

Spring Hill Farm – WINTER 2023

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Don't miss an issue !!

The SHF Trust and Advisory Committee were pleased to get positive feedback regarding our newsletters. So here we are, rolling along with **Issue SIX!**

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.



Cows don't mind the snow!

Quarterly newsletter for Spring Hill Farm
A non-profit town owned farm
96 Towle Road Chester, NH 03036

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Activities always slow down at SHF in the winter months, but that doesn't mean that the farm isn't busy with looking forward to happenings for the warmer months.

There are some structural items for the new ADA ramp foundation that need to be completed, as well as some threshold clearances inside the house that we plan on completing in the spring. Once we have those steps approved, we can open the farmhouse to the public on a limited basis.

We envision holding meetings in the farmhouse and conducting workshops and possibly seminars. Fall Fest and the Derry Trail Riders SHF benefit trail ride will again be held this year. Haying operations, cows, goats, the Ortins' CSA, and maple tree tapping on the Lane Rd will all be in full swing.

Stay tuned for info as it becomes available. As always, feel free to attend the SHF Advisory Committee mtg. on the 3rd Mon. of each month (Town Hall- Main Mtg. Room, 7PM). You don't have to join the committee...just come, listen, and share any ideas you may have.

SHF FUN FACT:

Miss Church was interviewed for an article that appeared in The Chester Literary Digest in the early 1990's. She recounts her time at Pinkerton Academy when she boarded there by the week. Trips back to Chester for the weekends were on the trolley that ran from Derry to Chester. One particularly bad winter several young women were not able to go home for several weekends because bad snow storms made it impossible for the trolley to make it to Chester. However, one Friday they heard sleigh bells. Muriel immediately knew that her father had come to get her. She told the interviewer that she got on the sleigh with her father and Dave and headed home to Chester. The interviewer didn't remember hearing that another fellow had accompanied her father to Derry. When she asked who Dave was, Muriel answered quickly - **Dave is the horse!**



Impending snow in the clouds

On the Horizon

Coming soon...

2ND Annual
Winter Festival at SHF
SAT Feb. 18th Noon-5PM



For more information go to

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



Did you know?

The first ever snowmobile sprung from the inventive mind of Virgil D. White of West Ossipee, NH in 1913. Originally a conversion kit for Model T's, it provided a means of driving while dealing with snowy conditions. This modification created a way of maintaining normal life even through long stretches of snowy winter days. The kit, sold exclusively through Ford, consisted of two metal and wooden skis to replace the front tires, and tracks to be added to the rear wheels for traction.

"O, wind, if winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

- Percy Bysshe Shelley



Sled Dog Demonstration at Spring Hill Farm

Spring Hill Farm is excited to be hosting a sled dog demonstration at the **2nd Annual Winter Festival** at the farm on **Sat. Feb. 18th**. Steve and Kim Murphy, along with daughters Melissa and Danielle, are owners of ADIA racing kennel out of Windham, NH.

The Murphys were introduced to sled dog sports about 15 years ago with 2 retired Iditarod Alaskan Huskies. The pure enjoyment of working together with the dogs and traveling down the trail together has since transformed their lifestyle to welcome and include many more canine partners into their home. They have raised 2 litters of puppies and raced their sled dogs on dryland and snow throughout the northeast and Canada. The Murphys prefer to run multiple small teams of dogs all together on bikes, small rigs, kicksleds, skis, or in canicross. (Not sure what canicross is???...come to the Winter Festival and you will have the opportunity to ask questions and hear all about it)

The Murphys look forward to introducing the many different types of sled dog sports that are growing in popularity all over the country. They will be giving demos with 1 or 2 dog teams; offering information about the history of the sport, and current trends in the sport; and answering questions about how people can get started with their own dog/dogs in the sport. They will have all of their dogs and equipment, visual displays and interactive activities for participants. You won't want to miss this up-close opportunity. See you there!



Two Different Approaches to Winter – Eastern Chipmunk & Gray Squirrel

During the warmer months, very often, one might see the eastern chipmunk and eastern gray squirrel close to each other, foraging for acorns or seeds. During winter, it is a different story. Eastern chipmunks have underground burrows, and they will disappear during fall and re-emerge in the late winter or early spring. They are voracious food gatherers and will store acorns and seeds in their underground network of tunnels and food hoard areas within the burrow, plus they have a latrine and nest area with leaves. Chipmunks don't develop a thick layer of body fat to help in winter. When they are in a deep sleep, their heart rate slows and their body temperature may drop to match that of their burrow, as low as 40 degrees Fahrenheit. They must wake up periodically in their burrows to eat and keep their bodies functioning, so they are not true hibernators. Each period of wakefulness can last several days. When they wake up, chipmunks urinate and eat some of their stored food. They can live for several months underground this way.

The eastern gray squirrel by contrast can be seen all year round, including winter. They do not have an underground burrow but will look for tree cavities or make intricate nests of twigs, moss, leaves and vines called dreys. They do store food by burying acorns in the ground for later use, but do not have large caches or supplies of ready and available food like chipmunks. Instead, they can store fat on their bodies to get them through the harder parts of winter if they need to hunker down. We have all seen that really plump gray squirrel, right? Eastern gray squirrels build a layer of brown fat, also called brown adipose tissue, to help generate heat in the winter. Brown fat has more mitochondria than white fat, and these mitochondria act like fat-burning stoves which produce heat quickly.

