

Organic Seed Farm Intern 2024 - 2-3 Days/Week

Nature and Nurture Farm ORGANIC SEED FARM INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

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Description of Nature and Nurture, LLC

Mike Levine and Erica Kempter are the owners of Nature and Nurture Farm, an Organic Vegetable Seed Farm. We have been doing organic landscape maintenance, fruit and vegetable gardening, and consulting for at least 20 years. Our farm was purchased in 2013 and we live on-site year-round. In 2017, our farm and seed business became Certified Organic. We are in Scio Township about 8 miles west of downtown Ann Arbor (pop. 117,025). The closest town is the city of Dexter (small town, pop. 4,160), about 2.8 miles to the north.

Our farm is situated on 130 acres of woods, wetlands, and mostly clay-loam fields with diverse topography. We have at least 62 acres of fields and the rest is wooded or wetland. We produce shiitake mushrooms which are sold to local businesses and directly to consumers. We grow heirloom vegetable seeds and sell them online through Nature and Nurture Seeds. Extra vegetable and fruit produce is sold through various avenues. We have a fruit nursery and diverse orchard. We teach organic gardening classes. All these projects will be expanded at our new farm. In addition, continue to plan, design, and implement regenerative agriculture, restoration agriculture, permaculture, edible forest, and restoration agriculture projects. A local farmer harvests organic hay on much of our acreage. There is plenty of space for a small cattle

operation in the future. We continue to run our landscape gardening business which is primarily offsite at various residences in the Ann Arbor area.

Our Internship Overview

We are looking for self-motivated interns with a positive attitude and excellent work ethic, who would like to work on a diverse, bio-intensive, medium-sized, organic farm. Interns must be up to date on COVID vaccinations according to CDC recommendations. Responsibilities may include soil preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, irrigation, seed cleaning, working on basic farm infrastructure, helping with farm events and more.

We do not have sleeping quarters for interns in our house, but we can discuss (on a case by case basis) options for interns who may want to sleep in a tent at the farm.

We offer a farm to table lunch, produce to take home, education, and a stipend dependent on experience and performance. The growing season is usually from April through November; however, we have some flexibility for both shorter or longer internships. Preference will be given to interns who can commit to the whole season. Interns interested in seed cleaning should commit at least through October (seeds are cleaned in August, September, and October).

This internship is experiential and will focus on hands-on application of sustainable agriculture principles and practices. Erica and Mike are both teachers and are committed to the education of interns. Longer term interns who have a special interest may do additional projects in the following areas:

- Growing and marketing of produce
- Seed growing, harvesting, and cleaning
- Shiitake mushroom growing
- Restoration agriculture/permaculture
- Organic invasive species control
- Fruit growing
- Nursery Propagation

Mealtimes

We provide lunch at our farm so we can all eat together and help build community. Interns are expected to help with harvesting lunch ingredients, cleanup, and

occasionally may be asked to help prep food for cooking which provides farm-to-table cooking opportunities. Cooks will prepare the meal and clean up right after we eat including washing and drying cooking dishes/pans, wiping tables, counters, and stove area, and sweeping floors. The rest of us pitch in to clean their own dishes, clear the table, put the food away, and minimize impact on the inside of the house.

All farm workers are REQUIRED to have lunch together as a community to share life, answer questions about the day's events, and discuss the direction for the rest of the day.

Household - CLOSED FOR COVID

We have a 3-bedroom farmhouse. We use the back porch as our main entrance. The shared areas in the main farmhouse are the kitchen, the dining room, the back bathroom, and the back porch which are shared with Erica and Mike. The rest of the house, the south side (bedrooms, living room, and 2nd bathroom) and most of the basement is Erica and Mike's private space. We don't wear shoes in the house and we must be vigilant to keep the floor clean. Everyone should clean up after themselves in the shared areas and put their personal items away. The guest bathroom (FOR COVID WE NOW HAVE A PORTAPOTTY) is primarily used and kept clean by interns and employees.

Also, we do not allow smoking of any kind or burning of candles, incense, lanterns, etc. in any buildings on the farm and in any areas where food/produce is being handled.

