

The OZARKS AGRARIAN NEWS

ISSUE #1

DECEMBER 2017

Funded in part by Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE)
Project #FNC17-1082 "Building the Local Food Economy in Ozark County, MO"




Building Culture and Community in the Rural Ozarks

Calling all Farmers, Homesteaders, Artists, Writers, etc -

Send us your Reports from the Field, Local Events, Classifieds, Short articles or essays, Recipes, Photos, Poems, Sketches, or Anything else related to growing stuff, making stuff, nature, rural culture, self sufficiency, sustainability etc!

Send submissions to Amelia at Amelia.LaMair@gmail.com
or mail them to 13962 State Hwy 181, Tecumseh, MO 65760
Deadline is the 10th of each month!



Here's what's cookin' : _____
Sweet Potato Pie
 Recipe from: Diana Serves: 1 pie
 Use mixer to blend
 3/4 cup brown sugar
 1 1/2 tsp cinchamon
 1/2 tsp cloves
 1/2 tsp ginger
 2 large eggs (3 if using reg milk)
 2 cups mashed sweet taters
 12 oz can or 1 1/2 cups milk
 Bake 425° for 30 min then 350° for 30 min



Hillbilly Yoga

Hillbilly yoga just another way to say,
 Namaste to you in a country way.
 Waking up early to do the simple chores
 Like milking the cows, and enjoying the great outdoors!
 There's always a new asana to perform each and every day
 Could be splitting the wood, or stacking the winters hay.
 Never a shortage of muscle stretching or back bending.
 You know the seeds need planting, or the fence needs mending.
 Might even be that the mash needs stirring and the still fire stoked
 It's just the natural way to exercise for some Hillbilly folk.
 There's nothing much to it except doing what is needed
 Something like squatting low as the garden is weeded.
 So if you see someone unusual and they look very lean
 Perhaps it's a practitioner of yoga from the country scene.

c Kevin Kaiser Sept. 2011

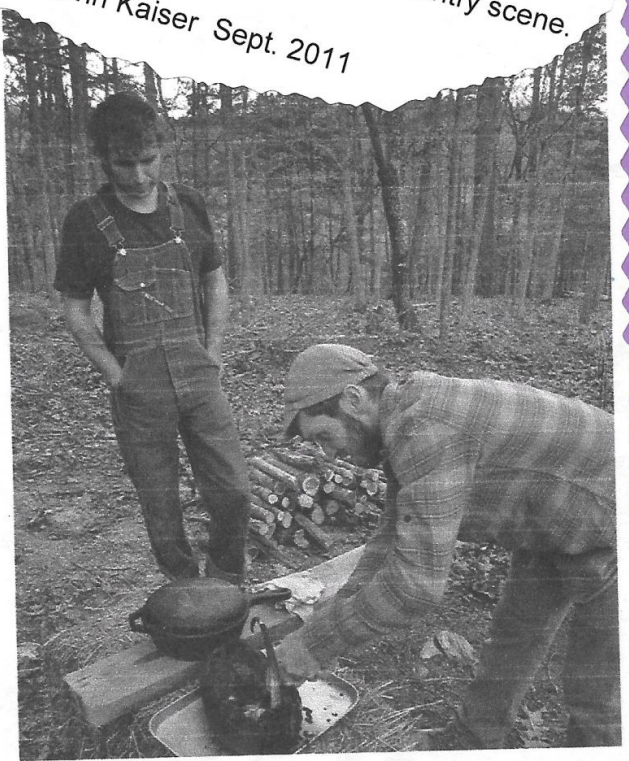
Action Item: Bryant Creek State Park
 Missouri State Parks is seeking public comments about the future of Bryant Creek State Park in Southern Douglas County. The 2,917 acre tract along Bryant Creek was purchased last year, but remains closed to the public due to political and financial reasons. Over 100 people attended the public input meeting in Ava on December 5th. Visit the website below for information about the park and a link to leave your comment
<https://mostateparks.com/page/70571/bryant-creek-state-park-information-meeting>

'Dillo on the Half Shell by Wren Haffner

It first came to us to eat an armadillo when a friend from South America said it was a prized meat there. Here it is thought of as a survivalist food and most have been brainwashed against eating it. There also is an unfounded fear of contracting leprosy from them (many studies have disproved this).

Being open minded and having had them menace our gardens all summer (they dig holes in moist earth looking for insects), we decided to try it. The meat was a hit, one baby couldn't get enough. People, surprised at the juicy meat, compared it to a cross between turkey and duck. It had no "gamey" smell or flavor and a texture like pulled pork. Very fatty, we cooked it for 8 hours on the grill over coals in the half shell (shell side down like a dish). Needless to say, we'll be eating more of this abundant and easy to catch relative of the anteater and sloth.

Again we learn that it is often not the thing itself, but how we perceive it that makes a Hoover hog someone's delicacy or a poor man's food. And in a time of such global change, when factory and mass scale farming are reaping untold impacts worldwide (and the US a leading contributor), we need to rethink local, abundant, wild food resources. They could be in our very own gardens...



