

Honey Rock News

E-mail honeyrock@ntown.net

(865)-984-0954

honeyrockherbfarm.com

spring 2016

*“Whether the weather be fine,
Whether the weather be not,
Whether the weather be cold,
Whether the weather be hot,
We’ll weather the weather,
Whatever the weather,
Whether we like it or not.”*

Author unknown

Greetings from Honey Rock,

Hope you and yours are well, happy and ready for spring!

We had a great 2015 with Jim’s retirement our gardens looked better, not great but better. It was a fairly good honey year. We only have two hives now, but they seem healthy. We harvested 75 pounds of honey out of one of those hives.

We just finished tapping 3 of our maple trees. From about 8 gallons of sap we got less than a quart of delicious syrup. A lot of work, but worth it.

We lost our sweet 16 year old diabetic cat “Blue” July fourth. Because of his care we haven’t been overnight anywhere in over 10 years. After his passing we took a trip to Wytheville Virginia. For years I have wanted to visit Beagle Ridge Herb Farm. Ellen, the proprietor, is an expert in butterflies. She took us on a tour of her butterfly house and I saw the first Monarch I’ve seen in I don’t know when. She showed us all the different stages of the butterfly eggs, caterpillars, etc. and the different varieties. I’m so careful now as I pick flowers for the market and feel guilty if I disturb one of the “flying flowers” as Ellen calls the butterflies.

In the Garden

*“Cultivators of the earth
Are the most virtuous and
Independent citizens.”*

Thomas Jefferson

If you’re like us I know you can’t wait to get your hands in the dirt (oops, don’t call it dirt) I mean soil. We’re excited to see so many places offering organic seeds. For years we’ve ordered seeds from Johnny’s Selected Seeds and Seed Savors Exchange. We still do, but it’s good to know organic seeds are available, and somebody is listening.

While we’re talking seeds; please never buy tarragon seeds. French tarragon is sterile. You would be buying Russian tarragon, which has the flavor of lawn grass. I wouldn’t waste money on rosemary seeds either. From 100 seeds you may just get a few to germinate, and you won’t know the variety. English thyme plants have only female flowers making it impossible to reproduce from seed. Peppermint is hybrid and is 99% sterile. You should purchase these plants and...we just happen to have these plants available!

Parsley takes forever to germinate. The old saying goes, “parsley goes to the Devil and back 9 times before it will come up.” So many times I’ve given up, dumped the flat and then found 100’s of parsley plants in the compost. It helps to soak parsley seeds overnight. Okra, moonflower, nasturtiums and morning glories are a few other seeds that would benefit from a good soak.

Dill, cilantro, chervil and caraway don’t like to be transplanted. That’s why we don’t sell these plants. You’ll save money and have better plants if you direct sow these seeds in your garden and let them flower and go to seed or resow.

In the Kitchen

Who doesn't love baked potatoes? Here's a simple recipe that's just a bit different.

Herbed Sliced Baked Potatoes

4 medium potatoes
2 Tbsp. butter, melted
3 Tbsp. chopped fresh herbs, (I like sage, rosemary or chives)
4 Tbsp. grated cheddar cheese
2 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese

1. Cut potatoes into thin even slices from top to bottom, being careful not to cut all the way through the bottom of the potatoes. Put potatoes in baking dish, fanning the slices slightly.
2. Drizzle with butter. Sprinkle with herbs, making sure to get them between the slices.
3. Bake at 425 degrees for 45 minutes, or until done. Remove from oven.
4. Sprinkle with cheese. Return to oven until cheese is melted.

In the Bee Yard

We're still concerned with the plight of the honeybees as well as all the other pollinators. The good news locally, the Blount County Beekeepers Association is growing so much their short course, given in February, had to be moved from the library to the Maryville Church of Christ where they have much more room. We still need to be aware of how we grow our gardens, care of our lawns and have more beekeepers.

