

**Jammers and Jellies; Moonflower Farm:
by Rue Tshamala and Zion Sayles**

Every week, farmers and artisans based in Winterville, GA hold the Marigold Farmer's Market just twenty minutes from the University of Georgia. To involve undergraduates in agricultural research, UGA's Plant Science department allows a handful of students to connect with the greater Athens area through the Crop Genetics and Genomics Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates program. This group of students went on a service-learning trip to Marigold's Farmers Market to help artisans man their booth and learn about how food goes from a farmer's field to their table, and they returned with a new perspective on agricultural careers.

Moonflower Farms, a name inspired by the Moonflowers on their six acres of land, is a small artisan business run by wife and husband Kathy and Mike Howell. With their generous hearts and abundance of hearty produce, they sell preserves, harvested wildflower honey, baked goods, and cheese balls. Making jams was initially a way for Kathy to preserve their harvests and give gifts to friends. Eventually, she purchased a cottage license so she could sell her work and has become a Jellie expert. Her flavors range from onion, and scuppernong, to dark chocolate and strawberry, and peach bourbon made with liqueur. She even expanded her inventory to include baked goods she finds enjoyable like blueberry zucchini bread, morning glory muffins, and cheeseballs – which she can sell under her new food sales establishment license.

For Zion, a Horticulture major, their work taught her a lot about understanding preservation practices, license requirements, sustainability, and the mutual relationships between the bees and harvest. For Rue, an Ecology major, the Howells gave them insight into a local farmer's relationship with their environment, other farmers, and homesteading altogether. The Howells spoke openly about how difficult it was to bounce back once something went wrong on their farm – whether it was a deer eating their plants or a late frost killing young blooms. However, for them, it's worthwhile even on slower days. Seeing the enjoyment the Howells had in their agricultural career inspired the students who worked in their booth to follow in their footsteps and have a prominent appreciation for small businesses.





