



Farmer Starter Program Overview

Farmer Starter Schedule Overview:

- Farmer Starter is offered two times per year.
 - The Spring class goes from February - June
 - The Fall class goes from August - December
- We meet Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays weekly.
 - We work in the field from 7:30am until 11:30am and then break for lunch.
 - Classes or Farm Tours start at 1:00pm.
 - We aim to end the day by 4:00 PM.

Key Program Components:

Field Time: Each morning we spend in the field working on our Certified Organic vegetable farm, gaining hands-on experience, learning how to use tools, harvest, manage irrigation, soil fertility, weeds and pest control, among other things.

Student Beds: Each student is given 2 beds on the farm to manage as a part of the in-field experience one morning per week. We will provide a list of crops that are appropriate for the planting window of the season. You will get to choose what varieties to plant, build beds with the walk-behind tractor, seed and tend your plot.

Classes: Tuesday and Thursday afternoons we spend in the classroom studying the science and business of sustainable farm management. Class topics are listed in the chart on the following page.

Farm Tours/ Hands on Workshops: In addition to our classroom time, each Wednesday afternoon we will have a skills workshop and/or local farm tour in which you will learn a myriad of essential skills ranging the spectrum of farming possibilities. These classes will be outdoor workshops which may feature guest instructors, take us to learning destinations, or on-farm tours where seasoned expert farmers will guide us through local area farms of various scales and disciplines, introducing us to alternative techniques and possibilities of farming in Central Texas.

Independent Project: Midway through the program students will choose a topic to explore more in-depth to present to the class at the end of the semester. Students may choose to complete a business plan as their independent project.

Crop Planning Project: In class we will learn how to make a seasonal crop plan to maintain a consistent harvest and meet the needs of your customers. Each student will complete a crop plan for the following season. This crop plan may be used to apply for **Farmer Cultivator**, a continuation of Farmer Starter where graduates can use a portion of the Farmshare farm to grow for our Food Access programs in the following season. Cultivators can use the land and tools rent free and Farmshare will purchase the produce they grow to our specifications.

Curriculum Schedule

Production Classes	Farm Tours/Workshops	Business Classes	Food System Classes/Special Events
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	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
WEEK 1	Vision, Values and Mission; Interactive Timeline of Ag in America	Basic Botany, Vegetable Families, Central Texas Growing Seasons	INTRO TO SOIL 1 - Structure and Chemistry
WEEK 2	INTRO TO SOIL 2 - Soil Biology	Soil Fertility Management	Propagation & Greenhouse Management
WEEK 3	Cultivation & Bed Preparation; Direct Seeding & Transplanting	Food Access & Food systems	Production Systems & Techniques
WEEK 4	Post Harvest Handling	Farm Tour/Workshop	Irrigation
WEEK 5	Cover Cropping	Farm Tour/Workshop	Composting
WEEK 6	Introduction to Business Planning	Farm Tour/Workshop	Integrated Pest Management
WEEK 7	Strategic Planning	Farm Tour/Workshop	Organic Weed Management
WEEK 8	Sales Channels	Farm Tour/Workshop	Managing Plant Pathogens,.
WEEK 9	Marketing Strategies	Farm Tour/Workshop	Mid Season Check in
WEEK 10	Planning For Profit:	Farm Tour/Workshop	Crop Rotations
WEEK 11	Managing Farm Finances & Record Keeping	Farm Tour/Workshop	Seasonal Crop Planning
WEEK 12	Start up budgets	Farm Tour/Workshop	Crop Planning Activity
WEEK 13	Accessing Capital	Farm Tour/Workshop	Taking and Interpreting Soil Tests
WEEK 14	Farm Taxes, Business Structures, Managing Risk	Farm Tour/Workshop	Livestock Management
WEEK 15	Organic Certification	Farm Tour/Workshop	Seed Saving
WEEK 16	Farm Labor & Time Management	Farm Tour/Workshop	Orchard Management
WEEK 17	Value Added Products	Farm Tour/Workshop	Climate Resilience
WEEK 18	Food safety - FSMA & GAP	Farm Tour/Workshop	Review Crop Plans
WEEK 19	Independent Project Presentations	Independent Project Presentations	GRADUATION!

- NOTE: The 20 week program consists of 19 weeks of instruction and one week of break. In the fall, the break is the week of Thanksgiving. In the spring, the break will be the first week of May.