EVENTS

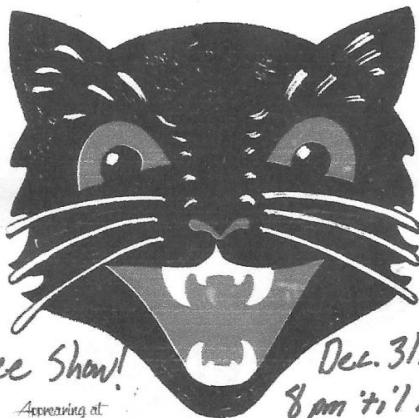
December 16th Live Music: Petey Wesley opening for Jeremy Meyers old time tunes, 6:30pm
Wages Brewing Company, West Plains

December 29th Oran Mor Community is hosting a Holiday Party. We will have a potluck, music, bonfire, and libations. Come hang out with us! Call or email for directions 417- 250-9252

December 30th New Year's Eve Eve Show: Thee Fine Lines, The Skoobs, and Daniel Elixir 6:30pm,
Wages Brewing Company, West Plains

December 31st New Year's Eve Show: The Pine Hill Haints (Alabama ghost music) and Creek Stink at Savor Grill, West Plains (see ad)

New Year's Eve!
THE PINE HILL HAINTS



Free Show!
Appearing at
Savor Grill
1321 Preacher Roe
West Plains MO
Dec. 31st
8 pm 'til late!
Performing Live
with Creek Stink

January 5th Bryant Creek State Park Public input deadline (see blurb)

January 14th Winter Farm Summit at Flotsam Farm 1-4pm (see invite)

January 20th Save the date for a High Tunnel Workshop. Details TBA. April.wilson@mo.usda.gov

~ WINTER ~ FARM SUMMIT

on **SUNDAY, JANUARY 14th**



Drop in 1-4 PM
at Flotsam Farm
(Amelia + Eric's)
Sylamore, MO

13962 state Hwy 181

- Network w/ other farmers, gardeners, & homesteaders over hot drinks + snacks
- Share your plans for the coming season
- Bring your seed + supply order list + favorite catalogs for collaborative ordering

EVERYONE WELCOME!

Contact Amelia for info (417) 261-1104

Amelia.LaMair@
Jshil.com



Reports from the Field

Birdhouse Farm, Barren Fork Creek White River watershed, Nottingham

Dawn reveals deer a plenty and practically domesticated, active beavers changing the channels overnight and winter birds flutter, filling the day with song.

Nourished by summers saved bounty, while

Greens and rooted things still flourish in the garden.

Coyotes howl, great horned hoots, cats scream and the magic quiet hour descends.

Home brewed wine is poured, wild herbals decocted, projects completed, studies resume, long cool nights and a bright winter moon follow Auriga the charioteer. And In the magic of morn, once again, stoves are stoked and frost flowers bloom.

Just another cycle in the land of Oz.

Happy Solstice friends...

Copper Logs Farm, Isabella

Autumn has been good to us here at Copper Logs Farm. I'm late preparing the high tunnel site for it's cover crops because of an injury, but the weather was so mild it gave me a second chance! I'm still planning the planting of said space and researching perennial and marginal edibles.

We scheduled with O.N.E. to have the big chipper in early December so there are lots of wood chips to keep me busy this winter. The room addition and cabin are almost ready for interior finishing - another great winter project!

Elixir Farm, Brixey

We are currently committed to the Ma Ma Jeans in Springfield who have been great customers for our 2017 season. the ease of having weekly orders for the last few years kind of takes the guesswork out of it and our products, basil, cherry tomatoes and jalapenos are very easy and simple. a reliable income! yippee!

Flotsam Farm, Sycamore

The short days and warm house have made us fairly lazy lately. Been seeing lots of bald eagles, a couple owls, and Eric saw a bobcat with two bobkittens! Garlic is planted and high tunnel greens are straggling along. The goats are knocked up and eating lots of hay. Chickens and ducks are done molting, but still aren't giving up many eggs. We are making plans to gut our old farmhouse and make "The Sycamore Dance Hall".

Dr Leo Sharashkin, Beekeeper, Drury

This year was quite challenging for natural beekeeping in the Ozarks. The spring rains (we got 25" in April!) set many colonies back as they were not able to forage and missed the spring blooms. Those who got over it, however, brought in a wonderful harvest of honey, largest in years.

We are in wonderful country for doing beekeeping naturally. The Ozark forests are full of locally-adapted honeybees ("survivor stock"), which you can attract to bait hives in the springtime to form foundation of a sustainable apiary. No commercial agriculture within the flight range of the bees means they can't bring pesticide residue back to the hive when they forage for nectar. The result is uncontaminated honey and robust colonies that can keep going for years without any drug treatments.

The interest in natural beekeeping keeps growing: my natural beekeeping course at my apiary in September attracted beekeepers from 13 different states, Canada, even the Caribbean and India! Over the past two months I presented in Connecticut, Tennessee, Florida, Kansas and the UK.

Dogwood, Tecumseh

This has been an exciting month at Dogwood, we FINALLY got our Bobcat back! This is a very important piece of equipment for us and we are glad to have it home. Things had been at a bit of a standstill without it, and it we have had a great bit of inspiration since getting it back.

Our animal menagerie is doing well, the chickens aren't laying much of course, but after molting they are really looking lovely with their new feathers. Our rooster, Zerubabel, is finally growing tail feathers back after a slight disagreement with our tomcat! We've added 5 doe rabbits and 1 buck to the homestead and if anyone wants little ones in the spring, be sure to let us know. With the cooler weather, the cats have been busy keeping the bed warm and holding down the back of the couch. One of our dogs has started obedience classes, and we have all been working hard on practicing his new skills.

