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MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

Farm Apprentice Program

P.O. Box 170 Unity, ME 04988

(207) 568-4142

email: education@mofga.org web: www.mofga.org

FARMER APPLICATION

Farm Name: Darthia Farm	MOFGA Member? Yes
Contact Person: Bill & Cynthia Thayer, Steve Eaton & Liz Moran	Certified Organic? <u>Yes</u>
Mailing Address: 51 Darthia Farm Rd,	
Gouldsboro, ME 04607	Phone: 207-963-7771
	(best time to call) 7am – 8am, 5pm – 8pm
Farm Address:	Farm County: Hancock
(if different)	
E-Mail: darthiafarm@gmail.com	Website: darthiafarm.com
Number of apprentices sought: 2 - 3	

The host farm online searchable database helps prospective apprentices find farms that match their interests. The next two selections are an integral part to the database.

Please classify your farm for the online database:

Farm Type (select as many that apply)

- Vegetables/Fruit
- Dairy
- Other Livestock
- Value-added/Processing
- Diverse, integrated crop/livestock
- Nursery Stock
- Educational
- Homesteading

Marketing Strategy (select key marketing channels)

- Community Supported Agriculture
- Other direct-to-customer (Farm Stand, Farmers' Market, Restaurant etc.)
- Wholesale
- Other – Holiday Mail Order

What is the ideal time period for your apprenticeships? Do you have a minimum or maximum length required? Do you have year-round opportunities?

Ideal time period is March – December. Minimum stay – 3 months. Opportunity for year ‘round apprenticeship.

Describe the physical setting of your farm and the nature of the community in which you live (e.g., acreage, woods/fields, buildings, near town/remote area, recreation available, etc.):

Our farm has 153 acres of woods, pasture, and gardens, located on West Bay in Gouldsboro, a small fishing village. The main house is a large 9 room Victorian farmhouse set back 1000’ from the road. We have a chicken coop, large stone smokehouse, 2 barns, farm workshop, greenhouse, 2 hoop houses, farm store, and various outbuildings, a commercial processing kitchen and apprentice bathroom, 2 apprentice living quarters, and our farm manager’s house. After a devastating fire in 2012, the kindness of people all over the country allowed us to rebuild a beautiful post and beam barn. The nearest town of any size is Ellsworth (22 miles away) and we are within one hour of Bangor and Bar Harbor. We are within biking distance of a library, a deli, and beautiful Schoodic Point.

Describe your farm operation (e.g., livestock, crops, bees, herbs, forestry work, greenhouse, orchards, building projects, haying, maple sugaring, meat processing, level of mechanization, livestock management system, products made, marketing, dairy, stock dogs, etc.). Please note any unique or special features, as well as any potential hazards:

We currently have a few head of beef cattle, a small meat/wool sheep flock, three Haflinger horses, laying hens, barn cat, and a Nova Scotia duck tolling retriever. Lambing takes place in the spring; meat chickens, pigs, and turkeys in the summer. We raise all our own vegetables, meat, eggs, herbs, and some fruit. Some of our crops grown in our intensively managed gardens include potatoes, herbs, mixed vegetables, storage crops, and salad greens. Income comes from spinning sales, beef, pulpwood, turkeys, vegetables, and a mail order preserves and wreath business in the fall. Jams, pesto, vinegars, etc. are made and sold from our farm store. The horses rake hay, haul logs, spread manure, and pull a wagon. In recent years we have acquired a couple of John Deere tractors. Our farm store also houses a local fine-crafts shop. We mill our own boards for various building projects. We have a small CSA and sell at one local Farmers’ Market.

Is your operation certified organic? If not, to what degree are organic methods used on your farm? Please describe any practices/materials that would not be certifiable.

We have been certified Organic by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners for almost 40 years for vegetables, small fruits, flowers, woodlot. Our livestock do receive some commercially raised grain but are mostly fed on pasture or farm raised foods. Our meat is not certified. Our preserves are all made with certified organic ingredients but are not certified organic.

Describe the work to be performed and the skills to be learned by an apprentice (e.g., care of livestock, planting, cultivation, harvesting, selling at market, use of equipment, carpentry, food preservation, woods-work, etc.). Please break the season (or months) into 4 major tasks to be performed during each.

In spring there is greenhouse work, planting, wood splitting, brush cutting, pasture work, animal care, lambing. In the summer, apprentices share work in the farm store, farmers’ market, CSA, harvesting, manage intensive grazing, compost making, garden maintenance. The fall brings slaughtering, harvesting, wool work, mail order work, and manure spreading. Apprentices learn to trim sheep feet, administer shots, learn about pasture rotation and compost making. Marketing is one of the most important aspects of our operation. Spinning, knitting, and dyeing are available, especially in the fall, using our own wool and our own indigo. There is an excellent opportunity for anyone who is interested in learning about running a mail order business in the fall. There is jam, pesto, and salsa making for the farm store and the mail order. In September we go to the Common Ground Country Fair with the horses and for a spinning demonstration - a wonderful but exhausting experience. It is important that apprentices feel comfortable working with the public when they are at Farmers’ Market and in our farm store. There are always small carpentry projects.

