

Farming

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wood-smoked pulled pork sliders using apple wood collected during pruning.

They also hosted several Wine and Paint nights for adults, and special events for kids, too. From bands performing to various kid themed painting events, they also had a haunted corn maze that will also make a return this year.

Wes and Stephanie are developing the craft vendor side of the business, with an emphasis on local crafts people with their own unique products.

In addition to the jars of sauces, jams, and relishes they have specialty popcorn (yes, from Mason County) and locally harvested honey.

“We have Hill Top Honey and some of his bees are here. It helps with pollination and is a huge factor. He harvests it, and I get to sell it,” Wes said.

Orchard Hill is known for their Apple Dumplings and Caramel Apples. Last year they sold more than 3,000 caramel apples and 1,000 apple dumplings, and produced about 1,800 gallons of apple cider. Apple cider slushies are also very popular.

But the bakery menu has been expanded and sales also included doughnuts, Apple Fritters, cupcakes, cookies, and a few new items for this coming season.

Family Farm

Like other farms and family businesses, everyone pitches in at Orchard Hill when it gets busy.

In addition to his wife, his mother, aunt, sister and other friends and employees are there when extra hands are needed with a staff that grows to a dozen at the height of the season.

They do the best they can for their trees, the land and their customers.

Wes is preparing to finish a month-long job of pruning to keep the trees rejuvenated and limit problems with things like fungus.



Orchard Hill Farm owners Wes and Stephanie Carithers hope to make their business a regional destination by offering products, activities, and experiences for visitors of all ages, from a Corn Maze to Wine and Paint nights, the have the whole season planned.

“You want to remove damaged branches and diseased wood. The more airflow in there and sunlight, the better off you will be,” he said.

The peaches will be ready in mid-July and he’s looking forward to the day.

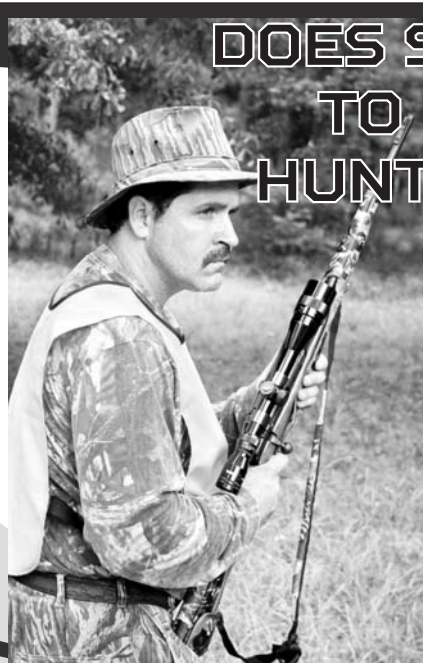
“I think they are better than store bought peaches. We have the luxury of letting them completely ripen on the tree,” Wes said.

And nothing will go to waste. The trimmings will be used or sold for smoking, and the grindings and pressings from making cider are used by an area farmer for his hogs.

The apples that fall to the ground will stay

there. “Some people think those dropped apples are what we make cider out of, but they don’t get used here. If they fell off, most likely it was for a reason.” Wes said.

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