



Apprenticeship Info and Application

WATERBEAR FARM

Waterbear Farm is a hundred acre farm with 7 acres in crops and the rest in fields and woods, there are several ponds and rivers surrounding this area, great places for both swimming and fishing. The farm is located five miles north of the town of Floyd. This town is a thriving artist community with lots of music, gatherings and activity in the center of a completely rural, county.

Richard Ursomarso/ Owner and primary farmer established the farm in 1987 and for the past fifteen years he has been farming according to certified organic guidelines.

The mission at Waterbear Farm to grow certified organic and biodynamic vegetables using sustainable farming practices. Our goal is to offer costumers great tasting highly nutritious and wholesome food.

We grow over twenty different vegetables which are sold to retail and wholesale accounts within 50 miles of our farm. We are the primary grower for the largest natural foods store in our area as well as restaurants, grocery stores, a neighboring CSA and direct sales on the farm.

THE APPRENTICESHIP

The apprenticeship is an educational program focusing on practical training in organic /biodynamic gardening and small -scale farming. The instruction and daily work experience in growing produce focuses on interactions amongst plants, soils, climate, insects, and pathogens. In a hands-on education approach, apprentices work alongside staff in the greenhouse, gardens, and fields. The apprentices selected to attend the course each year are interested in practical training that will prepare them to teach others and /or run their own operations.

We are looking for apprentices who will take responsibility for the Care and health of the produce we grow and the infrastructure surrounding it. Apprentices will learn how to grow beautiful produce using certified organic as well as biodynamic methods. Virtually all planting is done according to the biodynamic calendar and efficient technique and timing play a big part in our work. We use many progressive techniques, such as no-till, beneficial insect aviaries, and season extension covers.

Diverse, intensive, vegetable farming is best done with a team of interested "farmers" trained to care for the complex needs of the plants. Good communication skills and a teamwork spirit are essential. Apprentices are assigned to certain areas of the farming operation for the season. The work is a mix of physically demanding, meditative, social, and alone, wet, dry, fast, slow, beautiful, miraculous, meticulous and just get it done. This is an excellent opportunity to get a great deal of the knowledge necessary to start your own farm, and we have fun as much as we can and eat the best food on the planet.

THE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

The apprenticeship is a full-time (40 hours a week) and runs continuously from mid-April to December. Most activities take place Monday-Friday, but apprentices need to be available for occasional weekend greenhouse and watering duties (on a rotational basis). Apprentices have a 5-day break approximately half-way through the season.

This is a full-time program involving strenuous physical work five days a week. The program's work schedule is generally from 8:00 AM- 12:30 and 2:00 PM- 6:00 PM on weekdays. Apprentices are expected to participate fully in the work and be available for those hours every day. Examples of daily activities include bed preparation, transplanting, seed sowing, watering, weeding, thinning, composting, harvesting, produce handling, and storage. Rotational positions of responsibility, such as cooking, cleaning, greenhouse managing, and watering, tend to require different and/or longer hours.

Apprentices will get the maximum out of this experience by coming prepared- financially, physically, and emotionally- to make this experience their singular focus for their scheduled time. If an applicant has a temporary health condition (e.g., broken leg) that might seriously affect his or her participation, we ask that the applicant reapply another year.

FACILITIES

Here at Waterbear we offer an opportunity for apprentices to live at the Farm (free of charge). Apprentices share a large living area with kitchen, hot water shower, bath, tub, refrigerator, stove with oven, out house, washing machine, loft and deck. In addition to this space, each apprentice has their own camp site with a platform already set up for a tarp to be supported over your tent.

(We supply the platform; you supply both tent and tarp.) Tent life is not for everyone, but the advantages of living at the Farm are many and most apprentices choose this option, either for economical reasons or because they feel a greater connection with the land and with each other.

During the growing season we become a small community, Working, learning, cooking, and playing together to create a sustainable organic, biodynamic farming community.

SUPPLIES to BRING (required)

- *Bedding, sheets, blankets, pillow, tent, and tarp.
- *Clothing, including rain gear, gloves, hat, and water proof boots.
- *Money- at least \$200.00 (you get stipend at the END of each month)
- *Food, besides what we grow on the farm, and able to trade with other farmers, you are responsible for your own food necessities.

WE PROVIDE

- *\$400.00 to \$600.00 (depending on experience) stipend, paid at the end of the month.
- *All you can eat from our seven acre garden.
- *Lots of trade options for other locally grown goods and services using our produce.
- *Housing, hot water, hot shower, stove, electricity, refrigerator, freezer, washing machine, a really nice community space.
- *Cooking, eating utensils and equipment.
- *All tools needed for work.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. A great attitude and a burning desire to grow mountains of beautiful food.
2. Completing your stay as planned
3. Staying in good health and eating well enough to do the work.
4. We ask that our interns agree to avoid fasting while on the farm. We have found that the physical demands of the work make it very difficult for people to fast and maintain their responsibilities.
5. Working a minimum of thirty five to forty hours a week plus one weekend a month as caretaker and person responsible for watering.
6. being able to drive and deliver produce two to five times a week.

I _____ have read and understand the above information, and agree to the following terms and conditions.

Date: _____

APPRENTICESHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Age: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone: _____ Cell: Email _____
Address: _____
Driver License Number: _____

Emergency Contact Name: & Number: _____

Allergy Information, (if any) Special Considerations (if any)

Are you a cigarette smoker: _____

What type of experience do you have in this or a related field (if any): _____

Can you describe how you plan to utilize the information & experiences you learn during your time at Waterbear Mountain Farm:

What are your interests in this or related fields:

Are you physically fit, how you stay in shape?

Are you interested/confident/or willing to learn the use of power equipment on the farm, such as a weed eater, chain saw, and tractor:

What is the time frame that you are available to work in 2008?

From when to when:

Do you have your own car:

REFERENCES

#1 NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL: _____

TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS PERSON: _____

WORK PERFORMED WITH THIS PERSON (if applicable): _____

#2 NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL: _____

TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS PERSON: _____

TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED WITH THIS PERSON (if applicable): _____

#3 NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL: _____

TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH THIS PERSON: _____

TYPE OF WORK PERFORMED WITH THIS PERSON (if applicable): _____

If you have a resume, please attach it with this application. Your information is confidential with Waterbear Mountain Farm.

All information must be filled out and submitted to Ilima or Ritchie Ursomarso at least two weeks before the date of arrival.

I _____, have read and understand and filled out all of the above information and agree to the following terms and conditions.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Ilima & Ritchie Ursomarso
Waterbear Mountain Organic Farm
477 Rain Dance Road
Floyd, V.A. 24091