Corn maze offers seasonal fun

Anderson's Denver Downs Farm shows Tiger pride

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You may think you've done the whole corn maze thing – rows of evenly trimmed corn stalks, crisp fall weather, getting lost.

But Elizabeth Garrison is willing to bet you've never done a tiger-shaped maze. That's why she and her family, all avid Clemson fans, designed the corn maze at Anderson's Denver Downs Farm, which the family has owned for more than a century, with a little Tiger pride this year.

"We start brainstorming in the spring," Garrison says. "We just love Clemson football and we just love Dabo Swinney, so we thought, oh gosh, that's our maze pattern this year."

The idea for a corn maze grew out of the family's eagerness to share the farm with the public, says Garrison, and when the family opened the first one seven years ago, it was a learn-as-you-go sort of experiment. They free-mowed the first maze with a weed eater and learned "it's a challenge to make a maze look good."

As the Denver Downs maze has grown (it now spans 15 acres), the family has moved to a professional maze company (yes, they are real) that creates each year's walk-through puzzle. The maze masters use an herbicide that strategically kills corn along a certain path, meaning no design is off-limits. One year Denver Downs had a football field gridiron with a Palmetto tree in the middle and a Clemson and Carolina helmet on either end.

The maze takes about an hour to walk through, says Garrison. But there will be plenty of other activities, too, from farm football and corn bag toss to hayrides, a pumpkin patch and a zip line. The maze will be up through Nov. 1, says Garrison, just before the first frost, after which it will go to the cows … literally.

"We try not to waste anything, so my brother moves the electric fence around the maze and lets the cows eat the corn," she says. "We believe in full circle."

YOU CAN GO

- What: Denver Downs Corn Maze
- When: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturdays and 1-6 p.m. Sundays today-Oct. 18; 6-10 p.m. Fridays, 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturdays and 1-6 p.m. Sundays Oct. 23-Nov. 1
- Where: 4915 Clemson Blvd., Anderson
- Cost: $10 per person; free for children 2 and younger
- For more: 864-940-2293 or http://denverdowns-farm.com/content/corn_maze

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STAFF / File

Elizabeth Garrison, center, helps visitors in the Denver Downs corn maze find their way out.