

Homestead Fair Invites All to a Weekend Festival of Sustainable Living, Heritage Crafts and Family Fun

Music, Food, Horse-Drawn Hayrides, Live Demonstrations,
Barn Raising, Seminars, Make-Your-Own & And Much More!
Come early and plan to stay – You'll need more than one day to experience it all.

Each Thanksgiving weekend, over 12,000 people flood down the tree-lined country lane leading to Homestead Craft Village in central Texas to attend the annual Homestead Fair. This 27th annual Fair November 28 through 30 promises to be no exception. Preparations are well underway for the biggest Fair yet.

“At this year’s Fair we’ve greatly expanded our popular seminar offerings – we’ve got over 36 hours of seminars alone! In addition, there are 32 Make-Your-Own activities, dozens of items on the food court menu, continuous craft and skills demonstrations, a two-day timber-frame barn raising, live music each day, thousands of hand-crafted items for sale and so much more,” said Fair director Josiah Wheeler. “Our Fair is not just an event, it really is an experience!”

The event is a fun, educational three-day festival with activities for the entire family and is hosted by Homestead Heritage and The Ploughshare Institute for Sustainable Culture. Allow at least two days to see it all.

Visitors from all parts of the country as well as international visitors come to the Fair - some of them annually. How do they describe their experience?

“What an amazing place to visit!”
“Interesting, educational and fun.”
“Back to natural living.”
“A break from a hectic world.”
“Go – You will not be disappointed.”

This Year’s Feature - New Aquaponics Greenhouse and Ecosystem

The upcoming 2014 Fair will feature a new, unique aquaponics greenhouse. Currently under construction, this 30' x 88' high-tunnel greenhouse will contain a balanced, all natural ecosystem for growing plants using fish water.

“What we’re doing is a hybrid of aquaponics and traditional soil gardening,” aquaponics gardener Tim Tittley told us as we watched workers layer the rock and soil in the wicking beds. “It’s a symbiotic relationship that mutually benefits both the plants and the fish. The water from the fish pond circulates through rocks on the bottom of grow beds. A layer of wicking fabric lies on top of the rocks, wicking an abundance of water upward into the soil, bringing with it a continual supply of nutrients – mainly nitrogen. The plants in turn filter the water so that when it returns to the fish tank, the fish have clean water.”



Construction of aquaponics high tunnel greenhouse



Soil wicking beds inside the ecosystem greenhouse



For the Fair, greenhouse plants will include carrots, bunching onions, cucumbers, herbs, cabbage, leaf lettuce, tomatoes and more, started from non-hybrid, open-pollinated seed. The 4,000 gallon tank will be used to raise edible fish – potentially Tilapia or Blue Gill. The system will also contain a built-in three-tiered system for growing live duckweed for use as fish food.

Check the blog on www.HomesteadFair.com to follow the development of this ecosystem, which will play a key part in producing fresh foods year-round for the nearby cafe and the soon-to-open Homestead Market.

New Daily Seminar Topics

Allow time to attend a wide variety of seminars. These 30-40 minute presentations begin every hour on the hour and include sustainability, homesteading and educational topics. Ploughshare Coordinator Butch Tindell has chosen several new, relevant topics to include on the agenda for this year's Fair.

"In our technically charged, globally connected age where stores are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and provide what appears to be an endless supply and array of inexpensive food from all over the world, folks often ask us why would anyone want to raise their own food and live by the efforts of their own hands?" Tindell commented. "In *Homesteading – An Option For Our Times?* we will explore that question and also look at how to take the first steps toward designing and establishing your own homestead." Tindell's seminar is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. Friday and Saturday and at noon on Sunday.



Draft horse team on a hayride break

An Introduction to Aquaponics will feature the new soilponics greenhouse and will demonstrate the concept of growing plants and fish within a contained circulating system to benefit both high-yield vegetable production and edible fish. Topics covered include: how aquaponics systems work, types of systems, soil "wicking" beds, how to set up a system and what kind of fish to raise.

Other popular annual topics include, *Sustainable Gardening, Backyard Chickens, Beekeeping, Seed Saving, Rainwater Catchment, Cheese Making, Sourdough Bread Making* and one of last year's favorites, *Creative Writing*. Check online for a preview of this year's seminars and the schedule.

Annual Fair Favorites

• Make-Your-Own Activities

Try your hand at over 30 Make-Your-Own projects – for children and adults alike. Dip a beeswax candle, make a toy wooden boat, hammer a bronze spoon, quilt a coaster, weave a basket, shell popcorn and more. See the activities listing and discount coupon information online.

• Live Music

There will be children's choirs, gospel songs, bluegrass music and more in the Music Tent each afternoon, as well as concerts by the Heritage Choir and Orchestra on Friday and Saturday evenings.

• Fabulous Fair Food

The food courts and fairground kiosks serve an assortment of multicultural foods. New for 2014 is beef brisket barbecue. Every item on the menu is custom-prepared especially for the Fair using



Fresh sourdough pizza - straight out of the brick oven



Timber frame barn assembly and raising



Woodworking with hand tools demonstration

wholesome ingredients. Favorites include natural beef burgers, shish kabobs, Mexican tamales, falafels, brick oven pizza, corn dogs, sweet potato fries, funnel cakes, fresh-cranked ice cream, lattes, kettle corn and hot apple cider. The full menu is online.

• **Two-Day Timber-Frame Barn Raising and Auction**

On Friday and Saturday, Fair-goers can help raise the wall beams of an eighteenth-century barn. On Saturday, there will be a sealed-bid timber frame auction. For a description of this year’s auction frames see “Activities” online.

Ongoing Activities

Homesteading Skills and Crafts Demonstrations

Each day dozens of homestead craft and agricultural skills demonstrations will be presented throughout the Fairgrounds – woodworking with hand tools, hand-thrown pottery, blacksmithing, casting, broom making, basket making, sewing, quilting, spinning, weaving, soap making and more.

At the Working Homestead, visitors can watch sheep shearing and goat milking, visit farm animal pens, see organic gardens, tour the aquaponics greenhouse and watch apple cider pressing.



Sheep herding with sheepdog

Special Activities for Children

Kids’ activities include Make-Your-Own craft projects, a hay maze, farm animal pen and a mini-barn raising.

Horse-Drawn Hayrides, Surrey Rides and Carriage Rides

Hayrides, surreys and carriages will take passengers to the scenic Brazos River Valley overlook continuously all three days of the Fair.

Holiday Gift Shopping

Hundreds of hand-crafted items will be on sale for holiday shoppers at the Craft Pavilion, craft booths, Heritage Forge Blacksmith Shop, Fiber Crafts, Homestead Gristmill and Brazos Valley Cheese.

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www.HomesteadFair.com

No admission fee: Parking pass is good for all 3 days – \$10 at the gate, \$7 online in advance
Friday & Saturday Nov 28 & 29 – 9 AM to 9 PM • Sunday, Nov 30 – 12 NOON to 5 PM
Homestead Fair • 608 Dry Creek Road • Waco, TX 76705 • 254.754.9600