

Windy Ridge Orchard & Christmas Tree Farm

Cut to the Chase and Right to the Charm!

By Polly Tafrate



AS SOON AS WE FLIP the calendar page from November to December, my family gets excited about Christmas. The first question our kids, Emily and Elliot, always ask is where we're going to get our tree. For the past few years we've bought a ready-cut tree at a lot downtown. Once it's up in the family room we're disappointed to discover one less than perfect side. This year I suggest that we do the real deal—go into the woods to cut down our tree.



"Where?" my husband skeptically asks. "There aren't any woods on our property."
 "I know the perfect place," I tell everyone. "But it's a secret! A surprise! All you have to do is choose a Saturday or Sunday." We agree on the date and Emily colors a triangular Christmas tree shape in that calendar square.

No matter how much they pester me, I

refuse to tell them our destination. "Dress warmly," I advise everyone on tree cutting morning. "We're going to be outside for quite awhile."

"Do I need to bring my saw?" my husband asks. "Nope! Just get in the car. I'll drive."

We travel along Route 116 outside of North Haverhill and turn in at Windy Ridge Orchard & Christmas Tree Farm. "But this



is where we pick apples,” Elliot says. “And blueberries,” adds Emily. “And get those delicious donuts,” my husband says.

“You’re all right,” I tell them. “But today we’re going to add cutting down our Christmas tree to that list.”

This is a family farm owned and run by Richard and Ann Fabrizio and their five children. They’ve lived at Windy Ridge since 1967. The following year they planted an apple tree behind their house which gradually segued into an orchard. In 1995 Richard retired from The County Extension where he worked as a 4-H agent, and Ann retired from teaching. Now they were able to make a concentrated effort to create a family farm destination for friends and visitors. They added nature trails, a playground, and farm animals. Their daughter, Sheila, returned from The Peace Corp and a few years later opened the adjacent Cider House Café. Here one can enjoy delicious breakfasts (with the best donuts in the White Mountains!) as well as tasty lunches, while gazing at a killer view.

Once out of the car we walk up the driveway to see about getting the tree. The kids spot the goats nearby running up and down the ramps in their pen. They stop to watch them while my husband and I go inside. We’re assailed by the aroma of Christmas—there’s no other way to describe it. Ann Fabrizio warmly greets us. She, her daughter, Lynn, and Cider House Café helper, Diane, promise us a complimentary drink of cider, hot chocolate or coffee, and a warm doughnut when we return from our tree cutting adventure.

“Say goodbye to the goats,” I call to the kids. A family of four joins us as we pile



Need to Know To Go

Windy Ridge Orchard & Christmas Tree Farm

Route 116, North Haverhill
(603) 787-6377
www.windyridgeorchard.com

Directions: Travel on Route 116, which is 3 miles east from Route 10, and 7 miles southwest from Route 112.

Driving times: 8 miles from the village of Woodsville; 20 miles from Lincoln; 25 miles from Littleton; and 1.5 hours from Concord.

The Christmas Tree Farm

Open weekends 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends Thanksgiving to Christmas, and weekdays by appointment.

The Orchard

Windy Ridge Orchard boasts 3,500 trees on 20 acres. Pick your own blueberries in the summer and apples in the fall. Paula Reds are ready for picking in mid-August and are followed by Macintosh in early September. Then come Honey Crisp, Gala, Cortland, Macoun, Spencer apples in mid-September, and Empire apples in early October. Also for sale are pumpkins, squashes, gourds, honey, maple syrup, cheese, jams, jellies, and specialty foods. Browse the gift shop, visit the farm animals and kids’ corral playground, and walk the nature trails. School and Scout programs and tours available.

The Cider House Café

Open July through October. No visit is complete without a visit to The Cider House Café where you can eat inside or at the picnic tables outside, which have a spectacular mountain view. Eat a full breakfast (7 to 11 a.m.), which include such things as specialty pancakes, French toast and breakfast burritos. For lunch, (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.) enjoy a signature sandwich, or design your own. Doughnuts served all day! All foods are made from scratch using Cider House Café recipes and the freshest local products. These include Windy Ridge fruit, homegrown vegetables, Hatchland milk, Bernie’s homemade bread from Piermont, Pete and Gerry’s organic eggs from Monroe, Stoddard’s maple syrup from North Haverhill, Mom’s homemade apple butter and Cider House unpasteurized cider that is pressed on the farm, as well as baked goods. Don’t leave without choosing your own pumpkin and mums, which are on the front lawn in the fall.

STONEFALLS GARDENS GIFT SHOP

Fresh cut greenery, berries, garland,
wreaths, poinsettias, amaryllis and paper whites.
A lovely collection of unique gift items
for your family and friends.

