

Apples, Pumpkins and Corn Mazes Galore!

By Cheryl Wooten, Maple Creek Resident



Nothing proclaims autumn more than a pumpkin patch, apple cider and a maze cut from corn. If you're willing to venture on the road less traveled, there's a bushel of fall activities close to Valparaiso with fewer crowds and family friendly atmospheres.

Even in October, apples are still available for picking at two nearby orchards. Mowry's Fruit Farm in Crown Point (www.apples2pick.com) is completely U-pick. Through October, drive into the orchard, park, pick and enjoy a picnic lunch beneath the apple trees. Their store carries local honey, fruit butters and more, but no credit or debit cards are accepted.

Garwood Orchards in LaPorte (www.garwoodorchard.com) is a Hoosier Homestead Award recipient for farms owned by the same family for 100 years or more. Started in 1831, Garwood's is still going strong, six generations later. That's 185 years! They offer U-pick apples, fruits and vegetables, pumpkins, jams, honeys, pickles and more, plus a bakery full of donuts and goodies. Be sure to buy a jug of their homemade cider, perfect for mulling on a crisp autumn night. Through October enjoy a free Belgian horse-pulled wagon ride to the U-pick apples, live entertainment and special events.

If a trip to the pumpkin patch is on your to-do list, head to Coulter's at 5433 W US Hwy 421 in Westville, recognizable by the giant orange pumpkin. Through October, it's a hayride to the U-pick pumpkin patch on the weekends. Pre-picked pumpkins available daily. Enjoy pony rides, a cow train, face painting, a



Cheryl Wooten and her grandson, Spencer, enjoy a day at Coulter's Pumpkin Patch



corn maze and more. At Coulter's, it's all about the kids. Call (219) 785-2406 for more info.

For a fun fall adventure, head to the Guse Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch in Wanatah where you'll discover a plethora of family friendly activities (www.gusechristmastrees.com). Open on Saturdays and Sundays in October, get lost in the corn maze, play in the Korny box, ride the kiddy train, launch water balloons, bowl with pumpkins and more. Jump on the antique tractor-pulled hay wagon out to the patch to pick the perfect pumpkin. End the day by reserving a bonfire pit to cook hot dogs and s'mores over the fire.

Just down the road is the corn maze and pumpkin patch at WRF Nursery and Garden Center, 255 E 150 S, Valparaiso. Open Mondays thru Saturdays 9-5 until harvest in late October, romp through the corn maze, take a hayride to the pumpkin patch and purchase fall mums, corn stalks and more. Call (219) 462-8733 for more info.

There's plenty of country fun and entertainment to be had in our neck of the woods. It's great to live in Indiana!

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