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Mission statement of Spring Hill Farm: to preserve and promote the legacy of Muriel Church through the continuance of agricultural operations and the stewardship of both open land and forests, while providing educational and recreational opportunities to the public.

Issue  
**11**

## Spring Hill Farm –SPRING 2024

- \* *This is our High Tunnel issue!*
- \* *Butternut trees*
- \* *Winter Fest Review*
- \* *Dogs on Leashes*
- \* *YOUR Photos*

**Don't Miss  
An  
Issue!**



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This is how the High Tunnel at SHF looked on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Read on for its new look.....



**SHF FUN FACT:**

**“...my immortality and my castle...”**

In the book IN THOSE DAYS The Life and Times of Muriel Church as told to Ronald Baptiste, Muriel spoke of her love of Spring Hill Farm. “The hub of my farm is the farmhouse. In a sense it is my immortality and my castle. To me it seems that my house will stand forever.” The Muriel C. Church Spring Hill Farm Trust and the Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee along with many volunteers work to ensure that the house will stand forever. That is the legacy of Muriel Church.



**Birds are nesting !**



**Spring Snow Sunset at SHF fields!**

*On the Horizon*

**Mark your Calendars...**

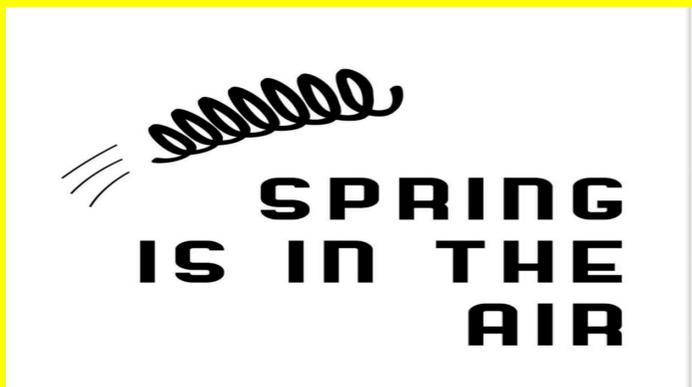
**SHF Benefit Trail Ride  
(Horses on Lane Rd. Fields)  
Sat. Sep.7th**

**Annual  
Fall Festival at SHF  
Sat. Sep.21st**



**Finally, my Winter Fat is gone.  
Now I have Spring Rolls.**

**--- Unknown**



## The Wind Takes on the SHF High Tunnel

There is an old English proverb that most people are familiar with: “March winds and April showers bring May flowers.”

This year’s exceptionally strong March winds were more than just a predecessor to April showers at Spring Hill Farm - they put the high tunnel to the test. It’s an understatement to say that the high tunnel’s 8 year old, (4 years past its rating,) plastic covering did not fare very well.



Immediately, a call-to-arms, (arms in this case being hammers, saws and drills) was put out and once again, volunteers to the rescue!

After checking with the Town’s Building Department and confirming that this repair work did not require permitting, the volunteers reported for duty. The first step was to remove what was left of the old cover and prepare for the new. It didn't take long to determine that the plastic sheathed, wood-framed end walls were also showing their age and in need of significant repair.

With a “let’s do it right” but save money wherever we can attitude, the end wall repair work commenced. Using donated windows, a donated storm door, leftover materials from previous SHF projects, many miscellaneous pieces of scrounged and donated lumber, and some purchased materials, the end walls were cost effectively reconstructed and are now better looking and sturdier than ever!



There are a few remaining tasks before the new plastic cover can be applied which will be the final step of the repair work. The care and approach used for these end wall repairs will ensure that any future repair or replacement of the main plastic cover, will be economical and predictable.

## What is a High Tunnel, anyway?

With all this talk about the high tunnel, the question often arises.....What is a high tunnel? (Isn't it just a regular greenhouse?...No.) The short answer is that the main difference between a high tunnel and a greenhouse is that the high tunnel (also called a "hoop house") is considered "temporary" and most often used for growing crops in-ground. The use of the high tunnel extends the growing season of the crops, allowing for earlier starts and later ends of the growing seasons. There is no auxiliary heat system with a high tunnel and, therefore, is not utilized year round.

Conventional greenhouses are mostly permanent structures that grow the crops in containers and on platforms throughout the year. With greenhouses, there is some sort of heat source to keep the temperature within the structure to approximately 70 degrees. (And cooling system, as required).

The High Tunnel at SHF was first erected through a grant that was awarded to the SHF Trust in 2016. It has been a thriving haven for many crops over the years and with its recent repair work, promises to continue its run.

## Maintenance around the farm is never finished

The driveway to the trails took a beating over the winter, but the new stone made a big difference.