Bees in the Garden Vegetable Sauce

¼ cup honey
¼ cup butter or margarine
2 Tablespoons minced onion
1 teaspoon thyme, crushed
Salt and pepper, to taste

In saucepan, combine all ingredients and bring to boil: cook for 2 minutes.
Makes about ½ cup.

Tip: Toss with cooked cauliflower or carrots or mix with baked squash.

In the Cottage

Check out our organic gardening supplies. We also have garden tools, gloves, books, hopefully our 3 bee honey, beeswax and beeswax candles.

2016 Herb of the Year Capsicum

The International Herb Association has chosen capsicum herb of the year for its many useful qualities. Most commonly known as peppers their flavors vary from sweet to warm too hot to OW!

When preparing the hot peppers be sure to wear gloves and be careful with the seeds and white membrane. That's where the heat is. You can use peppers dried, ripe, and unripe in pickles and chutneys.

Peppers can be easily started from seed or purchase transplants in late spring. Wait until the soil warms before setting them out. Your peppers will appreciate full sun, well drained good garden soil. They also like an addition of calcium and phosphorus.

Capsicum is high in vitamin C and magnesium. It stimulates blood circulation and digestive system. Many topical arthritis creams contains capsicum. Jalapenos are about as hot as I want to eat, but we use cayenne in different ways. You can put crushed, dried cayennes in winter boots to keep your feet warm. Don't forget your socks! If we have older dried hot peppers we put them in bird food to get even with the squirrels. The birds like it hot I'm told.

We like to get an inexpensive bottle of sherry and stuff it with cayennes. We use just a dash in soups, stews, gravies and sauces. It's great in coffee or tea when you feel like you're getting a cold.

I found this recipe in the book, Peppers Love Herbs, by Ruth Bass.

Garlicky Bean and Pepper Dip

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 fresh jalapeno peppers, cored, seeded and minced
1 small onion, minced
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 can (8-ounce) black beans, drained
1 large sweet green pepper, cored, seeded, and chopped
2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro

1. In the order listed, put the olive oil, jalapenos, onion, garlic, black beans, and peppers in a blender or food processor and puree.
2. Pour into a bowl, stir in the cilantro, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour to allow flavors to blend. Remove 15 minutes before serving. Serve with tortilla chips, corn chips, or celery stalks.

I'd like to get into the varieties of peppers, but Jim is typing this and says I've spent enough time on Herb of the Year.

Farmer's Market

Maryville Farmer's Market is growing leaps and bounds with new vendors and products, but I still hear people say they have never been. I don't understand this.

Blount County Master Gardeners will answer your gardening questions and help kids with crafts to remind them where their food comes from.

Brad Hitch will replace John Dupree in providing us with great local music.

Honey Rock Hours and Days of Operation

Beginning Friday April 1st. we'll be open Tuesday thru Saturday 10 to 5, April thru May. June will be open by appointment, so just give us a call 865-984-0954 or check us out at the Maryville Farmer's Market.

Spring Fever Day at Honey Rock

Hope you will come and help us celebrate this wonderful season, Saturday, April 2, 10 to 5.

We'll have your spring tonic of sassafras tea and herb cookies. Come see what's green in the greenhouse!

Happenings

April 1, Friday, 10 to 5. Honey Rock opening day.

April 2, Saturday, 10 to 5. Spring Fever Day at Honey Rock Herb Farm.

April 23, Saturday 9 to 3. Maryville Farmer's Market opening day.

**May 7, Saturday, St. Andrew's Garden Day.
314 W. Broadway Ave. Maryville, TN**

June 18, Lavender Festival, Jackson Square in Oak Ridge. 8 to 3. Call Barbara at 865-483-0961 for more information.

In Conclusion

We're looking forward to another year of sowing, planting, caring for and offering you our happy, healthy, chemical free plants. We're excited about getting back in the garden and yard. It will be great to see your smiling faces again and hearing about the fun you had growing and enjoying your plants. Until then take care and think spring!

**Peace & Plenty
D. & Jim**