Tobacco smoke in the greenhouse or in the fields is strictly prohibited due to tobacco mosaic virus (tobacco smoke contains a virus that can infect tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and potatoes). Consumption of cannabis during working hours is prohibited. Intoxication during working hours is prohibited. Abuse of drugs and alcohol will not be tolerated.

Work Schedule

This internship is a work-learning experience, so you can work after required hours if you want. Minimally we ask that our interns make a commitment of 2 or more days per week, if possible (days of the week to be agreed upon and will generally stay the same) and work 9am-5ish pm on their scheduled days. If you miss a day we expect you to make it up on a different day. Lunchtime can be variable, but is usually around 12:30 and

is a ½ hour long. Occasionally, you will be expected to work later than 5:00 if there is an unfinished project, if a frost is coming or there are any pressing farm emergencies. It is generally understood that interns might need short (10 or 15 min.) water/snack breaks in the morning or afternoon. If it's hot out, we might end the day early and go swimming at any of several local lakes or in our 1/2 acre pond. Our farm has hiking trails and you are welcome to hike the land after or before work.

Kiwi Dog

Our beautiful, sweet, and wonderful Australian shepherd mix lives on our farm. She's friendly, social, and is generally well behaved. She loves our interns (her fan club) and can't wait to meet you!

REQUIRED Participation: Work Parties/Open Houses

We have various events including volunteer work parties, tours, workshops, social events, and a harvest party in August. It is expected that interns will help before, during, and after events. We will let you know as these events are scheduled.

Our friends/customers/community members might come with or without their children and/or dogs to play, or just to walk about the farm and explore. We ask that you greet them if we are not around to host to make sure they are supposed to be here, and are content, safe, and don't do things that make extra work for us. We expect you to help be our eyes and ears on the farm.

Compensation and Expectations

We ask that you will follow through with whatever your personal commitment is for the season (duration of internship and number of days/week). We offer a stipend that is based on experience, performance, and how things go for us during the season. Our stipend is \$25/day if interns work at least 2 or 3 days per week (Usually Thursday and Friday). Volunteering for 1 day/week or occasionally does not earn the stipend, but we do still welcome your help and we'll still feed everyone lunch. We expect you to stay until the end of your committed time which you would decide before starting the internship. We are counting on you to live up to your commitment. If you need to end your internship with us for reasons beyond your control, WE NEED AT LEAST 2 WEEKS NOTICE ahead of time (more notice is preferred). Your performance will be evaluated based on taking initiative, a strong work ethic, consistent work focus, troubleshooting

problems, responsible behavior, etc. Stipends are disbursed on the first day of the month following the month worked.

We will provide good vibes, a delicious farm lunch, toilet paper, first aid supplies, water, and a reasonable share of produce from the farm to take home when there is surplus. If you want something exotic for lunch that we don't have, you may need to buy it yourself. We ask that our interns/farm crew supply your own personal hygiene products (sunscreen, bug repellent, etc).

All are welcome to apply for the internship, but there may be financial aid available to students through your school.

If you are an undergraduate in PITE at University of Michigan please check with that office regarding financial aid. You may be able to forego your stipend and receive financial aid from the University.

If you are a graduate student in SEAS at University of Michigan you can apply for financial aid here

https://seas.umich.edu/academics/resources/financial_aid/funding/weinberg_intern

If you know of financial aid through other schools or programs that could help you or other interns please let us know so we can share that information.

If you don't qualify for either of these options, there may be other financial aid/credit options available so let us know if you need help and we'll do our best to help you achieve your goals.

Please keep in mind that if you receive financial aid from your school or another source you are NOT eligible for our stipend.

Supplies/Equipment/Clothing Needed

Sun hat

Clothing to protect from sun

Sunscreen

Bug repellent

Swimming gear

Towel

rain coat and pants

work boots, hiking boots, sturdy shoes, or rubber boots (no bare feet during work time)

water bottle

pocket knife

warm clothing (polar fleece, wool, polypropylene etc.) for Fall & Spring Work

long underwear for Fall & Spring Work

Optional Items (Extras are on the Farm)

work gloves

favorite cookbooks or recipes

musical instrument