We have have planted garlic, transplanted watercress to our spring, put in some sunchokes and gotten the first of many raised garden beds made. We've cut one heck of a lot of wood, and got many of our logs skidded up and staged so they are ready to go through the sawmill. The new carburetor for the sawmill should be here this week, and we are excited to see it up and running.

Our most recent project is a rocket stove fired hot tub, we are finished with the first stage and are soon to be in hot water! We are looking forward to the coming months, as they should bring some beautiful changes to Dogwood.

-Sunni and Jason Fine

Reports from the Field

East Wind Community, Tecumseh

December at the community means crafting time. Here we celebrate art-mas, which is a handmade gift exchange where each person makes a gift for the person they draw from a hat. Artmas has been a cool opportunity for creative folks to indulge in their crafty skills. Past gifts have taken on many forms, including paintings, pottery, sketchbooks and journals, quilts and embroidery, wooden boxes, cutting boards and bowls, leather work, welding projects, homebrews, and more. It's always interesting to see what people come up with.

Projects on the farm have been focused more on the ranch and in the forest as the gardens are being put to sleep, though we are still harvesting some root crops and greens outside and in our hoophouse. We are currently installing some permanent and self-filling water troughs for our cow pastures which will save us labor in maintaining our dairy and beef herd. Richard has been cultivating chestnuts and hazelnuts and planting them throughout our pastures. We are also expanding our pasture space by selectively clearing a hillside for future pasture use. Clearing this area will provide us with all the firewood we need for next year, and lots of woodchips for our gardens. This year we have focused a lot of energy into maintaining and upgrading our infrastructure. We built a new pantry and dry goods storage in the spring, and are currently finishing a shower house and laundry room that is replacing our building that burnt down in 2011.

Community meals this time of year are typically really good, because we still have lots of summer produce canned or frozen, as well as fall crops in our cold storage room. Butchering season also begins for us around Thanksgiving. This year we have some enthusiastic deer hunters, and with a seemingly large deer population this year people have had good luck. So far we have also butchered one of our cows and have a couple pigs coming up soon. We are all grateful for homegrown and wild harvested meat from happy animals.

The winter is always a great time for hiking, and with the loss of foliage, bird and other wildlife sightings are more common. There has been some bobcat sightings on the land recently, as well as barred owls, bald eagles, and other migratory birds typically coming through the area this time of year.

As the new year approaches we look forward to having more down time for hanging out around woodstoves, games at our communal kitchen, jam sessions and drum circles, and personal projects. We want to thank everyone who supports us through our collective businesses and helps us continue our simple and fulfilling way of life here.

Mountain Jewel , Luna

At Mountain Jewel we've planted the fall garlic and put away a lot of food this year in our new freezer! Thankful to have the solar system bringing in abundant energy, a cozy cabin, a high tunnel and new herbal medicines business started as we go into winter (had none of this last year this time!). It's been a busy year also with Homestead Rescue filming on our homestead! Enjoying taking a pause this fall in the beautiful Ozarks.

Oran Mor Community, Squires

Oran Mor Community is a homesteading community currently housing 7 adults and 2 children where we share all of our resources, land, labor, and income in common. We live a somewhat primitive lifestyle in rural Ozark County where we use wood to heat our homes and cook our food, solar for electricity, pump our water by hand and catch rain water from our rooftops, and we live as close to nature as we can. All of our decisions are made by consensus among the members who live here, meaning that we all unanimously agree on proposals before acting on them. Our practices in living such an intentional lifestyle create a space for growth and mutual consideration, but it can be challenging at times.

Currently we are working on building a tiny home for my family of four to move into before the hard winter hits. We are using almost entirely salvaged or natural earthen materials for this project, which is normally how we do things here. We have also been busy preparing garden beds with compost, building up berms, digging swales, and planting garlic and perennials. We raise goats for milk and meat, rabbits, chickens, geese, and ducks.

If you are interested in learning more about us, we would love to have you over for a visit!

Stella Luna Farm, Smallet

The biggest highlight of our year was soil testing! Logan labs in Ohio does a fabulous, in-depth test. We followed up with a consult call with The Bionutrient Association for specific recommendations for amendments. The Ozarks are not known for their soil fertility, that's for sure!

We continue with mostly no-till beds, but we also purchased a BCS walk-behind tractor for some rotational cultivation. What an amazing tool!

Jeff wired in a solar pump on the land we lease for cattle. That was exciting, as the pond is almost empty due to this horrid draught.

In the winter we love to roast veggies in the wood stove. Squash, carrots, and sweet potatoes retain nutrients and tastes so much sweeter when roasted.

Community meeting in Ava next Tuesday to discuss the future of the square. With grant funding they would like to make more green space in the center in place of current parking. Meeting is at Jean's Healthway at 5:30.

Event Recap: Women's Grazing Field Day

Women learn better with other women. Research has proved that women, especially farm women, learn from other women in an all women settings verses the more than educational settings with mixed sexes. With this in mind the Ava NRCS and University Extension Offices in Ava and Gainesville planned a Women's Grazing Field Day.