Despite these adaptations, without acorns and other tree nuts to sustain them, it would be a very hard winter for both of these species. Our forest and our trees provide so much life! This is also an illustration of how important those snag trees are for habitat, not just for gray squirrels but for other wildlife. We are grateful to Muriel Church for Spring Hill Farm and a forever forest for the animals and wildlife. There are many other animals and birds which have unique ways of making it through a New Hampshire winter. Is there a particular animal or bird you are interested in, let us know!



WINTER FESTIVAL

SPRING HILL FARM, 96 TOWLE ROAD, CHESTER

SATURDAY · FEBRUARY 18 · 12-5



WINTER ACTIVITIES 12-5 PM

Hot Cocoa Bar - Outdoor Games - Wagon Rides
Sled Dog Demonstration - Ugly Hat Contest
Snowshoeing - Kiddie Sledding (if there's snow)

CHILI COOK OFF 2-3 PM

Beans or No Beans? Spicy or Sweet?
All ages encouraged to participate
Anyone can enter / Anyone can judge



BONFIRE & S'MORES 3-5 PM

Community Bonfire with Friends and Family
Let's all come together for S'mores and more
SNOW MUCH FUN!

WINTER FEST HAT CONTEST

FEEL CRAFTY AND CREATIVE?

SHOW OFF YOUR SKILLS AND YOU COULD WIN A PRIZE!!

*****3 CATEGORIES: UGLIEST, CUTEST & MOST CREATIVE*****

PLEASE SIGN UP AT THE HOT COCOA BAR UPON ARRIVAL IF YOU WISH TO ENTER THE CONTEST

THOSE WHO WISH TO PARTICIPATE OR VOTE SHOULD BE PRESENT AT THE HOT COCOA BAR AT 1:00PM





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

And it's very warm if you KEEP MOVING !



Maple Q and A's

We may be still experiencing the fun of winter, but the next season is quickly approaching! I don't mean Spring; I'm talking about **MAPLE SEASON!** Personally, this is one of my favorite seasons in NH. Most of us are not new to the joy that Maple Season brings, but how many of you have tried it at home? As a recent NE transplant, it has been amazing to learn of the fascinating process that goes in to acquiring this delectable amber nectar. There are so many wonderful maple farms, but it is a fun process to experience on your own as well. In preparation for this special time of year, we wanted to share a few fun maple sugaring facts.

Can you tap any maple tree?

There are 125 varieties of maple tree and 13 native to New England. While sugar maples are preferred, any native maple tree can be tapped.

If there are no leaves, how can I tell if it's a maple tree?

Maple trees have a grey-brown bark, smooth as it is young, but it will develop deep grooves or furrows as it ages. Sugar maple bark will also peel or flake off as it gets older. You can also look at the bud and branch patterns. Maples have opposite branching and paired budding.



How much sap do I need to collect in order to make syrup?

A lot! If you are tapping a sugar maple you will collect 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup!

What do I do with all of the sap?

Maple farms have large evaporators or reverse osmosis systems to process the hundreds of gallons of sap collected. If you are experimenting for fun on your own, you can boil it in a large pot outside on a campfire until you condense it down enough to finish off inside.

What temperature do I need to reach when boiling sap?

Sap turns to syrup after boiling about 7.25 degrees above the boiling point of water, so around 219°F.

What are all of the different grades of maple syrup?

Golden Syrup is usually from the first flow of the season and is a light delicate taste. Grade A Amber follows as the season progresses, producing the more classic rich maple syrup flavor and is good for making maple cream and sugar. As we near the end of the season, you will start to produce a Dark Robust

Amber, which is great for all around use as well as cooking. The last grade is Very Dark Amber and has a very strong robust taste that carries through in cooking dishes.



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If making your own maple syrup isn't something you want to try, and even if you decide to give it a try, there are opportunities to see the amazing sugar shacks around New Hampshire. Make sure to stop by the **Winter Fest at Spring Hill Farm on February 18th** for a fun maple syrup demonstration!

Also check out Maple Weekend on March 18-19! Look up the NH Maple Producers website to find a maple syrup producer near you! <https://nhmapleproducers.com/maple-weekend-2/>

Cunningham, Brian. "Identifying Maple Trees by Their Bark and Branches in Winter [Updated]." *Ferrin Brook Farm*, 3 May 2018, <https://ferrinbrookfarm.wordpress.com/2016/02/12/identifying-maple-trees-in-winter-to-tap-for-maple-syrup-2/>.

Davenport, Anni L. "Maple Syrup Production for the Beginner." *Penn State Extension*, 12 Nov. 2013, [https://extension.psu.edu/maple-syrup-production-for-the-beginner#:~:text=Sap%20becomes%20syrup%20\(66%2D67,slightly%20over%20219oF\)](https://extension.psu.edu/maple-syrup-production-for-the-beginner#:~:text=Sap%20becomes%20syrup%20(66%2D67,slightly%20over%20219oF).).

**The Pond
in Winter**

