



## Grappone Conference Center, Submitted by Joyce McCabe & Pam Bissonette

### Challenge or Opportunity:

Obtain locally produced greens for our conference center year round. In the quantities we need them (especially in the winter), we decided to grow our own in a hydroponic freight container. It's the equivalent of a 1-acre garden parked right behind the conference center.

### Your Approach or Solution:

Entrepreneur Steve Duprey is no stranger to firsts. He scored another first in December when a tractor trailer unloaded a 40-foot long freight container in the parking lot of the Courtyard Marriott Grappone Conference Center making it the first hotel in North America to be able to grow all its own organic salad greens on premises.

The self-contained hydroponic garden is the first delivered to New Hampshire by Boston-based start-up Freight Farms. The farm is made of a recycled, insulated freight container 40 feet long by eight feet wide and 12 feet tall.

Duprey already has 30,000 bees living on the roof of his conference center, that produce all of the honey the center needs for its kitchens and guest events. One of his other hotels in Concord is the first in the Northeastern U.S. with pervious (as opposed to impervious) pavement for its parking lots. This allows storm water to filter through the pavement, reducing runoff, trapping suspended solids and filtering pollutants.

### Impact:

We're moving where our market is headed, says Duprey. Our goal is to be the greenest hotel and conference center in America, and this is an important step in getting us there. Our guests want local, they want to patronize a sustainable business taking steps to reduce its carbon footprint.

The container is equipped with technology which automatically waters, feeds and lights the plants. All the Grappone Center's gardener has to do is monitor the unit and operate the technical controls that support the greens and harvest them when they are ready.

Growing greens in the container eliminates any need for pesticides and herbicides while also creating a smaller carbon footprint. Diseases thrive in soil, but because hydroponics only uses water and the container is closed, this is not an issue. And the container is perfect for year-round growing in the cold New Hampshire climate.