

in this issue >>>

Mission statement of Spring Hill Farm: to preserve and promote the legacy of Muriel Church through the continuance of agricultural operations and the stewardship of both open land and forests, while providing educational and recreational opportunities to the public.

Issue
SEVEN

Spring Hill Farm –SPRING 2023

- * *Spring comes to the farm*
- * *Native plantings*
- * *Did you know?*
- * *SHF Fun facts*
- * *CSA available at SHF*
- * *Hay season is coming*
- * *Indigenous roots*
- * *Saving a Timber frame*

*Don't miss
an issue !!*



Don't want to miss an issue? Send us an email to:

SHFtrust@yahoo.com

(include "Subscribe to Newsletter" in the subject line). You will be added to our mailing list.



Daffodils are one of the many welcome harbingers of spring.

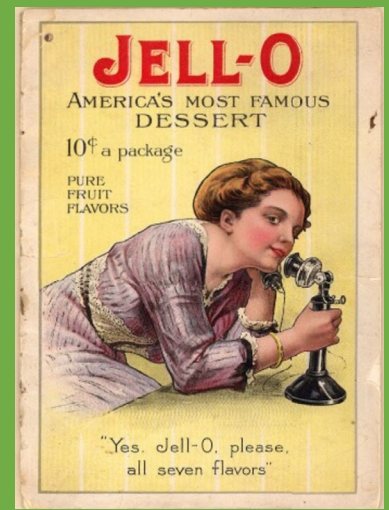
We made it to SPRING!!

Every year when we finally make it thru the last snowfall and the temperatures begrudgingly begin to creep upward, we reflect on having "made it thru winter". We look forward to what the longer, warmer days will hold instore for us. At SHF that means the long list of projects is dusted off and we start to prioritize jobs. Volunteers are the foundation of all the progress that has been made on the farm thus far. Do you have carpentry skills, just like to be outside, want to give back to the community, meet new people? SHF is "your farm" and we welcome you. This year the ramp foundation design and interior modifications to the farmhouse will be approved and then the saws, hammers, sheet rock, paint, etc. will be in high gear. There are outbuildings and planters that need staining. Want to help with putting hay bales on the wagon in the fields? (Better than a gym membership.) Any help is appreciated. If you would like to be on our mailing list, you will receive notice of scheduled workdays. There is no commitment to partake, but you will see what is happening at the farm and you just might want to come down for a few hours! Try it, you'll like it! Send us an email, with VOLUNTEER in the subject line.

SHFtrust@yahoo.com

SHF FUN FACT:

Miss Church was very active in her beloved community of Chester. In 1928 she led the Northside 4-H sewing club. To raise money to pay for supplies the club sold Jell-o door to door.



Spring has just sprung at SHF

On the Horizon

Mark your Calendars...

**Annual
Fall Festival at SHF
SAT Sep. 23th 10am-4pm**

**SHF Benefit Trail Ride
(Sponsored by Derry Trail Riders)
SUN Sep. 24th 9am-2pm**

For more information go to

<https://www.chesternh.org/spring-hill-farm-advisory-committee>

Enjoying LATER sunsets in the SHF Lane Road hay fields.



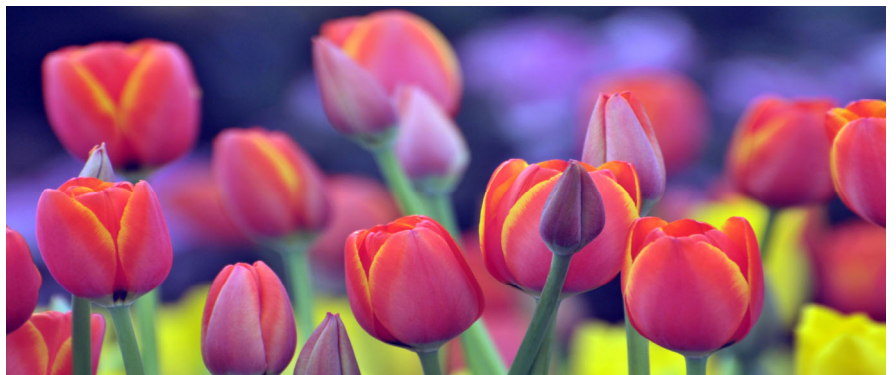
Did you know?

Science has proven that the increased length of daylight in the spring has a positive effect on the feeling of well-being in an individual. Not only is the sunlight uplifting, but the additional daylight can allow for more time for physical fitness outdoors and absorption of Vitamin D—a health win-win.

Late April until early May enjoy approx. 2 minutes per day of increased sunlight. This slows to one minute per day in June, up until the summer solstice.

Springtime...."The earth laughs in flowers"

-Ralph Waldo Emerson



Old Timber Frame Construction at SHF

It may not look like much, but have you ever noticed the “slightly dilapidated”, small wooden structure that is next to the silo at SHF? If you have, you may also have noticed that there is a protective tarp on the failing roof and various clamps and wooden supports have been installed. Volunteer efforts are under way to repair this architectural gem. It is a slow and tedious process. The building has been modified over the years in unconventional ways, but the photo below shows the best surviving interior corner, with its “gunstock post”, hefty diagonal braces and the purlin roof system.

