

18th Annual Sweet Sorghum Festival & Labor Day Open House at Homestead Heritage Traditional Craft Village

*Fun, Family-Oriented Labor Day Festival Features Sweet Sorghum Making,
Sustainable Life Skills and Fine Craftsmanship*

Homestead Heritage will host their 18th annual Sweet Sorghum Festival and Open House at Homestead Heritage Traditional Craft Village beginning at 10 am on Labor Day, September 3.

This year's event will feature the traditional method of making sweet sorghum syrup beginning in the morning with pressing the sorghum cane in a horse-drawn cane press. Cane pressing will continue all morning, followed in the afternoon by syrup cooking in a 12-ft copper pan over a wood-fired furnace.

Other highlights for Monday include Sustainable Living Seminars and Make-Your-Own Craft Activities as well as ongoing horse-drawn hayrides, music at noon, indoor/outdoor food selections and craft demonstrations throughout the day.

“Our annual Sorghum Festival promises to be a day of fun for the whole family, as well as an educational experience for young and old alike!” said community spokesman Josiah Wheeler. “Folks have the opportunity on Monday to step aside from the rush of urban living and observe firsthand some of the sustainable life skills and crafts that agrarian people have practiced for decades – sorghum syrup making, whole grain gristmill grinding, woodworking with hand tools, blacksmithing, making pottery, spinning, weaving and more – all set in a wholesome community atmosphere with music, hayrides and great food.”

Free Sustainability Seminars

The Ploughshare Institute for Sustainable Culture will host free sustainable living seminars starting at 10 a.m. in the Red Barn on the campus. Wheeler, Ploughshare's Development Director, has noticed an increase in attendance at the crafts and sustainable living skills classes that the school offers year-round. “Over the last few years we've seen a greatly increased interest in learning sustainable life skills. Folks from all walks of life are beginning to realize a very real need to be more self-reliant and want to rediscover and learn the skills that are necessary to provide their own basic needs.”

Make-Your-Own Activities

Make-Your-Own activities will be available in the Craft Village shops and the Gift Shop. “At our annual fairs and festivals we have found that Make-Your-Own Activities – which we originally provided for children of all ages – have become increasingly popular with adults as well!” Wheeler noted. Although the hot weather will limit the selections that they offer outdoors during Labor Day, you'll find projects in each air-conditioned craft shop. In Heritage Fine Furniture, you can carve a wooden



spatula using only hand tools. At the nearby Potter's House you can form a pinch pot basket out of clay. Just across the shaded footbridge, you'll find Heritage Forge, where you can hammer and shape a spoon from pure brass. At Homestead Fiber Crafts you can weave a coaster. Be sure to stop by the water pool filled with a fleet of floating wooden sailboats – even if you don't build a boat yourself you'll enjoy watching the creators test their models for seaworthiness!

Craft Demonstrations

Throughout the day, community craftsmen will demonstrate the heritage craft skills of pottery making, blacksmithing, spinning, weaving, quilting, basketry and more in their air-conditioned shops as well as the centrally located gift shop. Allow ample time to visit each one.

Homestead Gristmill

Take time to see the restored eighteenth- and nineteenth-century timber-frame buildings that are part of the craft village. At the 1760's restored Gristmill you can watch the water-powered stones grind whole grains into fresh flour. Taste samples of cornbread, gingerbread, muffins, cookies and more at the mill store.

Outdoor Grill • Fresh Ice Cream • Cafe Homestead

Outdoor food choices include delicious grass-fed beef hot dogs and sausage-on-a-stick hot off the grill, fresh brick oven pizza, funnel cakes and freshly cranked ice cream! Or enjoy lunch at Cafe Homestead, which features freshly prepared food made with locally sourced ingredients in a comfortable, air-conditioned environment. This year's cafe menu includes a Beef Sausage Plate, Grilled Cheeseburgers, Tacos, Soup and Salad as well as fresh-squeezed lemonade and organic ice teas. Monday's house dessert will be peach cobbler topped with organic vanilla ice cream.

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When

Labor Day – Monday, Sept. 3 - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Seminar Schedule

10:00 a.m. - Sustainable Gardening – An introduction to producing your own healthy food in your own backyard or on your own farm, using natural, sustainable methods

11:00 a.m. - Beekeeping – A seminar on keeping bees as a source of honey and for pollination, an essential part of a sustainable homestead

Where

Homestead Heritage Traditional Craft Village just north of Waco. Admission and parking are free.

How to get there

Brazos de Dios is located 5 miles north of Waco. Take I-35 to Elm Mott Exit 343; go west on FM 308 for 3 miles, then north on FM 933 for 1 1/2 miles. Turn west onto Halbert Lane and proceed one-half mile straight ahead to the entrance.

Contact

For more information contact Homestead Heritage at Brazos de Dios at 254-754-9600 or visit Sustain-Life.org.

Homestead Heritage Traditional Craft Village at Brazos de Dios
608 Dry Creek Rd. • Waco, Texas 76705 • 254.754.9600
Open year-round, Monday through Saturday