The field day was held September 30 at the Lisa Edwards' farm where a grazing system had been installed about seven years ago. Lisa and husband Robert raise cattle and goats on their 130 acre Ozark County farm. Lisa moved to MO from a MT cattle ranch, where her husband still worked until just last month.

Topics discussed by University Extension Agronomist Sarah Kenyon included forages and weed control. Lisa also told her story and what lessons she has learned over the years being a woman farmer in the area. Finally a rain fall simulator demonstration, that included a tray of soil and grass from Lisa's farm, was conducted for the participants to see just how various grazing management affects infiltration/runoff and soil health.

Thanks to the local businesses in the communities of Ava and Gainesville that donated gifts and money that supplied transportation was available to the farm for all the ladies, along with lunch, and a gift bag for all the participants. About 14 women were in attendance which was about the perfect size for interaction, discussion, friendships, and a really great field day. The agencies partners agreed with the participants on the success of the field day and plan to hold another similar field day in 2018.

April Wilson

Lead Resource Conservationist,
Federal Women's Program Manager Women In
NRCS (WiN) Mid-West Regional Representative
USDA-NRCS Rt. 1 Box 50, Ava, MO
Phone: [417-683-4816](tel:417-683-4816) ext. 3
April.Wilson@mo.usda.gov



Ladies in the field 9/30/2017



"Can't afford to practice conservation?"

OPEN SESAME? by Jeffrey Goss

It seems that in the past couple of years, a few folks have been trying to lead us down Sesame Street, if you will. They make outrageous promises as to how this crop will bring great yields, farm jobs, and wealth to rural Missouri.

Have you ever wondered where the saying, "Open Sesame" comes from? The pods pop open when ripe, releasing the seeds. For thousands of years, this trait made it impossible to harvest all at once. In the 1950s a variety called Renner was developed, which ripens its pods all at once and can be harvested with machinery. Still, though, if it rains the pods will open and the seeds go all over. You have to have a dry period long enough to dry and harvest it. Texas and Oklahoma are producing sesame, as their climate supports it. South Carolina used to produce a lot of it, under the name "henne", referring to a West African type.

Sesame will grow in the same conditions as cotton, but like buckwheat, it is difficult to harvest in the wet or humid conditions of the Ozarks, and could simply end up becoming a weed. The practical farmer should also heed the 1959 advice of agronomist J.I. Rodale, "There is a very important 'caution' that goes with growing sesame...(it) is a soil-depleting crop that would tend to deprive the soil of essential minerals and destroy its physical structure unless incorporated into a rotation schedule with legumes and grasses."

For an oilseed crop we can grow sunflowers (with a 1500-year history in the Ozarks), oilseed pumpkin (just like the pumpkins many of us already grow in our gardens), soybeans (first grown at Nottingham in 1936), or peanuts (for which Guber Hollow in Isabella is named). We can develop these reliably adapted crops, and we should, before even thinking about sesame. Corn, cotton, cocklebur...the Missouri soils and climate grows those well. But sesame? They will have to show us.

You Can Keep Bees, Naturally! By Leo Sharashkin, PhD

Keeping bees can be simpler than growing tomatoes, but many beekeepers' experiences today are downright discouraging. "My mother spent \$5,000 on her bees in the first few years!" told me Alan, his voice trembling with emotion. Indeed, here is a typical scenario: you attend a beginner beekeeping class, buy equipment and protective gear, order a package of bees, install them in the hive, treat against parasites and disease, feed in the fall and then... they do not survive the first winter. You buy more bees the following spring and the cycle repeats itself. Faced with very high bee mortality, even many expert beekeepers hang it up.

What gives? After all, historical records show that a hundred years ago Missouri farmers commonly had multiple hives in their backyards. Bees required hardly any care and yet produced a honey crop five seasons out of six. Georges de Layens, one of Europe's leading beekeepers, emphasized that sustainable beekeeping rests on two principles: *use local bees* and keep them in *appropriate hives* that are matched to the climate of your region. These simple rules still hold today, and following them makes beekeeping what it once was – a joyful and productive occupation that requires relatively little effort and brings great rewards.

But where do you buy local bees? The good news is you do not even have to buy them. Best things in life often come for free, and bees are no exception. Just as birds occupy bird houses, local honeybee swarms will move into larger boxes (called bait hives) set on trees in the springtime. Bee colonies multiply by splitting in two or more parts – casting swarms. These swarms send out hundreds of scouts to find a new home, and if they discover your box scented with propolis (bee resin) and lemongrass essential oil (two smells attractive to bees), they will likely move in. For every ten boxes I deploy in April, five will be occupied by bees before June is over. That's a 50% success rate, and it can be even higher. Bait hives pay for themselves with the first swarm you catch, and can be used for many years.

To maximize your chances of attracting a swarm to your box, it must be between 10 and 15 gallons in volume, placed 12-15 feet off the ground in a tree that stands out (on the edge of the woods, in a fencerow, along power lines or roads, in front or back yards, etc.). The box must be highly visible but in full shade to prevent overheating. Check it periodically, and when the swarm moves in (you'll see heavy traffic of bees leaving and entering) bring it down from the tree at nightfall and move it to where your permanent hive will be located.

Starting with colonies of local wild bees offers multiple advantages. Swarms are usually much larger (4-5 lb, free) than commercial packages (2-3 lb, \$150). And unlike the mass-produced commercial bees that come largely from the southern (Italian) stocks and may not be suited for your climate, local bees are truly adapted to the region's conditions, resilient and more disease resistant.