It would be interesting to know if and when the tack shed (as we call it) was moved to SHF. The framing style dates it much older than the house and the barn. New England timber framing started fading in the 19th century. It was replaced by lower skilled, less labor intensive construction methods.

An educated guess would date the frame circa 1780 +/- 20 years.

(Pretty Neat!)



Grown at Spring Hill Farm!!



Geary Farms CSA Shares

What: CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) is when a consumer

essentially invests in a farmer by purchasing a share of a farm harvest in advance. The upfront payment helps us purchase seeds and supplies for the year and in return, you receive a weekly basket of fresh produce at a discounted rate. What is in the basket will change week to week depending on the harvest.

When:

- ✿ June 23/24-September 8/9 (12-Week Share)
- ✿ June 23/24-July 28/29 (6-Week Share, Early)
- ✿ August 4/5-September 8/9 (6-Week Share, Late)

Where:

- ✿ Rockingham Brewing (1 Corporate Park Drive, Derry)
 - Friday, 5pm-7pm
- ✿ Spring Hill Farm (96 Towle Road, Chester)
 - Saturday, 1pm-3pm

Cost: 12 Weeks \$300, 6 Weeks \$150

<https://gearyfarmsnh.squarespace.com/new-products/csa-share-1>



Springtime Activity in the Woods

Springtime means bird nesting and egg laying time! Between the months of March through June, birds and other wildlife are very busy trying to build their families. There will be ground nesting and tree cavity nesting birds, as well as reptiles laying eggs. At Spring Hill Farm, there is habitat conducive to many species trying to raise young. During this sensitive time of year, it is especially important for people to stay on the trails. Whenever humans veer off trails it creates a disturbance and may startle birds off their nests. Even just a short time off their precious eggs, could decrease the viability of them.

In the same mindset, dogs that are off leash, running through the woods and meadows can inadvertently cause birds to flee and the birds may even abandon the nest altogether thinking that the dog is a natural predator. Native songbird populations, especially ground nesters, are declining steeply around the world. The loss of habitat, pesticide use, and human encroachment are the primary reasons. Considering this, it is highly recommended in addition to staying on trails, that during this sensitive time of year, dogs stay on their leashes, too.

One example is the Ovenbird, this small bird creates nests on the forest floor and its only defense is great camouflage. If people and dogs frequently go off the trails, they may not only scare the mother bird off the nest but can actually step directly on the nest since it is so hard to see. This article explains further, <https://natlands.org/mariton-another-reason-to-stay-on-the-trails/>

We all love nature and getting outside, and Spring Hill Farm is the perfect place for doing that. Our hope is that people and pets will limit potential negative impact when visiting. Please stay on the trails and consider keeping your dogs on a leash, thank you.

- Chester Conservation Commission

Oven bird nest, located on the ground.



(Photo courtesy of
Vermont Center for Ecostudies)



Springtime and Foraging

As we enter Spring and continue to head into summer the forests are beginning to burst with life! The birds are chirping, bugs are buzzing, and the spring peepers are singing every evening.

There is a lot of plant life that is sprouting as well. While these plants provide food sources for many of the animals, they can also provide a wild food source for you! New England is filled with amazing opportunities to go foraging! Exploring with foraging in mind can give old and frequently visited trails a new and exciting twist as your focus is on all the varieties of plants that you encounter and how they could expand your culinary skills.

The first thing to remember as your explorations and collections ensue, is to never consume anything you are not 100% sure of its identification. Many plants have poisonous look-a-likes and having a trusted source to confirm your identifications is key. This short guide is for introduction and informational purposes only. There are many foraging groups offering classes as well as handy field guides that can help you progress in your knowledge and confidence. You are highly encouraged to check them out! In the future, once we are able to open the farmhouse at SHF to the public, our hope is that we can host classes that will allow us to have an educational lesson and then head out to see what we can find together!

Another important aspect to keep in mind is being a responsible forager. You should never clear out the area of a plant if you come across them. Also, respect all the posted rules and guidelines for all trails you explore. Many places, Spring Hill Farm included, have sensitive habitats and request you stay on the trails to protect the sensitive life.

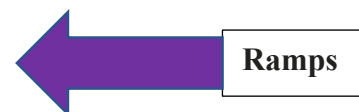
Now on to a few beginner plants that you might be able to find in the woods!

