



Cascade Farm Newsletter

“A Farm for All Seasons”

Volume XIII Issue 1

February 2009

FROM THE FARMER'S FIELD...

Well here we are! Setting up for sugaring, checking out the maple lines, planning out the garden rotations, ordering up the seeds, and of course keeping the fire burning to heat the barn and the greenhouses.

I know we say it every year but it is really unbelievable that our first seeds need to go into flats in the next week or two and our first outdoor seeds are set to go in the ground in less than two months. Lots of work needs to go into preparation and setup and we will be busily getting ready for our 13th season of providing safe, local, naturally grown produce right here in our community.

As is always the case for us, this time of year, in between the Christmas Shoppe and mid-spring, we find ourselves in a difficult cash flow crunch. January is when our insurances come due as well as well as other fees that need to be paid. So it is time to come to you seeking sign-ups for the upcoming season in order to keep moving forward. As everyone knows it, we are all in a very trying time with the state of our national economic crisis...to counter that in our own small way we are offering an early season discount of \$25 if paid in full (\$500) by March 7th. After March 7th we are going to hold the line and keep the prices the same as last season at \$525. While we know this is not much help, it is our own way of trying to be a part of the solution and to encourage folks to help us all get through these difficult times.

Another way we are trying to make a difference is in regard to outreach. As you may have heard, we have decided not to participate in the emergency food program in NYC this season.

(continued next page)

what's happening?

CSA MEMBERSHIP SIGN UP

Now is the time to sign up and reserve your shareholder membership (complete and return the enclosed card).

PAY EARLY FOR MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT

Annual membership for a 20 week season will be \$525. **Receive a discount if you pay your membership fee by March 7th...** pay only \$500 for you membership (and save \$25).

FARM BREAKFAST and OPEN HOUSE Saturday February 21st, Saturday March 7th, Saturday March 21st

Back by popular demand, our **Farm Breakfast** and **Open House** from 8:30am to 11am. Come enjoy our farm breakfast and bring your friends, neighbors, and anyone else who might be interested in the farm. We will be there to answer questions and sign up new members as well as welcome back previous members. Our breakfast price will remain same as last year with all you can eat pancakes, homemade bread, coffee, tea, or juice (however to keep our costs down we can only provide single servings of other breakfast items). Suggested donation for breakfast; \$7 for adults (\$5 for new or former members) and \$2 for children.

FARM SCHOOL MAPLE SUGARING – Late February through March

School groups that visited us in the fall will be returning to learn how to make maple syrup. If you know groups that may be interested in maple sugaring contact us. We welcome all ages to join us at our farm school. Please call for more information. (See the Farm School Desk article below).

FARMER'S FIELD CONTINUED...

(continued from page 1)

While it is a wonderful and much needed program, it was very difficult to deal with all of the various delivery requirements and handling circumstances that adversely affected the quality of our produce once it finally got to the intended recipients. We have decided to focus instead on helping out local programs this year in both Patterson and the surrounding communities. As many of you may have heard, these food service programs and pantries are experiencing very difficult times due to a combination of decreased funding and increased demand. In order to try to offset this very real local crisis we have decided to commit to match any donation equally, share for share, that is made to assist local emergency food programs. In other words, we are offering to match, in half or full share increments, any donation made towards helping others in need in our community. So if someone gives an additional \$250, we will match it with a half share donation and we will donate a full share of produce to a food pantry in Patterson, Pawling, Brewster, or Carmel. If we receive a donation for a full share (\$500) we will match it and send 2 shares to a local program and so on. It is our hope that enough people will want to be a part of this effort to make a real difference to local programs.

It is important to remember also that this program is not only vital in addressing the current shortfall being felt by local programs, it also is providing a type of food that is not often available for folks in need. Fresh, naturally grown, healthy produce is a far better option than canned and often processed foodstuffs that the programs are able to obtain. Please consider joining with us in this endeavor as we try to make an important contribution in this time of need.

And finally, as always we look forward to partnering with you this season in continuing to provide a safe, healthy, alternative food source to our local community.

Farm Funnies

What do you call the best butter on the farm?

A goat!

“Quotable Quotes”

“There is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather.”

John Lubbock



Hello Everyone!

Spring hasn't sprung just yet... but some of the farm babies have!

What a winter so far. Lots of snow and ice and below freezing weather, we can only hope for spring to come early this year. This past Tuesday (January 27th) Josh went up the icy hill to feed our goats and sheep. He realized that there was a ewe missing and when Josh looked around the barn he saw more than 4 feet. He looked further and realized that our ewe had just given birth to two healthy lambs. As soon as I heard the news I ran to the sheep barn to see them. They were still wet from just being born, two little boy lambs both all black with a little white tuft on their heads. We moved them inside the barn onto the clean shavings to warm up in the sun. This was quite exciting as it was the first birth of lambs we have had here in at least six years.

