

Northern Path Family Farm

Spring Newsletter - 2018



Yes, we know the calendar says that it is spring already, but judging by the stunted growth of the daffodils and the still very small buds on our apricots, you would think that we were still in the throes of a cold March. Cold it may still be, at least the snow hasn't hampered our efforts to get an early start on building our woodpile for next year's heating season. February and March is a good window to begin the ritual of buckin', splittin', and stackin' to build our supply. And our efforts have paid off...here we are in mid-April and we already have our next season's supply 'in the bank'!



This winter came with many challenges here on the farm. It was a winter of many repairs. Let's see, our furnace went out over Christmas break, which lead to frozen *and* burst pipes. Spent some weeks replacing all the plumbing. Fixed the furnace. Pulled our well pump and rebuilt the motor. Replaced the well pressure tank and all the well house plumbing. Oh, and ears? Can you say, starter motor, alternator, wheel bearing (2!), shackle brackets, drum brakes, disc brakes, upper control arm, tie rod ends, thermostat, yada yada yada...this list goes on. I suppose these are the conundrums that are supposed to pop up during our winter 'downtime' from farming.

Wait, farming? Oh, we can't wait to get back to that. Folks we have 50 chicks happily being reared in an indoor brooder. These puffballs will graduate into the most delicious pasture-raised broilers come early June. This will be the first of two batches of broiler chickens that we will run as we do every year along with a run of broad-breasted white turkeys. Please take note that we have established our customer on-farm pick-up dates for 2018. Look ahead in this newsletter to page 5 for details and mark your calendars!

Happy Spring to you and yours!!

Happenings on the farm...



In early April we took the opportunity to uproot 18 English walnut saplings from our tree nursery and transplant, while they were still dormant, to their permanent location on the farm. The next time you visit us take a moment to check out the two large English walnut trees that were planted on each side of our driveway over 60 years ago. These two trees serve as the seed bank from which we gather the ripe nuts in the fall and plant them in the nursery the following spring. What you see in the picture above are saplings grown from seeds collected in fall 2016. The seeds were cold stratified in a refrigerator during the winter and then planted out in the nursery in spring 2017. They then sprouted and grew to 2-3' whips, which we then uprooted the following spring (last week!) and transplanted to a new spot in the orchard. English walnuts are the variety that are most commonly sold in grocery stores. Known for their thin shells, they are easy to crack (MUCH easier than black walnuts) and are delicious. We'll continue to propagate this variety in the years to come. If you'd like to try to grow your own, let us know this fall and we'd be glad to save you some seeds!

Our fruit and nut orchard is still in establishment phase. If we're lucky we may get our first sampling of persimmons and hazelnuts this year as I have a feeling they may set their first fruit. We're also eagerly awaiting the opportunity to experience our first taste of pawpaws, chestnuts, pecans, and hardy kiwi that still have a few years to go yet.

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Our first year beekeeping was a great experience and we are scaling up this year by expanding to another colony for a total of 3 hives in 2018. Last season we were able to harvest a minimal amount of honey for ourselves, leaving the majority with the bees to keep them strong through winter. Aside from the delicious slices of buttered-honey toast that we enjoy with morning breakfast, we found the winter months a perfect time to begin brewing our own mead! It doesn't get any easier than adding yeast, honey, water, and oh yeah, time, to come up with a fabulous drink that is oft referred to as the drink of the Gods! We should have quantities available during our future on-farm pick up days.

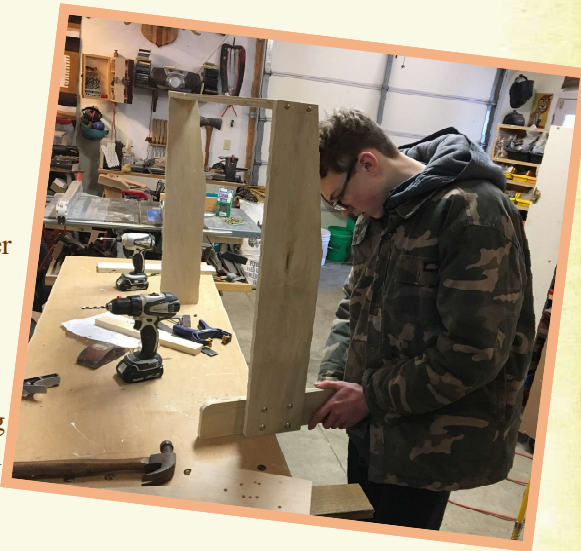


Speaking of bees, after building a handful of top bar hives for ourselves and friends, we are now offering custom-built top bar hives for sale. Shown left is the style of hive that we're producing in our own woodshop made of rot-resistant cedar and with an incorporated observation window which lets you get an unobtrusive look at the bees inside the hive as they busily work their combs. We're selling these hives for \$375 with a 3-week lead time for delivery. Please let us know if you'd like to incorporate one in your beeyard this year.



Aidan's Corner

Hi yall! It's been a little while since my last report. It has been a hard winter. Basically with this writing I wanted to let you know that I'm busy doing band (I play drums), track, and theater so I have been very busy. But it's been fun! I still help with the daily chores, mostly I've been helping with the wood cutting. We've never had so much wood stacked as we do this year. I also spent some time in the workshop with dad during the winter building some neat projects. One cool project we built was a custom guitar stand for all the guitars we have. Here is a picture of me building it and what it looks like after we were done and the guitars were in it.



Making a guitar stand.

The other thing I wanted to write about was that for the first time we had our outdoor barn cat, Marbles, give birth to kittens! There are four of them in the barn. They are in the barn now and they are still so young that they haven't been outside yet. Here is a shot of them in the barn.



New kittens born on the farm!



2018 Pastured Poultry

For 2018 our pastured chicken pricing is **\$4.25/lb.** To remind our customers, we use only certified organic grains as a complement to the natural pasture our birds obtain for their diet. Dressed birds generally weigh on average between 3.5-5 lbs. Please follow the below instructions on how to order:

1). Email us at:

northernpathfamilyfarm@gmail.com

and let us know how many birds you will commit to purchase.

2). Come out to the farm on the announced on-farm pick-up date to pay for and take home your fully-dressed birds.

Fall Turkeys

For 2018 our pastured turkey pricing is **\$4.50/lb.** Our fully-dressed turkeys can weigh anywhere from 12lbs (hens) up to 25lbs (toms). Ordering instructions are the same as above, simply send us an email to confirm your commitment to purchase and what quantity. We encourage you to place your order early as the number of birds is limited.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

CHICKENS

1st On-Farm Pick Up - Sunday June 10th

2nd On-Farm Pick Up - Sunday Oct. 7th

TURKEYS

On-Farm Pick Up - Sunday Nov. 18th

We receive our birds as one-day old chicks which we initially raise in a protected and heated brooder, after which they are transferred out on pasture. There they will enjoy a daily diet of fresh greens mixed in with a little protein from the variety of insects made available to them in a pasture that's completely free of insecticides, herbicides, and pesticides which makes for some of the healthiest, cleanest, nutrient-dense chicken you can find!

Be Sure To Visit Us At:
www.northernpathfamilyfarm.com

8775 Roberts Road
Gregory, MI 48137

*Thank you for supporting
your local farm!*

