

At Sanborn Mills Farm, preserving the past and planning for the future go hand in hand!

Sanborn Mills Farm

April 2018 eNews



www.sanbornmills.org

Getting ready for growing . . .

As soon the frost is out of the ground, our farm staff gets out into the fields and starts preparing for spring planting of our vegetables and grains. Step one is to plow up the fields. We use draft animal traction power combined with human power to do this work. Our goal is to get good turnover of the soil.

Next is to harrow and "pick rocks," sometimes referred to as "New England potatoes." Those who have gardens and farms in New Hampshire know that every winter frost pushes up rocks that were left behind when glaciers ground through the Granite State during the last ice age. This seemingly unending supply of field stone accounts for the vast number of stone walls that lace through New Hampshire.

Harrowing involves pulling a piece of equipment with multiple discs through the field to cut and level the soil. This prepares the field for seeding, leaving it with plenty of [tilth](#) and hopefully as few rocks as possible.



Farm Educator Ray Ramsey driving Ruff & Tuff while Jenn Merrill operates the plow to get the Teaching Garden ready.



Plowing with the oxen starts with finding the center of the field and plowing from the center out.



In between rows, both people & oxen take a breather and are reassured that the work is appreciated.



Tyler Allen picking rocks in the new field at the Merrill farm where we will be planting field corn, oats, and flax.



Tyler hauling the "New England potatoes" to a pile that will soon make its way to a new stone wall.



Teamster John Schlang working with Percheron horses Willie & Rose to harrow the new fields.

Prevent plant diseases before they get a foot hold . . .

Last year [fire blight](#) took a terrible toll on our pear, quince, and apple trees. At this year's [NOFA](#) (Northeast Organic Farming Association) conference gardener and author Michael Phillips spoke on the merits of using natural remedies for preventing disease.

So, gardener Michelle Smith got to work this month on a prevention campaign and sprayed our fruit trees with a formula listed in Michael's book [The Holistic Orchard](#). It consists of neem oil, liquid fish, mother culture of effective microbes, black strap molasses, liquid kelp (or seaweed extract), and liquid soap emulsifier.

For more information on how to support the healthy growth of your fruits & berries, check out Michael Phillips' book [The Holistic Orchard - Tree Fruits and Berries the Biological Way](#).



Workshop season is underway . . .

April started off cold & damp but the first blacksmithing students went right to work at their forges with enthusiasm.



Erik Meyer of Goffstown, NH was one of the first to use the Blacksmith Studio this season.



Craig Simpson of Canterbury, NH bending a section of his trivet with the help of instructor Garry Kalajian.

The weekend of April 21 & 22 was perfect weather for our first oxen workshop of the season. Eight students journeyed from New York, Maryland, Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont to take the Oxen Basics for the Teamster & Team workshop led by Tim Huppe, assisted by Ray Ramsey, Tyler Allen, Ben Allen, John Schlang and Greg Wright.



Trevor Snow of Stetson, ME driving Ben & Bill.



Brian Jerome of Brandon, VT un-yoking oxen at the end of the workshop day.

If you are interested in taking a workshop at the farm, there is one space in the [Garden Tools](#) workshop and plenty of room in the [Camp Frying Pan](#) workshop. [Floor Cloths](#) has a few spaces in July. Yoke Making is offered in [May](#) and again in [September](#). Oxen skills focused on the garden & farm is offered in [June](#) and the skills needed to work oxen in the woods is covered in [October](#). Check out the [calendar section](#) of our website for more information.

Real world learning for high school students . . .

This season we embarked upon our first special educational program for high school students. This April eight students from Bow High School spent three days with us during their "intersession" getting a basic introduction to blacksmithing. The "intersession" experience is designed to provide an alternative education in a real world setting. The many processes involved in blacksmithing provide a unique way to learn some of the fundamental principles found in what some call the [STEM](#) - or we like to call the [STEAM](#) curriculum (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math).

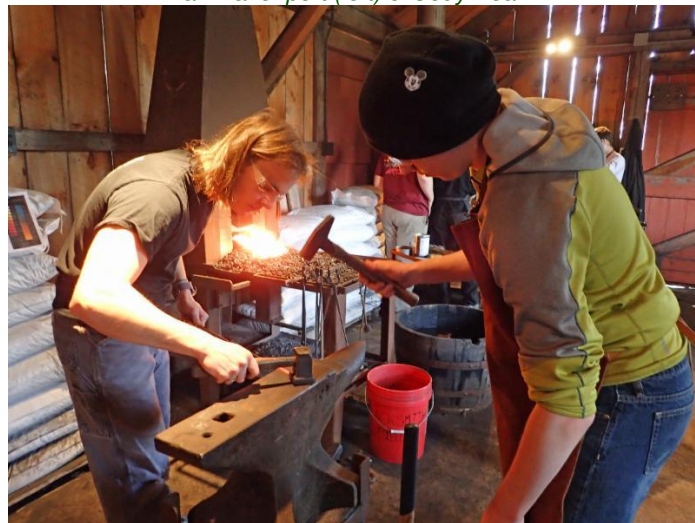


The assembled group from Bow High School holding their completed projects. Instructor Garry Kalajian is second from the left and BHS teacher Chris Naimie is on the far right.

The workshop was taught Garry Kalajian assisted by Bow High School instructor Chris Naimie who teaches math, physics and engineering. The students - a mix of juniors & sophomores - worked in teams and learned the basics skills of coal fire management, tapering, drawing out, upsetting, twisting, and riveting. Using iron, copper and brass, each student went home with a unique kitchen implement - some created a spoon, while others made a spatula.



Ian Davenport (left) & Cody Bean.



London Warburton (left) & Riley King.



Natalie Kay (left) & Sam Berube.



Allison Leger (left) & Hope Rector.

For more information on STEM to STEAM, check out these websites:

<http://stemtosteam.org/>

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/stem-to-steam-strengthens-economy-john-maeda>

What's new at the sawmill ?



Millwright Brian Clough with our newly installed Simonds saw blade.

After over 50 years of service, we have replaced our circular saw blade with a brand new 52" Simonds Trademark Series Inserted Tooth Saw blade made from Nickel Alloy plate. [Simonds](#) operates out of Fitchburg, MA and has been making saws for over 180 years. The old blade was showing wear on the shoulders that hold the teeth, thinning to the point that it was not producing an accurate cut.



Close up of the new blade showing the shoulders & inset teeth.

We are all ready for another season of sawing heavy timbers and lumber for our ongoing construction projects.

Celebrating craft at Canterbury Shaker Village

Sanborn Mills Farm Manager Tim Huppe and Farm Educator Ray Ramsey will be demonstrating ox yoke making at Canterbury Shaker Village's Traditional Craft Days event **June 2 & 3**. The event is an opportunity to meet craftsmen who are teaching their craft around the state and get inspired to learn from them.

For more information, visit the Canterbury Shaker Village [website](#).



How to visit the farm

Though we are not open for visitors on a daily basis, group tours can be scheduled from spring to fall. [Click here](#) for more information on how to arrange a tour.

The best time to see the farm is during the annual [Open House & Water-Powered Mill Demonstration Day](#).



Photo Credits:

Photo of John Schlang with the harrow by Ray Ramsey.

All other photos by Lynn Martin Graton.



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A traditional New Hampshire farm and nonprofit organization dedicated to sustainability, creativity, and preserving folklife skills and agricultural knowledge so that the best of the past can help shape our future.

