



Farm at the Arb Apprenticeship

The Farm at the Arb Apprenticeship is offered each year from February to October. Applications are due in the fall.

This hands-on, technical training in vegetable growing is designed for beginning growers, skilled workers and career changes. Are you looking to pursue a career in sustainable food production for sale and community health? The USDA defines a beginning farmer as someone who has ten years of experience or less - The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum helps individuals *begin* or *continue* their career as food system leaders.

The program is offered in collaboration with the University of Minnesota Department of Horticultural Sciences and Extension. Apprentices receive a combination of classroom, lab and field experience. This includes a 14 week paid work experience at the Arboretum and partnering farms.

Core Curriculum

The focus is on annual vegetable production, using a hands-on, plain language, and team-focused approach. Coursework includes greenhouse and raised-bed production, soil science, plant healthcare, food safety, and more throughout the program. Instructors are UMN educators and professional guest speakers who have established horticultural careers and deep experience in particular aspects of sustainable growing and marketing.

Curriculum components are adapted from UMN Extension Master Gardener and Agricultural Production resources, Growing for Market trade publications, and coursework from the UMN Horticultural Sciences Department.

Priorities and Environmental Literacy

Horticulture skills can be used to promote access to nature, local food, plant and pollinator diversity, healthy soil, and clean water. They enable us to create resilient landscapes that are adapted to our climate. We encourage participants to join a community of practice, whose mission is to advance horticultural knowledge while growing for defined markets.

For more information visit: <https://arb.umn.edu/learn/farmapprenticeship>



Thank you for your interest in the Farm at the Arb Apprenticeship program.
We are excited to announce the 2024 recruitment process.

1. **Complete the following interest form:**

Scan QR code or visit:

<https://z.umn.edu/FarmArbAP>

2. **Attend one mandatory two-hour Information Session**
(Details will be emailed prior to the event)

3. **Attend one mandatory three-hour Interview Day at**
the Farm at the Arb in Chaska:
(Sign up at Information Session)



Please feel free to reach out with any questions. We look forward to meeting you at an information session.

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FARM AT THE ARB - SUSTAINABLE HORTICULTURE PROGRAM 2024

Spring Schedule

February 5 - May 26

9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Monday

9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday

Paid Work Experience

May 28 - September 1

14 weeks at partnering farm sites

Fall Schedule

September 3 - October 10

9 a.m.-12 p.m. Monday and Thursday

8-12 a.m. Tuesday and Wednesday

Program Overview: 450 Classroom Hours, up to 725 Paid Hours

In the spring semester, the program focuses on the foundations of sustainable agriculture: horticultural plant science, soil fertility, pest management, greenhouse production, and post-harvest handling techniques. The program also includes exposure to specialty topics by guest lecturers. Participants also explore environmentalism and community building in group activities and discussions. The program structure is made of lectures, lab activities, and fieldwork to develop an employable and problem-solving grower with applicable skills to the industry.

During the summer paid work experience, participants will work a minimum of 24 hours per week on a commercial vegetable farm or garden. This intensive work experience applies concepts learned in the spring semester. While on internship, the participant must complete an independent pest and disease management project, S.M.A.R.T goals, and a detailed notebook on farm management.

After the summer, the participant creates a crop plan for the following year. The participant develops this plan in collaboration with a partner, and presents the plan in a public forum. Participants continue field work at farm sites, completing their skill sets for the program. Finally, students create an up-to-date resume, a horticulture cover letter, and participate in a mock horticulture job interview.



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SPRING SCHEDULE

Subject to change with notification

- Week 1: Intro to Farm at the Arb Program; Intro to Sustainable Farming
- Week 2: General Botany: Plant Parts and Processes; Fundamentals of Environmental Literacy and Water
- Week 3: Greenhouse Production: Concepts, Seeding; Fundamentals: Health, Food and Agriculture
- Week 4: General Botany: Plant Reproduction and Seeds; Fundamentals: Social Entrepreneurship and Community Organizing
- Week 5: Greenhouse Production; Water in Agriculture; Perennials Overview; Food Safety, Harvest and Market Training
- Weeks 6-8: Outdoor Production: Site Planning, Cropping Systems, Crop Specific Resources, Tilling, Transplanting, Building and Other Techniques
- Week 9: Soil Physical Properties; Soil in marginal areas: Practicalities, Land Access, and site maintenance
- Week 10: Compost & Soil Ecology
- Week 11: Soil Chemical Properties; Reading Soil and Compost Reports; Identifying Plant Deficiencies
- Week 12: Plant Health Care: Integrated Pest Management; Insect Pests and Beneficial Insects
- Week 13: Plant Health Care: Managing Plant Pathogens
- Week 14: Ecological Weed Management; GAPS Training; Small Farm Food Safety
- Week 15: Harvest Efficiency and Post-Harvest Handling Revisited; Intro to Beekeeping
- Week 16: Farm and Market Garden Reports;

SUMMER AND FALL

- Weeks 17-30: Full time, paid work experience at Landscape Arboretum or partner farm site. IPM assignment: Complete weekly IPM assessment and logging of a particular field/crop/pest.
- Weeks 31-36: Crop Planning and internship presentations, Employability workshops, and Field Days



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