



Fall Time at Full Circle Farm Harvest of the Season: Apples

The leaves on the trees are starting to change colors, and the signs of fall are starting to show around the farm. The breeze is a little cooler and the days are getting shorter. The long summer days kept the farmers busy, and now they are ready to celebrate their harvest. Fall time at Full Circle Farm is a time of celebration and preparation for the winter months.

Every fall Full Circle Farm has a Fall Harvest Party to celebrate the great harvest provided during the summer months. The farmers invite all of their families, friends, and members of the community to come out to the farm for a day of music, food, and fun. The Fall Harvest Party is also a day of thanks to all of the people, businesses, and organizations that buy food from the farm throughout the year. The day is full of hay rides down to the river, dancing to live music, and eating lots of fruits and vegetables that were grown on the farm. Some of their farmer friends that raise animals bring pork and chicken that are roasted over a fire all night before the party begins. Every year more and more people come to the party to celebrate with the farmers the great harvest from Full Circle Farm. After the party is over it is time to get back to work and get the farm ready for the winter months.

Some of the fall farm activities include spreading composted cow manure, preparing beds for winter growing, and building hoop houses over the beds. To prepare the beds for winter planting the farmers add nutrients to the soil using limestone, kelp, and composted cow manure. Organic farmers know how important it is to replenish the soil after a summer growing season and before they plant the winter crops. Full Circle gets a huge supply of composted cow manure from their neighbors who have a dairy farm with many cows. The composted cow manure provides important nutrients for the plants to grow healthy and strong. The farmers till in all the nutrients and then build the hoop houses over the tops of the beds. The hoop houses provide protection from the cool temperatures, heavy frosts, and possible snow that winter brings.

Winter preparation starts at the beginning of October just before all the rain starts to come in. Full Circle Farm sits on the Snoqualmie River and every year the great river breaks the banks and floods the farm. The floods help the soil because the river brings nutrients into the soil.

While some of the farmers are preparing for the winter months, others farmers at Full Circle Farm are still busy selling produce. Full Circle Farm's fall crops are lettuces, kale, chard, collards, carrots, parsnips,



spinach, beets, and arugula just to name a few. Full Circle Farm sells their produce at farmer's markets, restaurants, grocery stores, and to individuals in the community. The farm has friends in Eastern Washington, which is across the Cascade Mountains from Seattle, that grow apples. Full Circle Farm buys these apples from their friends and sells them to us so we can cook with them in our classrooms.

Apples are in the Rosaceae family or the Rose family. Are apples related to roses? Yes, they are and they are also related to pears, cherries, strawberries, and apricots. If you were to look at apple flowers, cherry flowers, or any flowers in the Rosaceae family you would notice they look similar.

There are many apple farmers in the state of Washington. Every year these farmers harvest between 80 million and 103 million boxes of apples and each box weighs 40 pounds. The farmers start begin harvesting in the middle of August and end in November. Apples can be stored all winter long for us to enjoy throughout the winter. There are many different types of apples grown in Washington, including Braeburn, Honeycrisp, Gala, Fuji, and Golden Delicious. Do you know which apple you are going to eat today? No matter which kind of apple you eat, it is guaranteed to be healthy because it is high in vitamin C, fiber, and contains many other nutrients. To find out more about Washington State grown apples check out the Washington State Apple Commission website at www.bestapples.com.