List any requirements of employment (e.g. particular skills, certifications, ability to perform certain tasks, drivers license etc.):

Apprentices must be able to work physically full days and lift 50 pounds. A driver's license is a plus. Musicians particularly welcome. A sense of humor goes a long way.

**What do you expect of an apprentice? (e.g., hours to be worked in a day, days to be worked in a week, heavy physical labor, time off, non-farm expectations (babysitting, errands, other work), etc.)
What level of independence do you require of your apprentices?**

There is naturally some very heavy physical work, long days, and the animals must be fed 7 days a week. From June through September, we generally start work at 6am, eat breakfast after some work, and then continue until 5 or 6pm with a break for lunch. Apprentices usually work 5 1/2 days per week but are expected to participate in regular animal chores on weekends and sometimes, especially during haying, work may need to be done after hours or on weekends. We encourage apprentices to follow directions well, work alone at times, assume responsibility, be self-motivated, and ask questions if there are any doubts.

Explain how you provide instruction, training and feedback to apprentices (e.g., work along with the apprentice, demonstration, apprentice working alone, training "classes," reading to be done, extent of supervision by yourself or others, Farm Training Projects, other trainings, system and schedule for check ins, etc.):

The apprentices will meet with Steven to discuss the day's projects. We try to include apprentices in decision-making. Steven will hold a weekly meeting for out of field discussion. Independent projects are encouraged and arranged. Bill, Cynthia, and Liz will work with apprentices in the areas of haying, spinning and dyeing wool, fence work, animal husbandry, etc. We encourage apprentices to attend MOFGA workshops whenever possible. We try to have a community dinner once a week. We have an extensive library and encourage suggestions.

Are you a full-time farmer? If not, describe what other occupation(s) you have:

Bill and Steven work full time on the farm. Cynthia writes and is available to teach spinning and dyeing. Steven manages the gardens and helps with everything else. Steven and Liz have two children who require their time and attention. We all have some other commitments: teaching, community service, various musical bands, solo gigs, chorus, theatre production, so occasionally one or two of us will be off the farm.

Please describe your level of daily or weekly involvement of apprentices.

Apprentices should be available from Monday AM through Saturday noon. Haying may fall on a weekend. Apprentices are expected to work from 6am – 5pm, five and a half days a week, with breaks for breakfast and lunch.

Describe compensation for apprentices including stipends, wages, piecework, room, board, produce from the farm etc. Are there special conditions for compensation (such as experience level, duration of commitment, probationary period, etc.)?

This is essentially an exchange of labor for room, board (farm-raised food including vegetables, meats, fruit, etc. – we have eight freezers and a root cellar), and a good learning experience. We pay a monthly stipend of \$300.00, which allows apprentices to purchase items not raised on the farm. Ideally we prefer a commitment from mid March through mid December. The minimum commitment would be through August.

Do you provide housing? On-farm Off-farm Rental No housing

If no, please describe local housing options for apprentices

If yes, please describe the accommodations, facilities and explain any room and board arrangements (e.g., would the apprentice live with the farmer, live apart but eat with the farmer,

are there young children, what household duties would the apprentice share, how are dietary restrictions handled, rules about smoking/drinking/drugs, are there any other important considerations or rules?):

Apprentices live either in a rustic two-bedroom house with a kitchen or an A-frame cabin on the property. There are cooking facilities but water must be brought in. We have an apprentice bathroom nearby with toilet, shower, sink, and washing machine as well as a certified processing kitchen. All the apprentice houses and the farmhouse are heated with wood. We share some meals together but the separate quarters allow us all some privacy. Apprentices are expected to share cleaning of their living areas and bathroom. We provide some bulk staples like flour, rice, beans. Apprentices are expected to buy other items like butter, coffee, laundry soap, etc. No smoking or pets, please. Wireless internet is available. We eat meat - our own. There is a wood fired brick oven for pizza and bread on the premises. 15 ex-apprentices have settled in the area and socialize together. Friends and family are welcome to visit. We would like a commitment at least through August, our busiest time. We depend on apprentices and expect them to honor any commitment that we've made with them.

Do you require a prospective apprentice to visit your farm before a final arrangement is made?_ Describe any trial period.

Ideally apprentices will visit the farm before an arrangement is made but we realize that sometimes it isn't practical. Once a commitment is made, we expect that commitment to be honored, as we will, but if things aren't working out for some reason, we will all try to find an amicable solution without endangering the the workings of the farm.

Do you have a written Farm Employees manual? What is your process for evaluating work and giving feedback? What is your process for disciplinary action if necessary

We have a farm manual explaining the work, what is expected, with a section of things to do in the area. We have a questionnaire, which we fill out with each apprentice, asking about their interests, skills, learning styles. We give verbal feedback.

