

Farm Internships

Charlestown Farm is seeking two main-season interns for 2009, beginning April 1st and ending November 30st, with time off for Thanksgiving, of course. We are a 12-month working vegetable farm with livestock opportunities as well. Please visit www.broadwaterfarm.org to learn more about the livestock opportunities.

Charlestown Farm's diverse business includes a 150-member CSA, weekly participation in a highly successful local farmers' market (www.phoenixvillefarmersmarket.org) and delivery to several area restaurants. We have recently branched out into the retail market with a local health food store. Interns will be involved with each of these agricultural channels. We have high standards and believe in strong organization. Sustainability is key in our lives, our soils and our systems.

Community connection is important to our CSA. We make a great effort to reach out to our members with cooking classes, flower arranging workshops, canning and preserving workshops, potlucks, environmental movie nights, and our annual harvest square dance complete with a caller and a band. We offer large U-pick areas which are filled with a wide variety of herbs, flowers, flavorful paste tomatoes, sweet strawberries, raspberries, succulent peas, crisp beans and exquisite sungold cherry tomatoes. We seek to reconnect people to their food source and the quality of locally grown and raised food.

We work hard, as most farmers do. We have 9 acres in vegetable crops and another 9 acres in sweet corn, potato, and cover crop rotation. At the height of the season, we start our day at 7:00am and finish at 5:00pm, with a 1.5 hour lunch break at noon. In the spring we usually work an hour later to try to get a jump on all the planting and weeding that happens so quickly in the early spring months. By July we catch our breath a little and start to enjoy the rhythmic summer days of harvesting.

Our 30x120 hoophouse is especially interesting for interns. During the main season we dedicate half of the hoophouse to early tomatoes and the other half to season extension and farmers' market items. We are interested in experimenting with grafted tomatoes this year to get increased production and mitigate soil-born diseases. By mid-September we are setting our sites on winter growing.

Each year we purchase new equipment to assist us in our production. Last season we bought a transplanter and a 3-row seeder for the tractor. This year we are purchasing a potato planter and harvester to make potato production easier. Farming is a creative art. Each year we like to trial a new sustainable practice, so there is always an interesting experiment going on at the farm, whether that is growing a spring cover crop, or transplanting into no-till fields, or trialing different approaches to mulches.

Some of the things you can expect to learn about and be involved in are:Systems: Greenhouse, Field and Hoophouse plans for the whole year. Cover crop planning and rotations (all the paperwork behind the implementation and how to arrive at those

decisions). Fieldwork: direct seeding, transplanting, cultivating, weeding, pruning, trellising, thinning, set-up and management of irrigation systems, beneficial insect release, mulching, soil tests Hoophouse work: Bed preparation using broadfork and tilther, soil testing, seeding with a 6-row pinpoint seeder, pruning, basket weaving, trellising tomatoes and cucumbers, pest control, corn furnace operation for heat in the late fall Washing & Packing: sorting harvested crops, quality control for various markets, packing for farmer's market and retail Greenhouse operations: seeding, potting-on, watering, seedling care, pest control, greenhouse temperature management Marketing: working in the share room, greeting members, working the farmer's market, tracking added-value items, contributing to the monthly newsletter, creating signage Additional Education: Opportunity to attend SAITA (Sustainable Agriculture Internship Training Alliance). This is a great opportunity to network with other apprentices and interns, see other farm operations, and attend lectures on agricultural and environmental topics. These field trips can really round out your intern experience. Fall Extras: Cutting and splitting wood (let your inner lumberjack come out). Set up of cold frame tunnels for winter growing.

Housing is provided in a renovated stone carriage house with a gourmet kitchen and high-speed Internet access. We eat like Kings and Queens. We have yet to get all 12 of our burners going at once in the kitchen. Dinners are rotated so that everyone has an opportunity to cook once a week. You receive 4 lovingly prepared meals and you only have to do the dishes once. The house is close to our seedling greenhouse in a private setting close to the Pickering Creek trail which runs along the creek. There is a pond for cool refreshing dips on hot July afternoons. If you are a "birder" the immediate area is a wonderful home to many species of birds.

We offer a stipend of \$700-\$1000 a month depending on experience, all the veggies you can eat, fresh farm eggs from healthy happy hens, a farm fruit share from a local, high-quality orchard and at cost purchase of value-added items from the farm such as salmon, pork, bison, beef, lamb and bread.

Putting together a cohesive farm team is paramount to making the farm work well. It is important to you and us that we work and live together comfortably with respect and consideration. Your experience here will help you decide whether farming is a career for you. If you are interested in a position with us this season, please forward your resume with references. Upon reviewing it I will call to follow up with a phone interview and arrange for a time that you can visit the farm for a half-day.

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