



ECO City Farms' Apprentices/Intern Guide

OUR GENERAL PHILOSOPHY

The internship/apprenticeship is, at its core, a working/learning experience. The primary method for learning about farming is hands-on learning. All work assignments are made within the context of working as a team, and as part of the overall farm operations. Our farm depends on dedication, mutual cooperation and willingness to help one another accomplish the overall goals of a successful season and demonstration urban farm.

OUR FARM WORK ETHIC

Farming is a mix of working hard and smart. Each individual should continually strive to find a balance between speed and efficiency, and balancing an eye for details while maintaining a grasp of the greater vision of the farm, the staff, and the season as a whole. There are a finite number of days and hours in the season the get our work done, so a positive attitude, enthusiasm, a strong work ethic and **endurance for long hours in all types of weather**, communication, and a serious interest in sustainable agriculture are all very important qualities.

WORK AGREEMENT

Apprentices and interns work in all aspects of the farm's production, from seeding, transplanting, nursery propagation, irrigation, bed preparation and cultivation, composting, harvesting, post-harvest processing, marketing, and general maintenance of the farmland. During the course of the season, apprentices and interns are given the information and time to learn about farming's many skills and topics.

SAFETY & COMMON SENSE

1. Footwear Policy

- We discourage open-toe footwear and being barefoot as there are many sharp tools, nails, glass, staples, sticks, and the like at the farm that can be a hazard. We suggest being prepared with some tall, waterproof boots. The farm can be very wet and muddy during the year.

2. Putting Tools Away

- It is easy to set tools down in the field and forget about them. Common things that are put down and forgotten are harvest knives, rubber bands, and hand tools during harvest days and other busy days. Always be aware of what you've brought out and be sure to put it back in its place, as it's less of a headache for everyone else later on. We should help remind each other of this when we see it happen.
- If for some reason things have to be left out and you aren't sure you'll return, notify someone else to handle it. We encourage everyone to take ownership over common work areas and help each other keep the farm tidy.

3. Be Prepared

- Bring a water bottle and keep it full, plus snacks, a hat, sunglasses, and proper clothes. We may have to work in all types of situations and keeping tabs on these little things pays off. The sun and humidity in the summer can be especially harsh. When the forecast calls for a brutally hot day, we may start extra early to be able to break in the middle of the heat and resume in the afternoon.

4. First Aid

- Familiarize yourself with the location of the First Aid Kit. Alert the staff to any farm injuries immediately. Be aware of your limitations. Stretching in the morning is a great habit to keep you farming for years to come. Keep proper posture when lifting and ask for help. Engage your core in all tasks. It helps maintain proper posture and control over your body.

COMPENSATION

- Apprentices will receive a weekly CSA bag, and a monthly \$40 travel stipend. We currently cannot provide any monetary compensation to interns.
- Any classes/workshops given by ECO City Farms is free to apprentices and interns.
- The farm staff participates in CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training). The mission of CRAFT is “to enhance educational opportunities for farm interns”. Roughly each month, there will be a visit to another farm in the Maryland/Virginia food-shed, which include a farm tour, potluck, and, occasionally, a workshop. It’s a great opportunity to learn and network.
- We are willing to help students obtain credit for their apprenticeship/internship, whenever possible.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Sometimes, apprentices and interns have a particular interest on the farm and want to develop a project outside of the normal day-to-day routine of the farm. We are happy to consider these projects. We have certain criteria to help us determine if it is a good fit for the farm and staff. Criteria includes: a description of the project and the short-term and long-term goals, what materials are needed, what is the time commitment anticipated, what budget may be needed, potential partners, and what research is required.

EDUCATION

- As previously stated, we primarily learn through hands-on experience. We will do our best to explain the why behind what we do, while still balancing the need to accomplish tasks in a timely manner.
- We will also provide you with access to resources to explore topics in depth that may interest you further. We will provide updates on workshops, conferences and other events held during the season. Groups, like CASA (Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture), regularly offer events. We’ll also provide a list of local farms that you should visit.
- Upon the start of the season, every apprentice will be expected to provide a list of goals for the season, as well as your own plan of action for achieving them. We are here to assist you in your learning, however you are ultimately responsible. We will meet over the course of the season to see if those goals are being met, or have changed, and to establish ways in which we can help you to meet those goals. The farm has a small library, both on-site and at the office, which apprentices and interns should utilize (and add to!)

- The resources and possibilities for learning on the farm are endless, but **ultimately you will get out of the experience what you put into it**. This is your opportunity to explore. Although no one should expect to learn everything about farming in one year (or ever, for that matter), there are always opportunities to learn. It is important to remember that even the most mundane tasks can teach us something, and that the season needs to be looked at in its entirety. A great tool for your journey is a journal.
- You will be provided with a small notepad for taking notes, keeping track of tasks, recording instructions, and writing observations.

OTHER PERSONNEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

1. Evaluations and Conflict Resolution

We work in an open and transparent environment. If desired, we can set up meetings to check in on a weekly basis, but do not hesitate to come to staff with any questions or issues you're having with other personnel or scheduling. Exchanging feedback regularly, when respectful, promotes a healthy way of dealing with problems as they arise and contributes to the success of the farm. Although the season will become very busy, please address concerns as they come up. Please do not assume we know how you are feeling- you must communicate.

2. General Demeanor, Schedules and Breaks

- It is expected that everyone arrive on time, or better yet, a few minutes early, **dressed appropriately and prepared to work**.
- We should all work to keep maintain an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and offensive and degrading remarks.
- If you are sick, please rest. Let us know what's going on in a timely manner.
- If you have to arrive late, we need to know as soon as possible. However, don't make it a habit. Communicate to us any special circumstances that may prevent you from being consistently on-time.
- Please, keep phone use limited to important calls. It can be distracting and affect our work.

3. Pets and Visitors

- We generally don't allow pets at the farm, as it can be distracting and unsanitary.
- We are an educational farming organization, so we want people to visit the farm and learn. However, please bring visitors after work is complete. We appreciate everyone's willingness to volunteer, but we haven't trained them and we have specific hours for general volunteering.

4. Farm Truck

- The farm's truck is reserved for the purposes of the farm, not for personal use unless there is an emergency.