Week sixteen! Only two weeks left - We've enjoyed having you! Make sure to have some fun with your edamame this week.

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Final Harvest Moon

Garth Woodruff

The Red Maples made my heart drop to the bottom of my belly on the way onto campus. I’ve been precursing to fall for some time now. More than a month ago a colleague and I were headed to a lecture in Lansing when we noticed the Sumac on the side of the road beginning to turn. However, those early birds didn’t take me back as the maples did this morning. At once I started looking around for the signs that would confirm my surprise. Sure enough, tucked close to the church walls stood two Flowering Dogwood. For years the Dogwood have been the catalyst for my fall melancholy. This morning, for seemingly the first time, they blazed in deep red. It’s hard to get my hands around the autumnal cycle that runs through my body. Students came back a few weeks ago, the last Wednesday night sailboat race was this week and the beaches are finally empty in St. Joseph. But none of that seemed to shake my inner being to the fact that fall was here and the seasons are changing as old the distinct red of Cornus florida.

Of course yesterday delivered the first day of fall. Also known as the fall equinox, which marks the parade of a dozen natural and manmade events. If you were standing on the North Pole this would be the beginning of six months of dark. At the same point, with the sun losing its power over your domain, you would also apparently see the Arctic ice beginning to freeze again. Each region embodies a unique fall marker that sets in place change which humanity has no control over. Cultures all over the world recognize this with special events. It signals the end of summers toil in the field, a fall great harvest, and winter preparations. Yet more often it beckons festivities and romance. Typically, these celebrations take place on what is known as the Harvest Moon, determined by the fall moon that cycles closest to the equinox, September 23 this year. More typically we see that moon phase in September but October can’t be totally ruled out.
Final Harvest Moon

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Childish curiosity, AKA OCD, had me counting days on a moon phase chart so that I could determine when to schedule the family evening around our back yard fire pit and a celebratory tip of hot apple cider. To my surprise this year’s equinox falls directly between moon phases in our region; 13 days exactly between full moons sets, one in September and one in October. It took Benjamin Franklin to instate the ancient practice of daylight savings time and it took the George Bush administration to move it. I need to know who has their hand on this Harvest Moon thing. If exactly yesterday Arctic ice started freezing then what great phenomenon is happening here? We straddle time with the full moon holding hostage our need to celebrate change. Great human events are determined by such things that now seemingly stand still. If I lived in Eastport, MD I wouldn’t know if I was or wasn’t allowed to wear socks?

We successfully tilled the earth at the gardens this summer. Our Mobile Farmers Market came to a close last week. Stephen and I are starting to compile data that will tell the story of a beautiful community outreach. The last CSA delivery takes place in two weeks. No more early Thursday mornings, no more collection of flowers, no more fields full of bounty. The apples are picked and the corn is all gone. Lani, connecting the dots over the weekend lamented sadly how she will miss the CSA basket.

Last week in an attempt to plan some celebrations for this hard work, Arthur and I began charting dates to get all the students from this past season back together. The last CSA goes out Thursday the ninth. Fall break at Andrews starts on the tenth. So, we decided that if a crowd was over at my place, staying up too late, grilling some of our own veggies and standing around the fire remembering summer antics, then Friday we could all sleep in. Without consulting the moon phases, In a texting volley late last week, we landed on this evening in October just because it made good sense. And, only now as I write do I realize that the evening of the ninth is the last day of the full moon. The last day of any possible Harvest Moon...and we will be celebrating the harvest.

Human life is more connected to nature than we realize. More importantly, if you stood at the North Pole yesterday and took in the vast scenery and didn’t know the fact that it marked the beginning of Arctic ice freezing it wouldn’t stop the ice. And, if our calendar stumbles the Harvest Moon unable to decide on the proper date, it won’t stop the Dogwood from turning red. So from my own interpretation of the Earth’s cycles and in the light that President Obama, dejected in his duty, neglected to step up and announced a formal Harvest Moon – I, Garth Woodruff, of sound mind, Director of the Andrews Student Gardens, proclaim October nine the Harvest Moon. You may all wear socks on Friday after.

How to Cook Fresh Edamame

www.bhg.com

The whole pod is cooked because it’s difficult to remove the beans prior to cooking; they slip out easily once the pods are cooked.

- Bring a pot of water or lightly salted water to boiling in a large saucepan. Add the pods and return the water to boiling; boil pods about 5 minutes. Do not overcook them or they will get mushy.
- Drain the beans and cool them under cold running water or immerse them in ice water to stop the cooking.
- To shell the beans, gently squeeze the pods with your fingers to release them. Or have fun simply putting the pods in your mouth and popping the beans out of their skins.
- Some people serve edamame cold and will refrigerate the cooked beans for an hour or two after cooking. Either way, you may want to sprinkle them with a coarse salt or dip them in soy sauce.

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