Fiddle Head Ferns – This is one of the first options that appear in early spring. This fiddlehead refers specifically to the Ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*). Ostrich ferns will grow along the moist banks of rivers and streams. They are only edible before they unfurl. There are a few characteristics that will help you identify them: a bright green color, brown papery scales on the curled-up part, growing in vase like clumps, and a u-shape trough in the stem celery). Also, there should never be hairy or furry on them. Never take 10% from any given patch (1 -2 per allowing for the clump to still have reach maturity, therefore able to next year. Once you collect them, cook them, as they will make you ill if you eat them raw. Rinse, then boil for 5-7 minutes or steam for 10-12 minutes, then sauté them in oil and salt and pepper and enjoy! They taste a bit like asparagus, green beans or broccoli.



(think anything more than clump), the ability to appear again you need to

Not long after Fiddleheads appear, **Ramps** (*Allium tricoccum*) make their showing. Also known as Wild Leeks, have a short growing season. They grow under hardwood forest canopies, soaking up all the sunlight they can



before the tree leaves fill in. They grow in dense clusters under the hardwood canopy. Each plant has a red stem with 2-3 bright green/yellow leaves coming out of it. Another way to identify them is by their very pungent onion/garlic smell. A forager should only harvest the leaves, and only one leaf per plant. The bulb should be allowed to remain underground to continue to produce each year. They have a peppery onion/garlic flavor and are a great addition to pesto as well as any recipe calling for greens or a garlic flavor.

Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) is an invasive shrub that grows plentifully in even the poorest of soil. It does, however, produce sweet yet tart berries that are high in lycopene (an antioxidant) as well as vitamins A, C and E. They can be found in abandoned fields, sand dunes, along ponds, railroads, and on the edges of the forest. The leaves of an autumn olive are long ovals with no serrations. They are a smooth dark green on the top and a silvery scaley slate green on the underside. The berries, which are ready in September and October are a bright speckled red or pink. Many people make fruit leather or jams with the berries.



Finally, one more invasive you can help to turn from a pesky plant into a delicious dish: **Japanese knotweed**. It grows on roadsides, stream banks, and pretty much anywhere there is a disturbance. It's best to collect it in the early spring, while the bamboo-like growths are young. The stalks, which are the edible part, are hollow. The shoots are a bright green color and have pinkish/red divisions between the sections. It is often compared to rhubarb and can be used in recipes where rhubarb is used.



Adamant, A., Debbie, Gilmour, C., Mihai, O., Chilton, I., Elsa, Karen, Mizzer, Mommaj, Terry, M., Gloria, Anna, Oscar, Karie, Duda, W., Rosemary, Nancy, Feathers, E., Rydström, R., ... JoAnn. (2021, July 5). *Using Japanese knotweed for food and medicine*. Practical Self Reliance. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://practicalselfreliance.com/japanese-knotweed/>

Adamant, A., Shawn, Lily, P., Judi, Administrator, Mene, S., & Dee. (2020, October 29). *Foraging autumn olive (elaegnus umbellata)*. Practical Self Reliance. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://practicalselfreliance.com/autumn-olive-elaegnus/>

Adamant, A., Shawn, Lily, P., Judi, Administrator, Mene, S., & Dee. (2020, October 29). *Foraging autumn olive (elaegnus umbellata)*. Practical Self Reliance. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://practicalselfreliance.com/autumn-olive-elaegnus/>

Fear, C. (2023, February 27). *How to find, identify, and Cook Fiddleheads*. Fearless Eating. Retrieved April 27, 2023, from <https://fearlesseating.net/fiddleheads/>



Enjoy the trails at Spring Hill Farm in the Spring! The beauty and solitude will calm you.

This is true ALL YEAR LONG!



Our Indigenous Roots

Spring Hill Farm's mission statement covers the 400 acre conservation easement bequeathed to Chester 'to preserve and promote the legacy of Muriel Church through the continuance of agricultural operations and the stewardship of both open land and forests, while providing educational and recreational opportunities to the public'. Its volunteers in partnership with the Conservation Commission continue its purpose as a working farm including hayfields, wetlands, pollinator species, maple sugaring, a CSA, goats, horse trails and likely a bountiful habitat for migratory birds. Recently, Chester voted to recognize Indigenous Peoples Day, the town's good intentions made manifest at the farm in its inventory study to identify all flora and fauna for best practices in land management.

As we learn how Indigenous people have maintained the aki (land), nibi (water), lolawikak (flora) and awaasak (fauna) for over 12,000 years we show appreciation in a formal land acknowledgement: we are located on the unceded, ancestral homelands (N'Dakinna) and waterways of the Abenaki, Penacook and Wabanaki Peoples past and present. We acknowledge and honor with gratitude the flora, fauna and the land itself and the people (alnobak) who have stewarded it throughout the generations.

Sunrise is sacred to NH's Abenaki People who call themselves People of the Dawn.

In the book, Braiding Sweetgrass, Robin Wall Kimmerer, enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, describes her mother's pragmatic ritual of respect. 'Before you leave any camping place', she would say, 'leave this place better than you found it'.

Whenever you visit Spring Hill Farm to hike, trail ride, snowshoe, cross country ski, dogsled, hay or sleigh ride remember our connection to Indigenous wisdom and in any and all ways possible 'leave this place better than you found it'.

