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Fair Grove Farmers Market is set to open 8th year with celebration

Opening for its eighth year on Wednesday, April 25 at 3:30 p.m., the Fair Grove Farmers Market will feature renowned dulcimer musician, Jonathan Dowell, performing Celtic, Appalachian and Ozarks music on his McSpadden custom maple mountain...

Apr 19, 2007

Opening for its eighth year on Wednesday, April 25 at 3:30 p.m., the Fair Grove Farmers Market will feature renowned dulcimer musician, Jonathan Dowell, performing Celtic, Appalachian and Ozarks music on his McSpadden custom maple mountain dulcimer.

Originally from the Ozarks, now living in New Mexico, he will be traveling the next day to compete at the Ozark Folk Center in Mountain View, Ark.

Also new will be the Growing Kids, Growing Market Club, a new program being sponsored by the market and starting on the first day of market. A free tree, flower or vegetable plant will be given to each young registrant each week for approximately eight weeks, in the hope of encouraging kids to have fun growing their own gardens this summer.

On the first week, a free white oak tree will be given to each child and parent attending (until supply is exhausted). Paul Whitsell, of the Forestry Division of the Missouri Department of Conservation, will present mini seminars at 3:45, 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. on the proper planting and

care of the trees being given away, in addition to being available to provide additional advice and printed handouts.

Each week thereafter, during market time, each child will receive two plants. As the ground warms up in May, flower plants such as marigolds and sunflowers, then vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, melons and pumpkins will be given out in order for them to start their own garden. Directions on planting, care and harvesting will be available.

Parents and grandparents are encouraged to bring their children and grandchildren the first week and sign them up for the approximately two-month-long Growing Kids, Growing Market Club. A signed permission is necessary. Registration will extend throughout May.

"Our hope is to teach our children about fresh vegetables," said Peggy Schletty, market director, "how good they taste, how good they are for them, and instill a sense of fun and accomplishment in learning to grow some of their own food." A special surprise will await registrants the week of May 9.

Fulltilt Student Ministry's summer project will be the preparation and serving of great food for dinner each week at the cafe. It will have weekly dinner specials in addition to Angus beef hamburgers, brauts, hot dogs, plus chips, drinks, ice cream cones and special ice cream desserts.

Among the various products available from the vendors will be spinach, lettuces, radishes, cool season vegetables, herbs, hanging and bedding flowers and vegetable plants, jams, jellies, salsas, pickles, breads, rolls, fresh eggs, hormone-free chickens and various types of meats, bird and gourd houses, and yard crafts.

The market is held every Wednesday afternoon through Oct. 17, from 3:30 to 7 p.m. It is located on the grounds of the Historic Wommack Mill at Mo. 125 and Main Street, downtown Fair Grove. The market is open rain or shine, and is a proud member of AgriMissouri and the Missouri Farmers' Market Association.