



In this file photo from last year, Stephen Delman and Mallorie Bruce, juniors at OU, spend their one-year anniversary at the 10th annual Pawpaw Festival in Albany. The festival is once again taking place at Lake Snowden Park this weekend.

Annual Pawpaw Fest isn't just about that zany fruit

It's official; the pawpaw is now Ohio's native fruit! In January, Gov. Ted Strickland signed Senate Bill 243 into law, honoring the pawpaw and paving the way for a memorable Ohio Pawpaw Festival this year.

This year's Ohio Pawpaw Festival will be held at Lake Snowden near Albany, Ohio, this Saturday and Sunday. The hours are 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Formal festival activities end by 8 p.m. Saturday, with the remaining evening hours largely devoted to live music.

Festival highlights include a best pawpaw competition, a pawpaw cook-off and pawpaw eating contest. Judges for this year's cook-off are slated to include state Rep. Debbie Phillips, D-District 92.

There also will be a Proclamation of the Pawpaw as the Official State Native Fruit at noon Saturday. State Sen. Jimmy Stewart, R-Albany, who was instrumental in passing the legislation, will present a copy of the bill, according to the news release.

The Ohio Country Fair returns again this year with environmental-minded workshops and kids' activities presented by RuralAction and Ohio University's Office of Sustainability. An expanded "kids zone" will include more inflatable structures, interactive games, art projects and other children's activities coordinated by Elemental Athletics and OU's Office of Sustainability. The Pawpaw Tent features

educational presentations and other pawpaw-specific programming all weekend.

Other standbys include the community marketplace, pawpaw beer garden and food vendors. Atrial throwing and competition, horse-drawn wagon rides, 1790s encampment and the Pawpaw Double Nickel Bicycle Ride are also part of the festival. Live music drawing from an array of genres will be on the main stage both days, according to the news release.

Dogs are permitted provided they are leashed and cleaned up after.

The Pawpaw Express, a shuttle sponsored by the Office of Sustainability at OU, will run from Baker Center every hour on the hour from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday. The return shuttle starts at 10:30 a.m. and continues until midnight (no returns 6:30 p.m. to midnight). Sunday the shuttle will leave Baker Center from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., with returns from the festival from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 4 p.m.

For a complete festival schedule, visit www.ohiopawpawfest.com, e-mail pawpaw@frog-net.net or call 740-698-6060.

To reserve an RV or tent campsite at Lake Snowden, call 740-698-6373.

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