Describe yourself, your family, background, farming experience, philosophy, goals & interests:

Cynthia, 72, & Bill 78, were teachers before moving here 39 years ago from Massachusetts. Cynthia is a novelist and Bill plays jazz drums. Cynthia sings in a chorus. We often have relatives and friends visiting the farm and the able ones are expect to help out some. We are politically liberal, non religious but tolerant, involved in farming and conservation organizations as well as town, art, and community groups. We put a conservation easement on the farm property so that it can never be subdivided and developed. We are committed to organic farming as a way of making our living and living our lives. Cynthia has rheumatoid arthritis, which can interfere with her work.

Steve, 30, and Liz, 28, met on an organic vegetable farm on Long Island, NY, and now have two children together (daughter, Harbor, is almost four and son, Cedar, is almost one). Steven is a musician and a certified yoga instructor. Liz is a talented baker and crafter of all sorts. We are committed to the health of the soil as the starting point to the health of our bodies and our community.

Are you interested in participating as a mentor and/or host farmer in MOFGA's Journeyperson program for advanced training in organic farming? X Yes No Not sure
In what area(s) of expertise do you feel most qualified/interested?

References

Jeff Beckley, Unionville Rd, Steuben, ME 04680, Jeffbeckley@gmail.com 207-546-2998

Former apprentice reference

Email

Phone

Wendy Gignoux, Unionville Rd., Steuben, ME 04680, hannahgsmom@earthlink.net, 207-546-2147

Former apprentice reference

Email

Phone

Paul Birdsall, Horsepower Farm, Blue Hill, ME

207-374-5038

Personal reference

Relationship/Affiliation

Email

Phone

Please return your completed application (including Farm Synopsis Form and signed mentor agreement below) with the \$35 fee (\$45 for non-MOFGA members) to:

MOFGA Apprenticeship Program,
P.O. Box 170,
Unity, ME 04988

or email to education@mofga.org.

Thanks!

Farm Synopsis Form

This synopsis will be posted on MOFGA's website, and is an important way that you will "advertise" your farm to prospective apprentices.

Consider including information about the following when writing your synopsis:

1. Location of your farm,
2. Number of acres under cultivation,
3. Scale – farmstead, market garden, commercial production
4. Methods of marketing - farm stand, CSA, farmers' market,
5. Livestock - yes or no, Livestock – numbers, types
6. Major crops of particular interest - small fruits, herbs, orchard, grain,
7. Power used - tractor, draft, hand tools,
8. Alternative power on premises - solar, wind.

Please try to be as concise as possible, synopses much longer than 50 words may be edited.

Name, address and phone are for office use only.

Only the actual synopsis with a reference number and farm county will be posted on the web.

Farm Name:

Synopsis:

150 acre family-run, saltwater organic farm in downeast Maine. Hay, pasture, and intensively managed gardens. Self-sufficient and growing for market. Farmstore, Farmer's Market, CSA, mail order wreath & preserve business in fall. Cattle, poultry, pigs, sheep. Market garden, flowers, jams, herbs, spinning, dyeing, food preservation. Horse, tractor, hand cultivation. Liberal views and music lovers.

Please make sure that your synopsis is included when you send your application and payment.
Your application will not be processed without it. Thank you!

Mentor Farm Agreement

By signing below, I acknowledge and commit to the following terms of participation in the MOFGA Apprenticeship Program. MOFGA expects that participating farms will:

- Review and renew their application each year
- Pay fees associated with program participation
- Notify MOFGA staff promptly:
 - when apprentices are found,
 - when your farm is full; and
 - when an apprentice leaves your farm for any reason
- Set clear expectations for apprentices
- Commit to good communication
- Conduct regularly scheduled check-ins or meetings
- Provide on-farm learning in the form of:
 - allowance for attendance at the weekly Farm Training Project
 - hands-on demonstrations
 - work alongside apprentice
 - identify apprentice learning goals for the season
 - classes, resources or readings

Mentorship and employment relationships between Host Farmer and Apprentice must be carefully arranged, well-planned, and self-regulated. Any apprenticeship arrangement made is strictly between the Host Farmer and Apprentice. MOFGA does not have the authority, resources or expertise to police relationships or arbitrate disputes between parties connected through this Apprenticeship Program. For more information and guidance about managing apprentice-mentor relationships, please consult your On-Farm Mentor's Guide, visit [the program webpage](#), or contact MOFGA.

MOFGA reserves the right to refuse participation in the Apprenticeship Program to any farm or apprentice applicant, at any time, at our discretion, should we determine any pattern of or egregious impropriety, or the appearance of such impropriety. In such a case, the farm's enrollment fee will not be refunded.

Host Farmer: Cynthia Thayer _____

Farm Name: Darthia Farm _____

Date: 12/6/2015 _____

Signature:  _____