

LAKE METROPARKS

FARM PARK

Almanac




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FARMPARK IS A LAKE METROPARKS FACILITY.

Farmpark's mission is to help our urban society understand how farmers raise food, fiber and other products that sustain and enhance human life. *Farmpark Almanac* is published three times a year by Lake Metroparks. This publication is sent free to Farmpark members.

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Thank You for Your Support & Patience

by Lee Homyock, *Farmpark Administrator*

In 2020, Farmpark confronted an unprecedented period during the Covid-19 pandemic. I would first like to thank all of our members for their support and patience in this ever-changing environment. After being closed for three months, we welcomed our many members and daily visitors back on a limited basis to enjoy the farm's interpretive programming outside. Our staff has explored ways to adapt programming to an outdoors-only environment and they have found new ways to accomplish Farmpark's mission. We have also completed renovations on many of our facilities.

In the Visitor Center, the theater has had a complete makeover with new carpeting and seating along with new paint on the walls. The Machinery Building has been insulated and heated to extend its use into the cooler months. New lighting and a catering kitchen have been added to the building along with an outdoor pavilion, walkways, fire pit, and landscaping to provide additional program and event space. This area is now known as the Hilltop area. A restroom was also constructed in Festival Field adjacent to the Hilltop. Improvement to Farmpark's Arena included an accessible walkway and landscaping

at its entrances. The Well Bred Shed was redesigned and renovated to allow for safe access through the building when we receive permission to reopen the facility. Other projects completed were replacement of maple sap tubing in the sugar bush, fencing and paving.

While we had to cancel many of our programs and events, Farmpark managed to provide outside programming on the weekends and our annual fall harvest event series. In place of Halloween Hayrides we offered a very well-received Halloween Drive-thru and we are offering our popular Country Lights event as a drive-thru as well.

In 2021, we hope to be able to expand our hours and eventually get back to normal business. Please keep an eye out for further information on Farmpark's events and programming this coming year. We hope we are able to see our members more in 2021. Again, thank you for your support and patience.



Hilltop area at Farmpark
EARL LINABURG



Where Does the Milk Go?

by Steve Ohmes, Assistant Farmpark Administrator

*A frequent question asked in our dairy is
“What do you do with your milk?”*

The cows are machine milked twice a day—once in the morning and once in the evening. As the cow is milked, the milk flows into a weigh jar that allows us to measure how many pounds of milk the cow gives. Milk is measured in pounds instead of gallons by producers and processors (as a point of reference, one gallon of milk equals 8.6 pounds). Once the milk is measured, it is sent to the bulk tank where it is kept between 33 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

The milk is pumped from the bulk tank into milk cans twice a week. Each can holds ten gallons, which is 86 pounds of milk. The milk cans are then delivered to Middlefield Cheese Co-op. Once at the cheese co-op, the cans are placed onto a conveyer belt that moves them into the processing area. The cans are then dumped into a tank that totals the weight of milk delivered. A recent month's total was 10,374 pounds or 1,206 gallons of milk.

Once the milk is weighed, samples are taken to test for antibiotics in the milk. If any antibiotics are found, the milk must be dumped. The milk is also tested for quality and bacteria. If a high-enough quality is met, then we receive quality bonuses.

Stop by Middlefield Cheese Co-op and try the cheese. The store has windows that allow customers to look into the processing room and see cheese being made. It is such a unique opportunity to experience the milking demonstrations at Farmpark, the first step in the process leading to the final product of cheese in retail stores.



Middlefield Cheese Co-op

Farmpark CALENDAR

1 JANUARY

3 Lake County FREE DAY

Ride a Draft Horse

Ages 10 and older, Fee: \$12 per participant

You have seen them pull wagons and plows, now here is your chance to groom, saddle and ride a mighty draft horse. Fee includes Farmpark admission for participant only.

