



# Interview with Lumbardo's Farm

This winter F2FA had an opportunity to catch up with Hailee Lumbardo of Lumbardo's Farm in Mikado. Lumbardo's Farm is a new business producing and selling of vegetables and cut flowers.

Their products can be purchased at the AuSable Farm market and customers can also contact the farm, preferably via call or text, for flower arrangements and vegetable baskets. Read below for an inside view of Lumbardo's Farm submitted by Hailee Lumbardo.

### Beginnings

My great-grandparents spent their entire lives running cattle ranches in the Black Hills area of Wyoming. Growing up, I learned so much from them about farming practices, growing food, preserving, and cooking our garden goods. Summers at my grandparents were spent hiding in their prickly raspberry bushes, eating until my hands were stained red, picking fresh veggies out of the garden to wash with the icy-cold hose before bringing them in for dinner, and my grandmas beautiful flower gardens. She was so proud of her rose bushes and her tomato hydroponic greenhouse, but my favorite was always the American Flag she made out of red, white and blue petunias. I loved that you could create art with flowers! I farm because it is important to me to carry on my family's heritage and teach my children how to live off the land. Every time I cut a flower, I am reminded of my Grandma Rena. Every time I pull a batch of pickles out of the

canner, I remember my Great-Grandma Irene's assembly line of cousins (I am one of 52 great-grandkids, though not all of us would fit in her tiny kitchen!) as we worked hours canning whatever was fresh that week.

### Lumbardo's Farm

My farm is MAEAP Verified in Cropping and Farmstead Systems. I adhere to organic practices such as compost tea for fertilizer and pest control using beneficial insects, though I am not certified organic.

I grow cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, garlic and onions as well as a large variety of cut-flowers for bouquets. I am currently working on establishing my perennials beds which will include asparagus, peonies, daffodils, and herbs.

### Facing the Challenges of 2020

2020 is the first year I offered goods to my community. A lot was already planned and purchased for bouquet sales when the pandemic hit. March of 2020 handed me an extremely hard decision- do I change my plan to grow more vegetables and make sure my community has fresh foods that we weren't sure were going to be available at the grocery stores? Or do I continue with my focus on cut-flowers with a selection of vegetables? During my heart-wrenching debate, I watched seed packet after seed packet disappear almost instantly off shelves and online stores. I was left with only one choice, and that was to continue on my original path. I worried that the pandemic

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## Interview with Lumbardo's Farm Continued

would have people busy preserving their own foods with no time to worry about beautiful arrangements for the dinner table. I could not have been more wrong! The flowers flew out the door and every bouquet brought a smile to my customers face. What everyone was really craving was a little bright happiness after some dark days, and my flowers seemed to do the trick!

### Plans for the future

This year I hope to offer Spring, Summer and Early Fall arrangements and vegetables at the AuSable Farmers Market. I also hope to expand my dried florals for wreaths and dried arrangements through the colder months. I will be offering onion and

garlic braids as well. My goals for the next 2 years include putting up a greenhouse for in-ground growing that will also serve as a lovely, warm space to teach classes on canning, bouquet making, soap making, and other fun hands-on experiences. I am also excited to deepen my skills with wedding and floral design work.

The growing aspect of our farm is entirely up to me, as well as being a full-time mother of 2. Our kids love growing with me, but also require ample time soaking up the rays with friends at the beach! Life is all about balance, and we are currently learning this delicate act of business and play. 2021 will be my second year growing on a new plot of land at our home, and

we can expect more hiccups along the way! I love to share my challenges and triumphs on social media, and am happy to assist you with all your growing questions. If I can inspire one person to start their own garden, I will have succeeded one of my greatest life goals.

TR Services is a land clearing business my husband offers on the side. He can be reached at 989-787-2827 or through the TR Services Facebook page.

### Contact Lumbardo's Farm

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Email: [lumbardosfarm@gmail.com](mailto:lumbardosfarm@gmail.com)



## Favorite Lumbardo's Farm Recipes

### Lemon Walnut Pesto

*Lemon Basil is one of my favorite herbs to grow. It holds up well in bouquets and the flavor is outstanding!*

*Pesto is traditionally made with Italian basil and pine nuts. This version is a light, lemony twist on the original version, using walnuts for crunch. My favorite way to enjoy this pesto is to bake it between a slice of fresh crusty bread and fresh mozzarella. It's a simple, elegant appetizer! It's also delicious on pasta, baked chicken or fish! Lemon Basil is the best variety for this pesto, though Italian basil is also great, just make sure to add more lemon juice.*

#### Ingredients

2 cups packed fresh basil (lemon basil is best but Italian basil is also great)  
1/3- 1/2 cup lemon juice (if using Lemon Basil use 1/2 cup, add more if Italian, to taste)  
1/2 tsp. salt  
2-3 cloves fresh garlic  
1/2 cup fresh grated parmesan cheese  
1/3 - 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil  
1/2 cup walnuts, raw

#### Directions

1. In food processor, add packed Basil, lemon juice, salt and garlic cloves. Pulse until roughly chopped
2. Add Parmesan cheese and walnuts, pulse until finely blended
3. Gradually add olive oil while blending to desired consistency. Add more oil as needed.
4. Store in the refrigerator for 2 weeks or freeze in pint jars leaving 1/2" headspace for up to one year. Thaw in fridge before using.

