

MUSCOOT MONTHLY

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MUSCOOT SHINES BRIGHT DURING HOLIDAY LIGHTS

The Holiday Lights on the Farm event at Muscot was a festive success, drawing over 2,000 visitors across six enchanting nights. The farm's barns were beautifully illuminated with thousands of dazzling lights, creating a magical atmosphere for all who attended. Families enjoyed a variety of activities, including a raffle with exciting prizes and the opportunity for families to take

photos with Santa Claus. The event also featured a heartwarming letter-writing activity, with hundreds being written to our animals at the farm, spreading holiday cheer. A heartfelt thank you to all the families who attended – Muscot Farm would not be as special as it is without the support of our wonderful community. Your participation helped make this event unforgettable and filled our farm with holiday spirit! - Jen Campbell



TAPPING SWEET SUCCESS

Something sweet is coming to Muscot Farm! If you're a seasoned sugarmaker, you have already begun thinking about and possibly prepping for the upcoming sugaring season. What is "sugaring?" Here's the short and sweet explanation. Whether you are making syrup at home or as a commercial producer, the process is the same. A hole is drilled into the xylem, or sap layer, of a sugar maple tree. Sap is collected, then boiled.

The boiling process causes water to evaporate, leaving a more concentrated sugary liquid called maple syrup. Sugaring can only happen in the winter when we have day time temperatures above freezing and night time temperatures below freezing. That change in temperature causes sap to freeze and thaw, which basically creates pressure in the tree resulting in sap flow. You can tap (drill a hole) other trees, such as birch, but sugar maple trees have the highest concentration of sugar in the sap, usually around 2%.

Fun fact: sugar maples only grow in the northeast and Canada. Another fun fact: New York's state tree is the sugar maple. There are so many reasons to love living in the northeast and I hope being the home of maple syrup is now on your list!

The art of sugar making began hundreds of years ago when the native people discovered this sweet elixir. There are many stories regarding the origin of maple syrup. One story involves a woman who, while on her way to the river to collect water for dinner, discovered water leaking from a tree. She collected the water, saving her the walk, and used it to cook with. The cooking process resulted in an amazing maple flavored dinner.

A second story involves the Creator and Gluskabe. The Creator gifted the people sap as thick and sweet as honey, but when the people should have been preparing for winter, hunting and maintaining their homes and tools, Gluskabe couldn't find them. Instead, they were found in the maple trees, bellies full of the sweet sap. As a lesson for the people, the Creator had Gluskabe fill the maple trees with water. The people now had to work in order to enjoy the sweet treat and the sweet sap would only flow for a short time before the start of spring.

Regardless of the origin of maple syrup, we continue to enjoy it on our pancakes and as a natural substitute for sugar in recipes. If you want to learn more about the process, make sure to check the calendar for our upcoming sugaring programs here at Muscoot Farm! - Mindy Swope-Quintero



ANIMAL PREPARATION FOR WINTER

Are you looking forward to winter? The way the snow blankets tree branches right after a fresh snowfall is our favorite here at Muscoot. Many of us love to do activities such as building a snowman, having a snowball fight, or going skiing and snowboarding when it snows. We as humans have it pretty easy with our preparations for the cold months. We switch our summer clothes for our winter ones, gather extra blankets, and turn on the heat in our homes. Animals have a lot more to think about before the cold is here to stay.

As this time of year sets in, all animals have to do their biological part in order to prepare for winter. Whether it's finding a shelter to keep them toasty at night, growing a thicker coat, eating more to bulk up, or collecting and storing food; there is a lot of groundwork that needs completion. To do your part at home, this is the time of year where it is helpful to have bird feeders out to provide wild birds with foods they can no longer easily find. Our farm animals here have assistance from our farm staff to take on winter.

Here on the farm, we bring some of our animals inside for the winter. Our horses and donkeys spend their days in outdoor paddocks and are brought in at the end of the day. Our sheep and goats have been moved from their fully outdoor paddocks to indoor pens within the lower dairy barn. Here they have the choice of whether or not to stay inside or explore the outdoors. All of our animals will grow thicker coats to adapt to the cold. Blankets and extra hay are given to animals that might need a little extra help staying warm. Hay and grain are provided during morning and afternoon chores, and the amounts given are adjusted during the winter months when there is less grass accessible to graze on. Water heaters are essential in every pen so that the water does not freeze during the day or through the night.

Our animals receive a ton of extra love and attention during these winter months to ensure their mental and physical well-beings. Come visit our animals any day - we are open throughout the winter! -Sarah Pieratti



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