Sunday, January 10, 2021, 11 am to 12:30 pm

Little Tikes' Round-up

Ages 5 to 7, Fee: \$12 for one child with one adult

Meet all of the horses, groom our miniatures and finish with a ride on a pony. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. Fee includes Farmpark admission for one child and one adult.

Saturday, January 16, 2021, 10 to 11:30 am

Plant Life

Ages 5 to 12, Fee: \$10 per student participant with one adult, \$5 per additional student

Investigate the world of plants. Learn how plants grow and make some fun discoveries. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Wednesday, January 20, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Thursday, January 28, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

My First Horse

Ages 8 and older, Fee: \$18

Take an in-depth look at horse nutrition, stable needs, grooming and saddling techniques. Try English and Western styles of riding. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. Fee includes Farmpark admission for participant only.

Sunday, January 24, 2021, 10 am to 12:30 pm

Spring Lambs & New Sprouts

Ages 5 to 12, Fee: \$10 per student participant with one adult, \$5 per additional student

Learn how farmers plant crops and see our spring lambs. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Tuesday, January 26, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

ICE FESTIVAL

January 30, 9 am to 7 pm

Shake the winter blues that fall upon Ohioans every January. Witness some of the best ice carvers from around the country take part in Lake Metroparks Farmpark's annual speed-carving competition. Enjoy hourly ice-carving demonstrations and a head-to-head competition between an ice carver and a wood carver. End the night with a warm fire built in a tower of ice. Come sit by one of our fire pits and warm up with s'mores. Plus, enjoy many other winter-themed family fun outdoor activities.

2 FEBRUARY

Plant Life

Ages 5 to 12, Fee: \$10 per student participant with one adult, \$5 per additional student

Investigate the world of plants. Learn how plants grow and make some fun discoveries. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Tuesday, February 2, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Tuesday, February 9, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

7 Lake County FREE DAY

My First Pony

Ages 7 to 10, Fee: \$18

Discover how much fun and work it is to own a pony. This fun hands-on program includes cleaning, grooming and care. Finish with a pony ride! Wear sturdy shoes or boots.

Sunday, February 7, 2021, 10 am to 12:30 pm

Spring Lambs & New Sprouts

Ages 5 to 12, Fee: \$10 per student participant with one adult, \$5 per additional student

Learn how farmers plant crops and see our spring lambs. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Wednesday, February 10, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Wednesday, February 17, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Thursday, February 18, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Tuesday, February 23, 2021, 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Little Tikes Drive a Mini

Ages 5 to 7, Fee: \$12 for one child with one adult

Come meet our stable of horses. Then learn how to groom, harness and drive a miniature horse. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. Fee includes Farmpark admission for one child and one adult.

Saturday, February 13, 2021, 10 to 11:30 am

From Harness to Hitch

Ages 18 and older, Fee: \$15 per participant

Put on your boots and come see what its like to get a team of horses ready to drive. Everyone will learn to harness, line drive, and drive our show wagon. Fee includes Farmpark admission.

Sunday, February 21, 2021, 11 am to 12:30 pm

Horses for Tots

Ages 4 to 6, Fee: \$12 for one child with one adult

Come meet our horses and join us for a live horse tale (story). We will groom a small horse and finish with a craft. Fee includes Farmpark admission for one child and one adult.

Saturday, February 27, 2021, 10 to 11:30 am



Regular Farmpark admission is waived for Lake County residents on “**FREE DAY**” (Proof of Lake County residency required). Every day is “Free Day” for Lake Metroparks Farmpark members.

For more information about Farmpark programs and events:
440-256-2122 • 800-366-3276 • lakemetroparks.com

3 MARCH

Please refer to lakemetroparks.com for programming and event updates due to COVID-19.

MAPLE SUGARING WEEKENDS

March 6 & 7, 13 & 14

Witness the maple-producing process as sap is collected from our network of tubing and 1,000 taps! After collection, watch as the sap is boiled and turned into maple syrup and candy. Discover how trees are tapped and see the tubing that connects the taps. Sample maple syrup and candy, help gather sap, and learn how to make maple syrup in your own backyard! Farmpark’s own maple syrup and candy will be available for sale.

