



About Willow Pond Farm

After 32 years in the U.S. diplomatic corps, Tom and Madeline Wajda “retired” to raise certified organic herbs in Fairfield, Pa. Since 1995 they have transformed the 32-acre Willow Pond Farm into a destination for herb and garden enthusiasts from around the country.

Fairfield and the farm lie nestled at the foot of Jack’s Mountain near the northernmost point of Virginia’s Blue Ridge. This picturesque region is resplendent with thousands of acres of apple and peach blossoms in the spring and the reds and golds of ripening fruit later in the year.

History is never far off at the farm. Fairfield itself was occupied by Confederate troops for 10 days before, during, after the Battle of Gettysburg and was on Robert E. Lee’s main retreat route. Confederate troops attempted to requisition horses at the farm but were foiled in their efforts when the lady of the house—Mrs. Musselman—hid the family horse in the kitchen.

Farm activities center around a magnificent 1760s vintage stone farmhouse thought to have been built by the mason who constructed the Fairfield Inn on Fairfield’s Main Street. The Willow Pond shop is located in the early 19th-century summer kitchen, where visitors can step into the walk-in fireplace and back in history to a time when jams, jellies, and apple butter were cooked over an open fire.

The grounds include demonstration gardens featuring culinary herbs, edible flowers, antique roses, lavender, scented geraniums, salvias, medicinal herbs, biblical plants, and dye plants. The farm also features a silver “moon” garden, a shade garden, a butterfly garden, and a 250-foot-long perennial border. The butterfly garden has been recognized as a “Monarch Way Station” by the University of Kansas.

Willow Pond Farm is certified organic; all plants and gardens are cultivated in strict adherence to organic standards. For the past several years, the Wajdas have focused increasingly on lavender. More than three acres of plants thrive in the lavender fields with additional stock planted each year. Tom Wajda propagates more than 100 varieties of lavender—including three exclusive varieties—and a number of unique and unusual herb and perennial plants.

While gardens and lavender bring many visitors to Willow Pond, Madeline Wajda’s culinary abilities make the farm a destination for those with discerning palates. During a four-year diplomatic stint in Paris, she studied cuisine extensively and received Chef John Desmond’s *Certificat*. She has developed a devoted following of food lovers with her herbal dishes, and also makes more than 30 kinds of herb and flower jellies, 20 herbal vinegars, and 12 varieties of herbal flavored honey, all using the farm’s certified organic herbs. Popular items include Lavender jelly and honey, Basil Garlic vinegar, and Lemon Verbena honey.