The next day Margaret and her children came to visit the lambs and we noticed that the female goats were acting very calm and distant. We checked them out and predicted that we would probably have at least one of the goats give birth by morning. I returned to the goat barn about a half hour later to make some minor repairs to the barn as we were expecting a big snow storm the following morning and wanted to be sure the barn would be warm enough if there were new babies overnight. As I arrived I noticed our Boer goat, Pixie, was in labor and within 10 minutes and a few pushes she delivered her first baby. Pixie cleaned her baby and 4 minutes later she had her second baby! By this time the first baby was up on her wobbly legs and very hungry. Pixie proceeded to clean her second baby and before long they were both up and nursing. The first nursing is very important for a new goat. The mother goat produces colostrum which is the first milk containing all of the antibodies needed by the vulnerable minutes-old babies. We stayed until we were sure both babies were able to nurse properly.

That night and early the next morning we had a snow and ice storm that covered the roads and everything at the farm. When we finally arrived later that morning, we discovered that during the night and early morning the other two pregnant goats gave birth to three more babies.

So with 5 new kids (what baby goats are called) and 2 new lambs, the farm has begun to spring! We still have 2 more ewes expecting soon so there will be lots of jumping and playing going on in the barns in the weeks to come. We will let you know when it is ok to make arrangements to visit the new babies (always call first). The sheep are very protective of their newborns so we need to be sure to give them enough space.

Ashley

Ruminations



Maple sugar is about as twice as sweet as standard granulated sugar.

A tap in a maple tree can produce an average of 10 gallons per tree (but it will take about 40 gallons of sap to produce just 1 gallon of maple syrup).

A maple tree will have to be 30 to 40 years old before it can be tapped for sap to make syrup.

Sugar maple trees can give sap for 100 years or more.

Source - <http://www.massmaple.org/>

Weather or Not...

Old Man Winter you are a difficult, yet necessary sort! I have always said that each season needs to be true to itself...it is vital for the whole web of life that each season spend a good amount of time being and doing what it is supposed to do...seeds and bulbs, buds and bugs all need a time of rest and renewal before the thaw and promise of spring brings new life.

Of course, having said that it seems as though this winter is lasting forever! Although the official start of spring is still almost two months away. Doesn't it seem that this is the year of the ice??? It does here on the farm...oh well, just have to be careful...



From the Farm School Desk...

My children and I recently read together one of Laura Ingalls Wilder's books, "Little House in the Big Woods". As most of you will recall, it is the story of Laura's own early childhood in the woods of Wisconsin during the late 19th century. Much of the story details how they made and obtained food, clothing, and shelter for themselves. For my family this offered plenty of discussion about how difficult it must have been to live during that period (and hopefully made us grateful for the little things that do make our lives easier now). We did find it interesting that there were some things that have not changed much since that time. Maple sugaring in particular is something my children have participated in at the farm so they really appreciated the descriptions in the story about gathering sap and boiling it down to syrup and making candies from it (as we have done). Some good things just do not have to change... yes there are improvements to sugaring over the centuries and modern technology can no doubt make some of the steps easier but I found it an important lesson to my children that we don't "make" this special treat. The steps to maple sugaring are still basically the same. We need to wait for just the right time, when the trees are ready to give us their sap. The weather conditions, the tree's age and health, the amount of sap – so many variables, and so much work. It takes an average of 40 gallons of sap to produce 1 gallon of syrup and you may get sap for a few days or a few weeks (you never can tell). Evaporation of the sap to sugar is no easy task either as the sugar burns quickly needing constant supervision. No wonder the families gathered to celebrate at the end of the sugaring season as described in the story; eating, celebrating, and dancing while still finishing the syrup. It must have been quite a wonderful way to end long cold winters and anticipate the arrival of spring.

I am sure we will be thinking of those families from so long ago while we do our maple sugaring this season. Although some things have changed, I am sure those families worked hard just as we will to prepare for the sugaring season, wait in anticipation for just the right weather, gather the sap, and prepare the syrup to get to the moment to be able to have that first taste of the fresh warm syrup.

Just as wonderful is sharing this experience with students during the sugaring season. Our farm school offers field trip classes for groups to be able to experience maple sugaring, something unique to only a few areas of the world. Our classes allow students to see how and where we collect our sap, watch how we evaporate the water from the sap, how we complete the finishing process, and get to taste the syrup (all while learning about the history of maple sugaring). Call us to inquire or reserve a date from around mid-February through mid-March.

Margaret



We are inviting you to get more involved at your farm. We always need help with weeding and planting projects but perhaps you would like to write an article for our newsletter about farming or want to share an inspirational story? Or perhaps you would like to share recipes, or have ideas for our website? Send your ideas to cascadefarm@verizon.net or to the post address below.

Get your children involved also! We welcome drawings, stories, poems, and jokes. We will include them in our newsletter or post them on our barn bulletin board.