7 Lake County FREE DAY



Waiting on Spring

by Valerie F. Reinhardt, Horticulture Manager

Winter sometimes seems never ending, especially if you want to garden. But you don't have to wait for it to be frost free to get out in the garden. Late winter and early spring are great times to get gardens ready for planting and perform other garden chores that are best done while plants lay dormant.

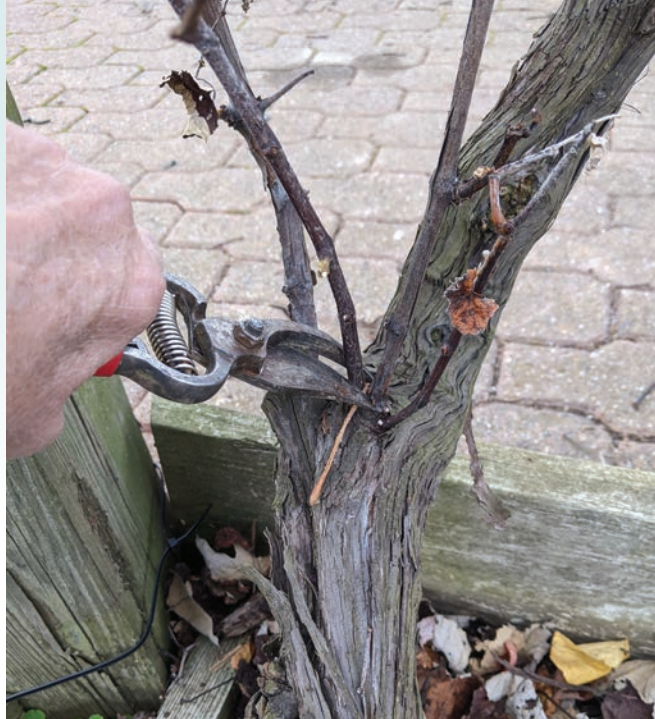
Major pruning is best done when trees and shrubs are dormant, except for spring-blooming shrubs or ones that bloom on old wood. Those not-so-frigid days of winter can be an excellent time to take care of overgrown shrubs, fruit trees, or summer and fall bloomers. Late winter and early spring are also a good time to cut down any perennials that were not cleaned up in the fall, like ornamental grasses or perennials left for winter interest. Old growth can be trimmed down to the ground before new spring growth begins, making for a fresh start in the spring.

It is important to prune grapes while still dormant to reduce sap bleed that can open the plant up to disease. Grapes are vigorous growers and severe pruning is necessary for good fruit production. It is important to get rid of new canes and leave eight to ten spurs along the main canes with a couple of buds each for the new growth. Brambles also need pruning at this time, taking out old canes but leaving last summer's new canes in place for fruiting. Apple trees need waterspouts removed, branches thinned out to open the inside to sunlight and damaged branches removed.

With the spring thaw, the ground becomes workable which makes it a good time to **divide perennials** before new growth begins. You should also think about working on garden beds



Last season's grass tops cut down



Pruning unwanted growth

by removing overwintered weeds and adding compost or other soil enhancers. You may also consider building a raised bed that can give you a jump on planting.

Early spring is a great time to plant many crops including peas, lettuce, spinach and carrots. Peas peter out once the weather gets hot, lettuce and spinach are quick to bolt in the heat, and carrots taste sweeter when grown with cool nights and warm days. Other cold-tolerant annual vegetables include beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, onions, and Swiss chard. One caveat though is that your garden must be well drained for these crops to flourish. Though these plants can take the cooler temperatures, cold, compacted and soggy ground reduces available oxygen and harbors anaerobic bacteria that can cause seeds and roots to rot.