Open every Thursday through Sunday
November 25th through December 23rd
Thursday through Sunday - 10am to 5pm

(603) 428-6161 • www.stonefallsgardens.com • 184 StoneFalls Road, Henniker



FRESH HOLIDAY GREENERY



UNIQUE GIFTS



New Hampshire ToDo

into the farm wagon. Richard Fabrizio climbs onto his tractor and drives us across the road, down the hill, and past the pond to the Christmas Tree Plantation. His son, Mark, follows in the Gator which is used to bring the cut trees back. He works year-round maintaining the thousands of trees—planting, mowing, and pruning them. On the way down the hill we pass a family that brought their sleds with them and are enjoying sliding down the snowy hill.

Once the wagon stops and we climb down, everyone scatters. I take a few deep sniffs—love that woody pine scent! Shouts of *Look at this one!*; *I think this is it!*; and *You gotta see this one!* are heard as we walk among the rows of trees. Richard and Mark take a family and their tree back to the apple building and return with another group.

After stomping around for about a half-hour we choose a beauty—Richard hands my husband a bow saw and shows him where to start the cut. After a few minutes my husband gives the saw to Elliot and then to Emily for carefully supervised turns. I can't take pictures fast enough.



My husband makes the final cut. We stand back to watch the tree fall. It lands with a gentle thud onto the snowy ground. We drag our tree over to a sled and pull it over to the place where we're to meet Mark, who places it on the Gator next to those of two other families. We all climb back into the wagon to head back.

The warmth of the gift shop is more than welcome. Christmas songs are playing and we sit down at one of several tables in the festively-decorated large room to the side of the store where we enjoy our refreshments and thaw out our feet. A large Christmas tree is in the center. Emily stays at this table to color a holiday picture and Elliot and my husband move to another one and set up a game of checkers. I use this time to browse around

GEMSTAR GEMSTONE COMPANY
A Source and Experience in Rocks, Beads & Jewelry



Open Year Round Wed Thurs Fri Sat 1 pm - 7 pm Sun 12 pm - 5 pm Closed Monday & Tuesday

427 SHAKER BOULEVARD ♦ ENFIELD, N.H. 03748

603-632-7115

Please visit our associate website www.crystalmoon-online.com

the shop filled with Christmas ornaments and decorations, New England crafts, Yankee candles, jams, jellies, and bags of apples.

A giggling elf and a bearded Santa approach me—Emily and Elliot have found the dress-up box. “Wait!” I tell them. “I need to get my camera.” Close to where I left it, I notice Santa’s mailbox. I encourage the kids to sit down and write a letter to Santa so they can send it directly to the North Pole. I return to the gift shop.

“Who makes these gorgeous wreaths?” I ask Ann. “Richard makes them and I do the decorating,” she says. I know one will be going home with me.

Windy Ridge is always expanding with new ideas. The most recent addition is the Seven Birches Winery. We’ve enjoyed their Apple and Blueberry wine in the summer, the pumpkin wine in October, and are delighted to see their own Malbec and Pinot Gris wine for sale now. I put a few bottles on the counter along with my other purchases—a bag of Cider House doughnuts, a wreath, and a few little gifts.



“We’d better leave soon if we’re going to get our tree up,” I tell the kids. We say our goodbyes. Outside I see pre-cut trees propped on stands in front of The Cider House Café and think how special it is that we were able to cut our own. Walking down to the parking area I see Mark and my husband tying our wrapped tree to the roof of the car.

“Have fun?” I ask the kids on the way home. “Can we do this again next year?” they ask.

“Absolutely,” I answer. I know that this is going to become a December family tradition.

To Do

Frye's Measure Mill
Shaker & Colonial Boxmakers Since 1858

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Frye's Measure Mill is one of the few remaining water-powered mills, and only measure mill, still active today.

Housed in a portion of the old sawmill, our seven room shop offers the visitor a rare opportunity of finding high-quality crafts, creatively displayed in an antique setting. Folk art from some of the country's top rated artisans, colonial tinware, hand-blown glass, pottery, period lighting, pewter, hand-forged ironware, antiques and collectibles are just some of the items that accent the woodenware in our Museum Shop.

WINTER HOURS:
 TUES-SAT. 10 AM TO 5 PM
 SUNDAY 12 NOON TO 5 PM

Phone: 603-654-6581

12 Frye Mill Rd, Wilton, NH 05086 Visit us on the web at fryesmeasuremill.com

“The Enchantment of Olde New England”

General Stark Store
Country Furniture & Gifts
 432-8852
 148 Rockingham Road (Rt. 28), Derry
www.thegeneralstarkstore.com

Handcrafted USA-made Furniture
 Period Lighting & Pictures
 Braided Rugs & Curtains
 Old Century Paints