

GETTIN' PICKIN'

Moon Time Farms offer produce on the vine BY STACEY M. HOLLIS

PHOTO BY STACEY M. HOLLIS

“It’s not a hobby, it’s not a job, it’s a lifestyle.” If you’ve ever made a day of a visit to a u-pick farm, or picked up a CSA box or, heck, even grown your own comestibles straight out of the earth, you may better understand what Moon Time Farm owner Nicki Tabb means when she explains farming as, above all else, a lifestyle.

Moon Time Farm is a three-acre produce and chicken farm that also specializes in annual and perennial herbs. It’s also the place Tabb and full-time farmer and partner John Neilson live.

“When we got here three years ago, there was nothing,” Tabb says. Now the farm produces 5,000 to 6,000 pounds of food a year. And it’s open to anyone who cares to stop by and harvest some produce to take home.

A cheerful sign beckons passersby on the tucked away country road: Moon Time Farm. You’ve found it, the place where countryside and a quiet residential neighborhood seamlessly coexist.

In addition to providing for local customers through community-supported agriculture deliveries, they also encourage visitors to come out and get their hands in the dirt. “We have volunteer workdays on Saturdays,” Tabb says. “You can work on the farm for a few hours, take home whatever food you need, learn what you want to learn, get some exercise, touch the earth and connect.”

And for those less inclined to noodle around in the dirt, “There’s all kinds of things that people can do to participate in the food experience,” Tabb says. In return, she makes a big lunch for all the volunteers. “If you’re gonna come work for me, I’m going to feed you,” Tabb says. “That’s always the deal.”

“It’s all about giving people access to food,” Tabb says. “We really want to encourage people to make that connection.”

And connecting is easy when all it takes is a short drive out to the country, westward out of town toward Veneta:

As you head straight out West 11th toward Veneta, the world opens into a broad expanse of fields and marshland. Fern Ridge Lake appears and watery expanses make up the view off both sides of the highway. An eagle dives for a fishy meal, scooping at the water with scaly, bright yellow feet punctuated with long, curved talons. He got his meal and I, too, was on the hunt for nourishment.

So what can you expect to find at Moon Time? Well, produce for sure: kale, beets, spinach, pumpkins, pole beans, carrots, peppers and tomatoes, to name a few. In addition, they have flowers available for picking — peonies, daffodils and foxglove — and pear trees. There are also preparations to have a good number of different berry crops in the future, available for those who want to come out and pick their own. “Next year there’ll be lots of strawberries for people to pick,” Tabb says. “They should be able to sit in the middle of the path and just eat.”

Scheduling a trip before you come is a good idea, Tabb says. “We’re always here,” she says, but “it’s best to email us or to call, just to check.”

Tabb and Neilson, along with the help of a progression of Willing Workers on Organic Farms interns who work in exchange for food and a place to stay, already have hundreds of plant starts ready to go. And they try to grow what people ask for, Tabb says. “We ask people over the winter: What kinds of things do you like, what do you eat more of, what would you like us to grow more of?”

And if anyone is interested in medicinal herbs and they’re having a hard time finding something, Moon Time Farms can grow it, Tabb says. “If it’s medicinal, I’m probably going to grow it eventually.”

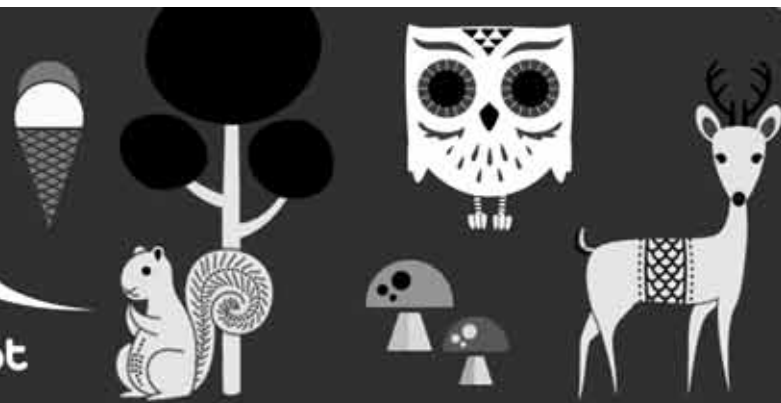
Not only can you help decide what kind of food the farm might start producing in the future, you may already be helping Moon Time without even knowing it: The farm uses compost that is sourced from Eugene, in the form of leaves and compost straight from Eugene’s own Off the Waffle.

Sourcing your food close to home can be pretty darn satisfying. “It feels so much better when you see what you’ve done and then you get to eat it,” Tabb says. “So many people lose that, being in the city.” ■

To find out what’s available each month and to schedule a farm visit, head over to www.moontimefarms.com. They can also be found in the Willamette Local Farm and Food guide.

partycart + red wagon =
together forever

2777 Friendly St. • in the healthy pet parking lot



FISH & CHIPS

Take out window and limited patio seating. Phone orders welcome.

Monday-Friday, 11 to 7,
Saturdays 'til 6:30

1545 Willamette
344-2371



Open 7 Days, 11 to 7,
Fridays 'til 8

485 Coburg Rd.
485-9292



EVERGREEN

SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN INDIAN CUISINE



EW's BEST ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFFET 2008-2009

LUNCH BUFFET

7 Days a Week 11:30am - 2:30pm • Dinner 5-9:30pm • 5 Years in Eugene

EAT & PARK

FREE PARKING FOR EVENTS AT MATT KNIGHT ARENA
WHEN YOU DINE WITH US

* 1525 Franklin Blvd. Eugene, OR
541-343-7944

* 136 SW Third • Corvallis, OR *
541-754-7944