Other items to consider are perennial crops like asparagus, rhubarb and strawberries. These plants need well worked up beds started in the early spring while the plants are dormant. Once roots or crowns are planted, they are left to grow the first year, removing any flowers and fruit so energy goes into root development. These plants take a year to establish before enjoying their harvest but can be harvested year after year with the proper care. March is also the time to start warm-season crops inside if you plan to start them from seed.

Don't let the cold keep you out of the garden! Bundle up and grab your garden tools—spring is on its way and the garden is waiting.



Iris crowns ready for planting

WINTER in the HIVE

by Valerie F. Reinhardt, *Horticulture Manager*

The goldenrods and asters have faded (mainstays for honeybees collecting the last of the season's nectar), the nights are longer and temperatures have dropped. What happens to the honeybees? What goes on in the hive in the winter? The European honeybee, a non-native, is the only North American bee to overwinter in the hive as a colony. Bumble bees, mason bees and other native bees all die off, except mated queens that hibernate for the winter.

In the hive, the bees get ready for winter and the drones are forced out. As the days shortened in October and November, the queen went from laying 1,500 to 2,000 eggs a day to around 25 a day.

In the fall, beekeepers busily prepare their hives for the winter. They do last-minute checks to see that the hives have enough honey to make it through the winter; if there is not enough honey, they do a fall feeding of sugar water or high fructose corn syrup. Beekeepers gather the last of the harvestable honey, making sure to leave enough for the colony and bring the size of the hive down to just a couple of supers. They check the health of the bees and medicate if needed. Small colonies often do not survive the winter, so the beekeepers combine them with other hives to make sure there are enough bees to warm the hive. Honey stores, health and the size of the colony all make a difference in making it through a winter. Some beekeepers wrap their hives in black tar paper or build a wind break to help keep the cold out, but the bees themselves heat the hive.

When temperatures fall below 55 degrees, bees ball up in the hive with the queen in the center. Insects are cold blooded, but bees can generate heat by flexing their flight muscles. They do this to keep the core of the hive warm. The bees rotate from the inside of the ball to the outer edges, taking turns heating the hive. The bees on the outside may become inactive due to cold but when pushed to the center, they warm up and take the place of those in the center. Doing this can keep the core of the hive a toasty 90 degrees. In our area, it's not the cold that will kill the bees but starvation when they are unable to move to the honey stores.

Hives with fall feed getting ready for winter



Honeybees taking a mid-winter cleansing flight

This can happen if the size of the cluster is too small to keep the colony warm during long periods of deep cold.

Good ventilation in a hive is important even in winter, as this allows excess moisture to leave the hive. A vent hole at the top of the hive allows warm moist air to exit the hive. Cold damp air can lead to sickness and death in the hive.

Bees need the occasional break in the weather during the winter months when temperatures are above freezing. On warm days they will exit the hive for cleansing flights (voiding feces). When unable to do these flights because of cold weather, bees can become sick which can lead to hive decline. You can sometimes see them exiting the hive even with snow on the ground if the outside temperature is warmer than 60 degrees.

When the days start to get longer in January, queens resume egg laying and steadily increase to laying 1,500 to 2,000 eggs a day by March and April. The cluster of bees will move around in the hive to access the honey stores and continue to generate heat as needed to keep the queen and brood warm and alive.

If there is a long warm spell mid-winter it can cause the bees to use up their honey stores and lead to early brood rearing. Bees will not move away from the brood chamber to feed, which can lead to starvation. This is especially hard if followed by a deep cold spell.

As the first truly warm days of spring arrive, maples and dandelions will begin to bloom. These plants are important to honeybees because they supply the first nectar and pollen of the new season. At that time, beekeepers go back into the hives and see how the colonies fared during the winter and start a spring feeding of sugar water to give the bees a jumpstart to ensure their health. When the bees are happily collecting pollen from the bright yellow dandelions and bringing it back to the hive, you know the queen is laying and the hive is ready for a new season.



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