Once you obtain your first colony (and catching your first swarm is very much a thrill), you need to give them a good home – transfer from the temporary swarm box into a stationary, durable, well-insulated, easy-to-build and easy-to-manage hive. I give preference to Layens horizontal hives that require no heavy lifting and are gentle on the bees, allowing them to live a life similar to what they would have in the wild while producing a handsome surplus for you the beekeeper.

So do you have local bees buzzing around a good hive you gave them? You can now rest. The bees will do the rest.



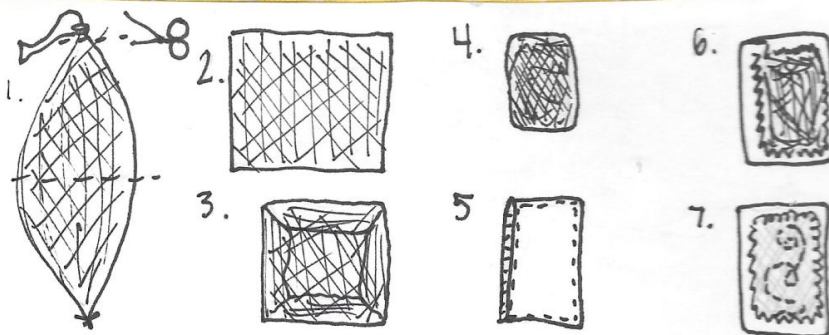
About the Author Leo Sharashkin received his PhD in Forestry from the University of Missouri. He is editor of *Keeping Bees With a Smile*, a comprehensive book on natural beekeeping, and regular contributor to *American Bee Journal*, *Bee Culture*, *Acres U.S.A.*, and major other publications. He lives on a forest homestead in the Ozarks where he catches wild honeybee swarms and keeps bees in several dozen easy-to-build horizontal hives. Leo teaches natural beekeeping at his apiary and around the country and internationally. His website (including free hive plans): www.HorizontalHive.com

"We just finish raking up the splendor of autumn, when it comes time to shovel the glory of winter." (Aucher Unkows)

Re-Purpose Corner

Dish Scrubbie

Citrus bag & Terry cloth rag



1. Cut ends off the netting.
2. Cut netting in half.
3. Fold edges in.
4. Fold to quarters.
5. Cut rag so that when doubled over, it's a little larger than the folded netting. Fold and stitch edges.

6. Pin netting and zig zag stitch around the edge, securing it to the rag.
7. Attach center of netting by quilt stitching lines, shapes or names. Whatever you'd like.

Re-using items see as trash is fun and exciting. With our creativity, we can amplify and more thoroughly enjoy our resources. Please consider submitting your own re-purposing ideas for the next edition of The Ozark Agrarian.

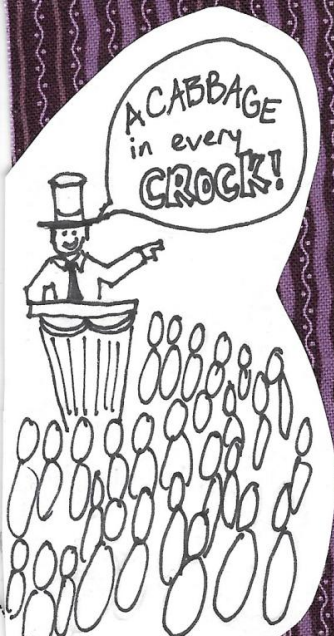
Sauerkraut

*It's more than just a condiment,
My very favorite lacto-ferment.
Oh, Sauerkraut, ferment divine!*

On salads, sandwiches, or on the side.

*It's pro-biotic! Rich in vitamin K,
Go get you a cabbage and make some today.
Chop it, crush it, add salt from the sea,
Packed into a crock, what a fine sight to see.
My mouth starts a waterin' in anticipation,
Oh, how I love the art of fine fermentation.
Here's to the salad with all the clout,
Three big cheers for Sauerkraut!*

*Salt Ratio =
.2 Tbsp/cup of
chopped cabbage*





Beaver Logic (The Slough) by Ken Boschert, Gentle Karma Farm

Below my stone bluff there is a slough (pronounced: slew). This slough is a remnant of the old stream bed that was once part of Beaver Creek, which now runs several hundred feet away to the East. Water still collects there from rain runoff and from small springs that enter from sources beneath the ridge. The soil there is too porous to hold water for very long and, in the height of summer, the tiny springs cannot keep up with evaporation and the earth's leaching effect. The shallow lagoon dries up leaving its mud bottom swollen and cracked in the sun. Other times, water spills from its shallow basin and into the surrounding field creating, in essence, the perfect algae scum covered, mosquito infested swamp. Surely I could improve upon this unacceptable situation. I took it into my mind that if the water level of the lagoon were lowered about six inches, water would not run into the field thereby fixing the mosquito problem.