### Zucchini Pumpkin Muffins

*Nobody loves a frantic morning. A little meal prep can definitely help get you through! That's why we turn to these muffins. They freeze well, are packed full of nutrients (ahem, veggies) and are kid approved! They're also a great way to use up all those extra zucchini you can't seem to use up. Feel free to add/substitute extras like blueberries, coconut flakes, or even shredded carrot to spice these up!*

#### Ingredients

1 cup butter, melted  
1 cup canned (or fresh baked and pureed) pumpkin  
3 eggs  
2 cups sugar  
3 cups flour (1 cup wheat, 2 white or any combo you choose)  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1/2 tsp. baking powder  
1/2 tsp cinnamon  
1/2 tsp Pumpkin Pie Spice  
2 Cups shredded zucchini  
3/4 Cup Walnuts  
3/4 Cup Chocolate chips (or substitute anything you please!)

#### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350\*. Line muffin pans with cups.
2. Shred zucchini. Let rest in strainer to drain off any excess water.
3. Add melted butter, pumpkin, eggs and sugar to stand mixer. Mix until well blended
4. In medium size bowl, mix together flour, baking soda, baking powder. Stir in cinnamon and pumpkin pie spice, mix well.
5. Slowly incorporate dry ingredients into wet ingredients using stand mixer. Mix until well blended
6. Fold in zucchini, walnuts and chocolate chips.
7. Bake 18-20 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool on wire rack. Can be stored in freezer 3 months.

# Maple Syrup: A Sweet & Sticky Job

By Denise Thompson

It's maple syrup season and F2FA had the opportunity to catch up with Dave and Becky Riegle at Sunrise Sugarhouse for a lesson in maple syrup production!

Maple syrup all starts with maple trees and the sap that they produce. In late winter the trees send their sap up from their roots to their branches to feed the buds in preparation for leaf production. The amount of sap a farm is able to collect is highly dependent on weather conditions. Collection time can occur between February and April and last anywhere from 1-2 weeks or more than a month. Cooperative weather means 35-45°F during the day and 20°F at night. Lake effects impact sap collection here in Michigan. Even subtle differences in temps across a county will affect the amount of sap each farms is able to harvest. Ideally, spring needs to come in like a lamb with slow, steady shifts in temperature.

It takes 30-40 gallons of sap from a sugar maple to produce 1 gallon of syrup. The amount of sap require to yield once gallon of syrup is more when collecting from trees with a lower sugar content. It is possible to make maple syrup from any maple tree including red maple, silver maple, and even box elders! Sugar maples have the highest concentration of sugar in their sap, making them the preferred choice for syrup.

The syrup is made by boiling the water out of the sap. The cooking temperature and time effect the flavor and color of the finished product. A long cooking time at a lower temperature will produce syrup amber in color with a more robust flavor. A shorter cooking time at a higher temperature will result in golden-colored syrup with a light flavor. Boiling is no longer the only option for syrup production! It is becoming more common for producers to use reverse

osmosis to separate the water from the sap, a process which also results in a lighter-colored syrup.

Although reverse osmosis was not an option for our forefathers, what they did prefer was producing maple sugar, which is made by continuing to cook down the syrup until it fractures into sugar crystals. Maple sugar is a versatile food which can be used cup-for-cup in place of white sugar. It can also be reconstituted back into maple syrup. In its crystalline form it is shelf stable and can last indefinitely, whereas maple syrup may be kept on the shelf 2-3 years and should be stored in the fridge after opening as it could grow a white mold on its surface. Maple sugar is commonly used in older recipes, such as in shortbread—a favorite recipe at the Riegle's.

The Sunrise Sugarhouse, located at 5298 Clark Road in Harrisville, makes approximately 70-100 gallons of maple syrup annually. In addition to traditional maple syrup, they also produce maple sugar and infused maple syrups including coffee bean maple syrup made with Alcona Coffee and bourbon maple syrup which matures to a heavenly, buttery treat in bourbon barrel. Sunrise Sugarhouse products are available for sale out of their house. They also can be found at local art fairs and on their Facebook page at [Sunrise Sugarhouse](#).