## Butternut Trees at SHF

There are a few tree species struggling in New Hampshire and we can add the butternut tree to that list. Last year we found a butternut tree on Spring Hill Farm property and for this newsletter we decided to do a little research on this tree. Butternut trees are shade intolerant and grow in full sun, growing rapidly as young trees. They become very nice shade trees with a straight trunk. Early farmers planted the nuts near farmhouses to make it easy to gather the nuts in the fall. The oily butternuts were used in baking and candy making, especially maple-butternut candy in New England. Husks were used to make a soft orange-yellow dye for work clothes, and the wood was used in fine cabinetry and later for veneer.

Butternut Trees live for 75 years and are hardy in cold climates. The long oval-shaped nuts with a very hard shell are an easy way to identify the tree.

Unfortunately, fungal canker disease hit butternut trees and they began to decline rapidly in the 1960s. Today, over 90% of the remaining butternut trees are infected with it, and virtually all cutting of butternut trees has stopped. Butternut canker disease was most likely introduced from Asia, through the St. Lawrence Seaway, into the ports around the Great Lakes. Symptoms of the butternut canker on the tree include many dead branches, discoloration of leaves in early to mid-summer, and the creation of many cankers or dead lesions all over the tree. Signs of the disease include oozing black liquid from wounds, black powdery material surrounding dead spots on the bark, and the formation of target like cankers around the base of the tree. The New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands has created a project to harvest shoots and buds, called 'scion wood' from the few apparently disease resistant trees still alive in New Hampshire. The project was started in 1996. Since then, they have surveyed more than 3000 possibly resistant trees at over 300 sites statewide. To date, they have found only eight butternut trees that meet the strict standards and show signs of significant resistance to the disease.

From those 'super trees' they have established a one acre seed orchard at the state forest nursery in Boscawen and a smaller orchard at the Fox Research Forest in Hillsboro. Hopefully the butternut tree will make a comeback with the help of the dedicated people behind this project.

### References

- Anne Krantz, NH Big Tree Team
- Butternut Restoration Project, NH Division of Forests and Lands, Kyle Lombard



## New Dog Leash Regulation at Spring Hill Farm

Recently, two “all dogs must be kept on a leash” signs were posted at Spring Hill Farm. One off Towle Road and the other by Shepard Home Road. The Spring Hill Farm Advisory Committee decided to put signs up for a couple of different reasons. Safety concerns were considered because we had received complaints of dogs off leash and some trail users were frightened by the dogs, and the other main reason was for protecting habitat.

We found that Spring Hill Farm hosts ground nesting bird species, and these birds are highly sensitive to disruption. If these birds are scared off the nest, they may abandon and leave their eggs or their young. All year long there are mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds utilizing Spring Hill Farm as their home. As we try to balance the need for human recreation with conserving the diverse species located on the farm, sometimes decisions like keeping dogs on leashes and to stay on trails needs to be made. Spring Hill Farm is a multi-use property. We welcome horse riders, biking, walking and also hunting occurs on some areas of the property. Keeping dogs on a leash is now a regulation for these parcels of Spring Hill farm to keep accidents from happening and to protect the habitat.

We understand people wanting to bring their dogs for a nice walk and even a dip in the pond, we just request that dogs stay on their leash and on the trails. We welcome everyone to enjoy Spring Hill Farm and we love to see people and their dogs and horses there. It is just important to remember that Spring Hill Farm is also a conservation property, and we have a duty to protect the wildlife calling Spring Hill Farm their home.



## **SAVE the date and, perhaps, PARTICIPATE!**

It's time to start thinking about the Fall Fest! This year it will be held on **Saturday, September 21** from 10am - 4pm right here at the farm. We are now accepting applications for vendors. Our festival highlights the works of local New England Artisans and Crafters. At only \$15 for a spot, it is a low risk chance for young or beginning entrepreneurs to get their opportunity to introduce their wares at a festival. So click the link below to sign up and reserve the spot for your booth.

Also, do you have a talent you would like to share with our town? We are looking for people interested in doing demonstrations of traditional handicrafts (yarn spinning, basket weaving, blacksmithing, animal demonstrations, woodworking, chain saw carving, etc.). If you are interested please contact us as we would love to talk with you.

Additionally, we welcome anyone interested in volunteering!

**Here is the link to the VENDOR FORM:**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZWX9ioB8RWpA4d7-egBOTcDe4m3rz9j4SztUk-7\\_r7KcJzA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfZWX9ioB8RWpA4d7-egBOTcDe4m3rz9j4SztUk-7_r7KcJzA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

**Fall Fest will be here before you know it!!**



More of “Your Photos” .....(submit to: [SHFtrust@yahoo.com](mailto:SHFtrust@yahoo.com))



Thank you, Deborah Chaze, for this wonderful early AM photo.



Sandy Florence Wright submitted these fun shots of Benny, Rain, Tyrion and Fargo who are taking their owners for a jaunt on the trails at SHF.



In case you missed it, some photos from the SHF Winter Fest