Convinced of my logic and armed with a trusty spade, I set about the task of creating a narrow trench through the earthen dam created by some unknown farmer decades before to contain the water for thirsty livestock. I was careful to make the trench just six inches lower than the existing water line before I dug away the last few inches of earth that separated the pool from my excavation. Suddenly, water came rushing into my small trench and the slough began to drain. I was reassured I had made the right decision as large sections of green algae began breaking loose in the current and were swept away leaving a clear water surface behind. Water and nutrients began running into the small drainage ditch, that led away from the slough, that eventually made its way down to Beaver Creek. I could envision this little tributary springing to new life, refreshed by this new source of water. My, I was certainly becoming an excellent steward of this land! I lay my head down that night and happily fell into a very self-satisfied sleep. The next day I rushed back down to the slough to view my handy work. As I approached, I could see the flow of water had ceased. Apparently some debris, freed by the current, had been sucked into my trench and had cut off the flow of water. This I cleared in a short time and again my project began to function beautifully. Within a couple of days, the small drainage ditch did spring to life as expected. Tadpoles were swimming furiously as minnows nipped at their tails. I even saw a small water snake chasing the minnows. Surely this was what nature had intended for this place before the dam had been created so long ago.

The next day, however, I again found that my little trench had become clogged with more branches and leaves. Water was no longer flowing into my little "creek". I cleared it but was now curious about how labor intensive this little project was going to be? It seemed that every time I cleared an obstruction, within 24 hours the trench was clogged again. Where was all this "trash" coming from? I began to have my suspicions which were confirmed the following day. Again, debris had created a dam which completely stopped the flow of water. But this time, the dam maker had left a signature. On top of the pile of brush lay a large dollop of mud that had been slapped flat by a large flat tail, a beaver tail! In a flash of insight, it suddenly occurred to me that the name "Beaver Creek" had been chosen for a reason. I got the message, alright, but was not to be outdone by an overgrown rodent with a fancy tail. I became a self-declared "Dam Destroyer". No matter how often I removed them, though, the dams would reappear by the next morning. Finally I had to admit defeat and the drainage ditch again dried up.

A few weeks later a friend of mine, a professional botanist, was visiting and I took her down to the slough to discuss the situation. I got the impression she was not impressed with my water project. After spending some time hiking the length of the slough and making several entries in her note book, she finally gave me that raised eyebrow look and announced that, "Even though the earthen dam had been created artificially by man years before, Nature had adapted to create what was now a perfectly balanced and fully functioning ecosystem complete with an extremely rich diversity of plant life unique to the present conditions." I got her message which was essentially, "It's perfect, leave it alone!" The most cerebral response I could muster was, "Oh . . . wow." After that, I began to look at my slough a little differently. The "mosquito infested swamp" was actually the center piece of a diverse, complicated, and interdependent circle of life. From the rock outcrops above, I have since observed different species of water turtles, fish, muskrats, and even the pre-historic looking alligator snapping turtle. I have come to appreciate the many beautiful and strange looking plants that explode in multicolors every Spring and Summer and I've observed the flock of migrating swallows that nest each year in the cavities within the stone bluff. I admire how they roll and tumble through the air as they feed voraciously on the mosquitos the slough offers up for their sustenance. My observations from the bluff led me to discover the agave, one of only two cactus plants native to Missouri. I have also found which parts of the bluff are covered with the exotic looking plant with only three leaves, the purple trillium. I then discovered a grove of small trees growing tenuously within the shelter of a tiny microclimate that exists between the bluff and the pond, and our State's only native tropical fruit, the paw paw.

The slough experience has slowed me down as I now consider carefully any change I might want make to what already exists on this land. I have taken pause and considered my own past when I've been so eager to rush in and "fix" things that weren't even broken. Now, my daily challenge is to figure out my own proper place within the surrounding landscape as I am just beginning to understand what the beavers knew all along. There is precious little we can do to improve upon what God and Nature have already created, here in our beautiful Ozark home.



The Meadow Loft

On the square in Mountain Grove MO, above Meadowbrook Natural Health Foods, is a Sustainable Living Community Center. Our motto, adopted from the Friends of the Farm Resettlement Congress, is "All Things in Health".

Our current focus is on healing arts and providing incubating space for local sustainable projects, co-ops and small business. In-house healing arts businesses are the anchor and financial life blood for the space.

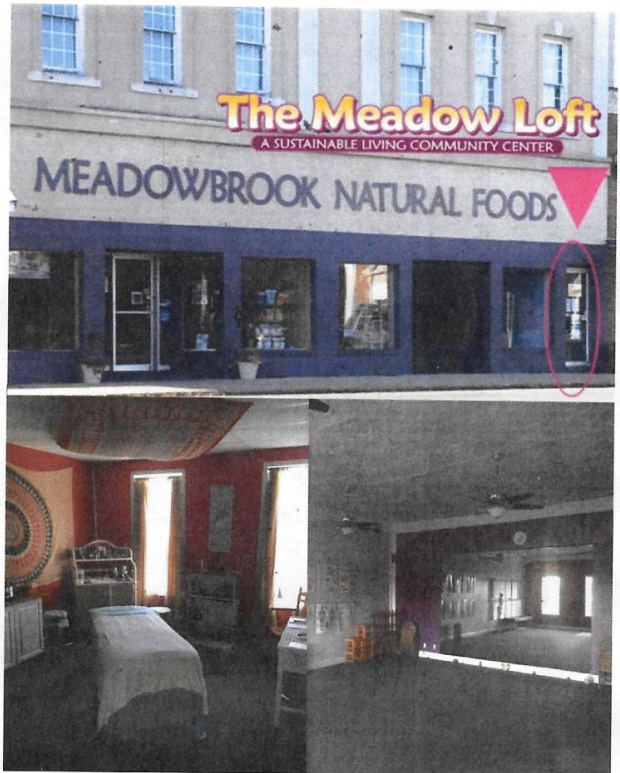
Several discussion groups make up the "We". The two basic entry level groups are the Compassionate Communication and Positive Living classes. These classes represent the fundamental philosophies of the Meadow Loft, encouraging the use of compassionate communication, critical thinking, and local governing to arrive at affective networking and action taken towards sustainability.

