

## **A Forest Gardener and Farmer's Year**

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### **A Southern Appalachian Forest Farmer's Year**

#### **All Year:**

Harvest pigeons

Harvest rabbits

Harvest duck eggs

Stick mulch

Swale maintenance

Harvest chaga mushroom sclerotium

Soak shiitake and oyster logs during warm spells for fruitings as needed (then put in root cellar or basement until fruiting is complete)

#### **January**

Planning, dreaming, reading up about project details for warm season

Cracking nuts

Winter pruning

Preparing spiles for tree tapping

Drink chestnut beer

Dig sassafras root and cut black birch twigs

Harvest winter oyster mushrooms

Harvest native truffles if you can find them (and tell Zev!)

Trap squirrels and groundhogs

Re-make candles

Finish craft projects

Selective logging projects

#### **February**

Review forest gardening and permaculture principles, take classes to increase understanding and knowledge.

Tap maples, make syrup

Winter pruning

Starting some annual seeds (only things that can't be replaced with perennials)

Flagging trees for thinning

Felling oak for shiitake inoculation

Dig and process kudzu root starch and medicine

Check bees on warm days

Harvest winter oyster mushrooms  
Coppice nitrogen fixing trees  
Stone work

### **March**

Tapping maples, making syrup  
Harvest first sochan, nettles, ramps, poke sallet, chickweed, dandelion  
Plug shiitake logs  
Felling tulip poplar for basket making and oyster mushroom plugging  
Finish last minute winter pruning  
Divide and transplant strawberries  
Fell dying hemlocks for *Ganoderma Tsugae* (Appalachian Reishi) inoculation  
Dig and process kudzu root  
Tap birch, make syrup  
Harvest first shiitakes  
Sample fall meads (but save most of them for aging at least 2 years).  
Make dandelion kraut for spring digestive tonic (need some brassica to instigate ferment).

### **April**

Peak ramp harvest; process and store ramps  
Plug oyster mushroom logs  
Divide and transplant herbaceous perennials  
Plant asparagus  
Coppice basswood and process fibers, eat basswood leaves from coppiced stumps  
Plug *G. tsugae* hemlock logs  
Admire serviceberry blossoms  
Hunt morels  
Make low alcohol spring tonic meads

### **May**

Resist going insane with activity, leave time for rest  
Coppice nettles to maintain fresh growth for eating  
Hunt morels  
Eat basswood leaves  
Harvest Appalachian Reishi fresh tips for eating  
Cut sochan flower stalks to maintain harvest  
Plant milpa  
First honey harvest (poplar)  
Harvest black locust flowers for fritters, soda  
Swimming

## **June**

Harvest juneberries (serviceberries)  
Harvest elderberry blossoms for fritters, soda, medicine etc.  
Harvest strawberries  
Harvest/coppice lamb's quarter and amaranth greens  
Swimming  
Hammock siestas  
Harvest mature Reishis for medicine

## **July**

Harvest wineberries  
Harvest early blueberries  
Harvest strawberries  
Mulberry harvest  
Elderberry harvest  
Eat amaranth and lamb's quarter greens

## **August**

Peak blueberry harvest  
Mulberry harvest  
Aronia berry harvest  
Harvest elderberries  
Start native koji, hanging nixtamal in corn husks under warm moist building eaves  
Process quantities of annuals such as tomatoes, okra.  
Harvest honey

## **September**

Harvest groundhogs for meat and skin  
Amaranth and lamb's quarter seed harvest  
Cranberry harvest  
Make and preserve (dry) native koji starter  
Harvest hazelnuts  
Breed sheep for spring birth  
Prune ginseng leaves to circumvent poachers (use leaves for tea and medicine!)  
Make mead with excess fruit and honey  
Start sauerkraut and other winter veggie salt-based ferments.

## **October**

Hunting deer (check exact seasons yearly)  
Harvest groundhogs for meat and skin

Chestnut harvest, make chestnut koji, make chestnut amaranth beer, shell and dry chestnuts, store in a bug-proof manner (layer between dried wormwood foliage).

Milpa harvest

Harvest white oak, chestnut oak, special hybrid oak acorns, store dried in acorn granaries.

Harvest burdock root

Begin harvesting sassafras root.

Harvest Maitake

Harvest ginseng root

Slaughter turkey for storage (or slaughter throughout winter to avoid storage issues)

## **November**

Hunting deer and wild turkey (check exact seasons yearly)

Maitake harvest

Process, process, process food; abundance is busy.

Start at least 1 but no more than 3 major craft projects for the winter (baskets, bags, clothing, tool-making and repair).

Make native miso.

Plan selective logging projects

Sleep unabashedly.

## **December**

Coppice most tree species.

Sit by fire, read stories, tell stories about previous year, feel emotions, don't medicate with coffee all the time.

Do bulk of craft project work.

Drink chestnut beer.

Transform spiritual sugars gathered during growing season into starches that can fuel a renewed sprouting and flowering in the spring.

Begin selective logging projects