

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