Currently we have a massage practice room, a Studio Clinic for yoga and other body movement and education classes, and a library and Internet lounge. Also available are a cloth and fiber room and a fix-it space. The fiber room is stocked with sewing machines and scrap fabric, and houses a barn loom waiting for assembly to see what it needs to be in working condition. The fix-it space is collecting tools and has several work benches for projects. It is the hope that these two spaces will combine in a larger location into a Makers Space in conjunction with Ozark Vitality as it moves into Wright County. The Meadow Loft is also an Art Gallery high-lighting local Ozark art. We do have space for more!

Future projects are an after school/home school program, community garden projects and a certified kitchen. The school program is to offer electives in health, life skills, tutoring, the ML fundamentals, and promoting self discovery. The certified kitchen intends to be supplied with food by the community garden projects, thus feeding the students and faculty, and incubate a farm to fork eatery. It will also be available for entrepreneurs wanting to establish value added food product. We also hope to help promote our local Farmers Market on the square and discover ways to network with them.

There is currently a kitchen to be used now, but it is not certified. It has a household standard sink and refrigerator, dehydrator, crock pots, hot plates etc. We use it for community events and such now. We are excited to announce that we have purchased a range top oven combo and hope to have it wired in December. There is much to be done to certify. Stay tuned for details in the coming months.

The Meadow Loft welcomes more people to join our community. We recommend to get aquatinted you attend a discussion group! For direct inquiries you can contact vendoni_woodfairy@yahoo.com, 573.286.2863 OR find us and LIKE our FB page and ask to join the group page.



Did you know?
Pansies will freeze solid,
but defrost when the sun hits
them. They also bloom all
winter! You can still plant
them now if you can find
plants. From the Baxter County Master
Gardeners "Ozark Green Thumb" 12/2017

Buy, Beg, Barter, or Borrow ≡ CLASSIFIEDS ≡

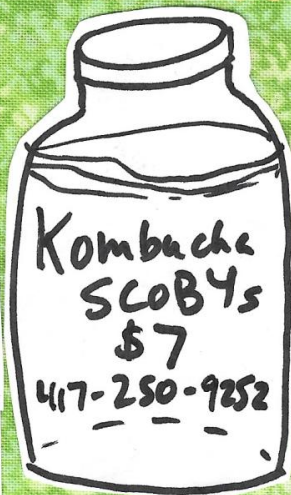
2-day natural beekeeping workshop with Dr. Leo Sharashkin, Rockbridge, MO, March 24-25, 2018, and you can get \$100 off registration fees by using coupon code 100SWARMS when you register at HorizontalHive.com (discount expires 12/31/2017; there are currently 10 seats left).

Wages Brewing Company in West Plains is always looking for farmers/etc to work with. From ingredients for beer, to artisan beer/food dinners, to providing a meeting space, and even the art on our walls, we like to do as much as we can to intermingle. Find them online or Call Phil Wages at (417) 293-3119 email: phil@wagesbrewco.com

Any interest in a kid's educational group?? Homeschooling mom looking for kids and families to have fun and learn with. Also happy to tutor elementary aged kids for trade. Dora area. Contact: Chelsea Lyn - (417)449-4092 chelseathemermaid@gmail.com



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The Sorghum Consortium, based in the Bull Shoals Lake Basin on the Missouri Ozarks Plateau, is a partnership of folks cooperating to create a more self-sustaining and resilient community by working together in local food production. Our 100% pure sorghum syrup is made from sweet sorghum grown without any chemical fertilizers or pesticides. CALL

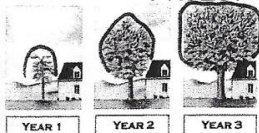
32 FL OZ (1 QT) 946ML ⁴¹⁷⁻⁶⁷⁹⁻⁰⁴⁴⁶

PRODUCT IN FACILITY NOT REQUIRED TO BE INSPECTED BY MO. DEPT. OF HEALTH

L'isola farm, located in Vanzant, is looking for volunteers, long term residents or something in-between. We employ permaculture techniques, are fully organic and have a lot of fun natural-construction projects in the works. For more info please contact "jamie" ji, theoriginaljii@gmail.com

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Day laborers at \$10/hour + for most work, repairs, fending, electrical, remodeling, etc. We have a team of workers living here. Oran Mor, Squires greeneearthalive@gmail.com 417-250-9252

