



[www.goinglocal-info.com](http://www.goinglocal-info.com)

As owner of a business ethics and compliance consulting firm with a large roster of multi-national clients, **Victoria Wesseler's** head was in the boardroom, but her heart was never far from the garden or the kitchen. During the week, she worked with some of the world's largest corporations (including Microsoft, Waste Management, Kaiser Permanente and Eli Lilly Corporation). Her publications and video training productions won numerous international awards for content and production excellence. On the weekends, she lead a "double life" pursuing her passions in "all things domestic" including cooking and gardening. While growing her successful consultancy, she also completed the Personal Chef course of study from the United States Personal Chef Association and earned the designation of Purdue Advanced Master Gardener.

In early 2007, her passion overcame her profession and she chose to follow her heart and develop a business which would combine her love of and expertise in gardening, cooking along with her writing and training skills to help people be successful in their own culinary and gardening pursuits. She began a new blog site, Going Local ([www.goinglocal-info.com](http://www.goinglocal-info.com)), which would allow her to fulfill that dream.

Victoria lives on a mini-farm called *Dirtpatch* which is located in "America's Heartland" in Lebanon, Indiana just north of Indianapolis. It is home to Victoria, her husband Robert, their two rescued cats, Barnie and Dover and, their hunting dog, Rufus (who is a regular visitor to the gardens where he enjoys fresh strawberries, juicy tomatoes and even picking and shucking his own sweet corn).

Victoria and Robert bought the land in 1997 and at that time it was full of dirt and weeds. So they named it *Dirtpatch*. They worked together to create the property as it is today and designed the spacious home which is built for entertaining and casual living. They continue to do all of the farming and property maintenance by themselves. The 7 acre property boasts several large vegetable gardens, edible flower and herb gardens; a stocked pond, fruit orchard, and berry patches.

Once the gardens bring forth their harvest, produce is canned, dehydrated, stored in the basement or frozen. This includes several varieties of tomatoes, chili and sweet peppers, corn, beans, okra, lettuces, sugar pumpkins, ornamental pumpkins, onions, carrots, butternut squash, popcorn, rhubarb, salsify, broccoli, asparagus, sorrel, broccoli rabe, Swiss chard, and zucchini. Jams, chutneys, relishes, fruit butters, applesauce and jellies are made. Beans and tomatoes are canned. Peppers are pickled. Garlic and popcorn are set out to dry in the barn.

The fall's final harvest of chili peppers is ground into a mash and put in vinegar. This mixture will sit in glass jars for a year before being made into "Wesseler's Serious Hot Sauce".

The back patio of the house is bordered by an edible flower and herb garden which includes roses, blue and white borage, dianthus, pansies, tulips, calendula, marigolds, nasturtiums, day lilies, lavender, anise hyssop, and several different herbs. In addition to using the flowers and herbs for fresh accents in her cooking, Victoria candies the rose petals and pansies and makes flower and herb compound butters, lavender white wine jelly, champagne rose cocktails and floral accented baked goods.

The Wessellers grow about 50% of their food and strongly believe in eating locally and seasonally whenever possible. Victoria buys her eggs from her neighbor who raises pasture bred Arucana chickens. A smokehouse “up the road” provides pork and fresh turkeys for their table. And fresh, grass fed pasture beef is always available from the farmer a few houses away.

Victoria is a member of the Building Local Foods Network, Boone County Master Gardener Association, Purdue Master Gardener Association, Indiana Farm market Association, American Horticultural Society, National Gardening Association, International Association of Culinary Professionals, and the United States Personal Chef Association. She is a member of the planning Committee for the 2008 Indiana Farm Sustainability Tour program sponsored by the Purdue University Extension.

From 2006 through 2007, she was a weekly columnist, “A Healthy Bite”, for CDKitchen ([www.cdktichen.com](http://www.cdktichen.com)) which is the fifth largest food related website in the world. Her recipes have been featured in Indianapolis DINE, Indianapolis HOME Monthly, Indianapolis Monthly, American Small Farm, Out Here, the Sustainable Table, and Cooking Pleasures. She has written a series of lifestyle and home entertainment columns for MSN and has written and produced culinary segments for broadcast on WKYT in Lexington, KY.

Her husband, Robert, was born on a small family farm which he still owns in Batesville, Indiana. While he was a student at Indiana University, he co-owned and managed a local restaurant and bar. He is as comfortable in a tuxedo, as he is in a barn birthing a calf or in the kitchen baking loaves of crusty artisan bread.

An accomplished businessman in the insurance industry during the week, on the weekends he can be found clay shooting, bird hunting with his dog Rufus, making brisket in his smoker or shaking up the perfect martini to accompany plateful of delicately fried zucchini blossoms.

Born and raised in Connecticut, Victoria moved to Indiana to attend graduate school and “lost the return ticket”. She enjoys trips to major cities (Chicago, Seattle and New York are favorites), but always likes to return home to her quiet rural setting. She stays fit with twice weekly Pilates classes and daily walks outdoors or on the treadmill.

She was honored for her blog site GOING LOCAL by Martha Stewart LIVING as one of ten finalists in the 2007 Dreamers to Doers Program which recognized women for turning their dreams into successful ventures.

