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