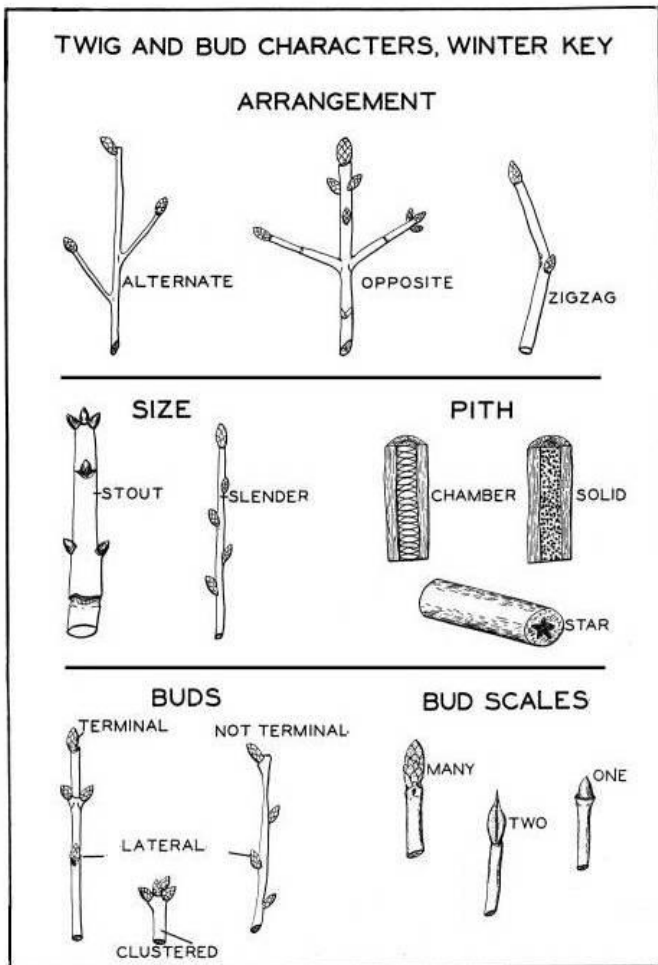
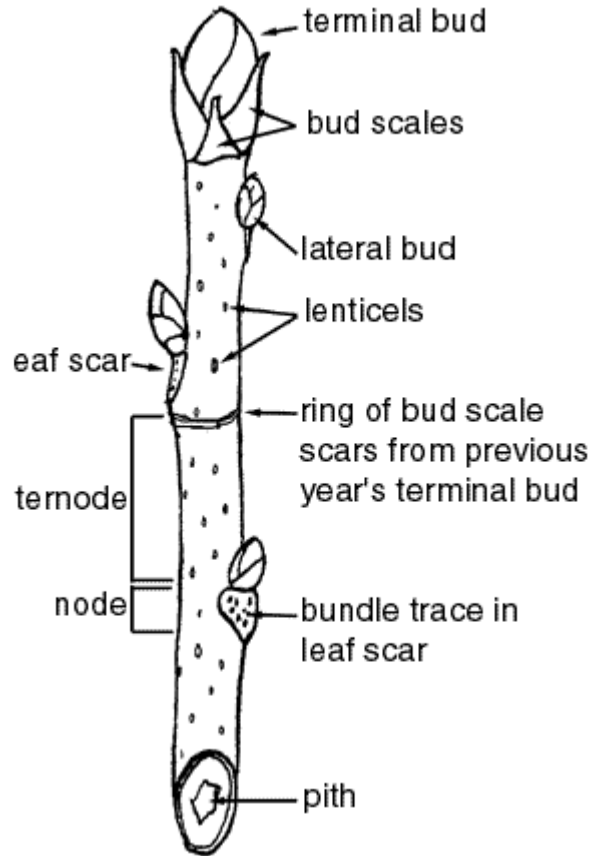
Herbal tinctures made with herbs from our land - \$10/1 oz. \$15/2 oz. Catnip, Chamomile, Cleavers, Echinacea, Goldenrod, Lemon Balm, Motherwort, Mugwort, Passion flower, Red Clover, Tulsi (Holy Basil), Yarrow. Regeneration Oil \$24/4 oz. This healing oil can be used for cuts, bruises, arthritis, eczema, rashes, and lots more! An excellent addition to any first aid kit. herbal smoking blends and herbal teas. All of our herbals are made from plants grown and harvested at Oran Mor Community. Contact Dez at greeneearthalive@gmail.com 417-250-9252 or rootsapothecary.etsy.com

**** **Kid's Field Guide** **** **Exploring Twigs in Winter**

The Language of Nature

Everything in nature has a way of expressing itself. Humankind has learned so much by simply observing the natural world. As creatures who like to communicate what we see, people have created words to describe their observations. Getting familiar with some of these descriptive terms expands our own language, giving us a way to talk about what we see.

Even in the winter time, nature can speak to us. Each plant has a particular pattern of growth. In dormancy, these patterns are used for identification. Even a simple twig can tell a lot about a woody plant.



Every feature of a twig or branch gives us more identification clues. Get outside and write down what you find. What color is the bark? Is it smooth or rough? Is the bud terminal (at the tip) or off to the side? Use these words in your observations, and soon they will be like a second language to you!

Arrangement – How the twigs are growing from the branch.

Size – How thick or thin the twig is.

Pith – The texture on the inside of the twig.

Buds – How the buds are arranged on the twig.

Bud Scales – How many protective scales cover the bud.

Lenticels – Raised pores along the twig.

Leaf Scar – The mark left on the twig after the leaf falls.

For a fun challenge, check out a field guide with full stretches and try to ID some of the twigs you've found.