Dave and Becky encourage backyard maple tree tapping and are happy to share their knowledge and inspire young people to appreciate nature through the age-old practice of making maple syrup. This season we encourage you to experiment with maple products for a sweet treat!

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## Blueberry-Oatmeal Muffins with Maple Syrup

Original recipe by [Sally's Baking Addiction](#)

*These blueberry muffins are serious yum and a perfect use for locally harvested frozen berries and syrup! This recipe includes 1 cup of oats to boost the fiber and cholesterol-lowering power of this delicious treat.*

Yield: 12 muffins

1 cup old-fashioned oats  
1 cup milk  
1 ¼ all-purpose flour  
¼ tsp salt  
¾ tsp baking soda  
1 tsp baking powder  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
1 large egg, room temperature  
1 ½ tsp vanilla extract  
½ cup butter or coconut oil, melted and slightly cooled  
½ cup maple syrup or honey  
1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries, plus a handful for topping



1. Pre-heat your oven to 425 degrees. Spray a 12 well muffin pan. Set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the oats and milk and let soak for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, melt the butter or coconut oil. Allow to cool slightly.
3. In a large bowl, combine the dry ingredients – the flour, salt, baking soda, baking powder, and cinnamon.
4. In another bowl whisk together the wet ingredients – egg, vanilla, oil, and maple syrup.
5. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and stir a few times. Add the soaked oats/milk and blueberries. Gently stir/fold the batter until just combined.
6. Fill each muffin well 3/4 full. Sprinkle with extra oats and 1-2 blueberries.
7. Bake for 5 minutes, then turn your oven temperature down to 350°F. Continue baking for 15-17 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Allow the muffins to cool for 5 minutes in the muffin tin before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.



## FARM TO FORK ALCONA

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*Supporting local farmers and  
nourishing our community*

## New Alcona Farm Market in the Works

by Judy MacNeill, Chair of Farm to Fork Alcona

A NEW Alcona Farm Market? The F2FA Committee is busy exploring this idea. We recently met with Lenny Avery from Alcona County Commission on Aging (ACCOA) and received an update on a proposed new community center to be built next to Alcona Health Center in Lincoln. The Community Center plans to include an outside farm market with stalls for up to 25 vendors, cold storage, and parking lot access. Timeline for completion estimated is four years.

Lenny noted that the need for a local farm market in Alcona is critical. Alcona is truly a "food desert", which is defined as an area where people have limited access to healthful and affordable food. This serious issue became even



more apparent during the COVID-19 crisis, and the dire need for food by our residents. At the same time, many of our local farmers are 'ageing out', with not many to fill their shoes.

Before a new farm market for Alcona can be realized, research is needed to find out what it will take to bring in enough farmers to populate a farm market here in Alcona. F2FA formed a sub-committee, chaired by Boyd Byelich, to identify how F2FA can help grown new and support existing farmers in Alcona, identify barriers, and help create opportunities. We will keep you up-to-date on these efforts in the coming months.

## The Legend of the Dandelion

The Angel of the flowers came down to earth once—long, long ago—and she wandered here and there, in field, and forest, and garden, to find the flower she loved the most. As she hurried on her search, she came upon a gay tulip, all orange and red, standing stiff and proud in a garden, and the Angel said to the tulip: "Where should you like most of all to live?"

"I should like to live on a castle lawn in the velvety grass," said the tulip, "where my colors would show against the gray castle walls. I should like to have the princess touch me, and tell me how beautiful I am."

But the Angel turned away with sad eyes from the proud tulip, and spoke to the rose.

"Where should you like most to stay?" she asked the rose.

"I should like to climb the castle walls," said the rose, "for I am fragile, and delicate, and not able to climb of myself. I



need help and shelter."

The Angel of the flowers turned sadly away from the rose, and hurried on until she came to the violet growing in the forest, and she said to the violet: "Where should you like most of all to live?"

"Here, in the woods, where I am hidden from every one," said the violet. "The brook cools my feet, and the trees keep the warm sun from spoiling my beautiful color." But the Angel turned away from the violet and went on until she came to the sturdy, yellow dandelion growing in the meadow grass.

"And where should you like most of all to live?" asked the Angel of the dandelion.

"Oh," cried the dandelion, "I want to live

wherever the happy children may find me when they run by to school, or romp and play in the fields. I want to live by the roadside, and in the meadows, and push up between the stones in the city yards, and make every one glad because of my bright colors."

"You are the flower I love the most," said the Angel of the flowers, as she laid her hand upon the dandelion's curly, yellow head. "You shall blossom everywhere from spring till fall, and be the children's flower."

That is why the dandelion comes so early and pushes her head up everywhere—by hedge, and field, and hut, and wall; and has such a long, sweet life.

From the book "For The Children's Hour"  
By Carolyn S. Bailey and Clara M. Lewis, 1918

