall Township Environmental Advisory Committee Green Team (WTEAC/GT) officially launched their Green Business Recognition Program. The first two members that were certified and inducted into the program were Lew Thompson of Thompson Brothers Farm and Greg Wolek of Wolek's Garden Cottage. Lew Thompson and Greg Wolek were awarded certificates at the Wall Township Municipal Complex Court/Conference Room from the Chairwoman Wilma Morrissey, Mayor Nick DiRocco, Deputy Mayor Tim Farrell, Monmouth County Freeholder Tom Arnone, Hance Sitkus, and WTEAC/GT members on August 17, 2017. Lew and Greg scored more than 10 out of 48 action items in 9 categories. Their selection was based on their narrative for entry into the program.



Deputy Mayor, Lew Thompson, & Freeholder Arnone



Deputy Mayor Farrell, Greg Wolek, Mayor DiRocco and Freeholder Arnone

