

Farm Assistant

Full Time | Hempstead Farm



GENERAL SUMMARY

Blackwood Educational Land Institute is a teaching farm on the quest to model the indispensable role of sustainable food systems in all our lives. Our production farm grows healthy food to inspire the next generation and to connect us all. We are dedicated to harvesting and producing our food in restorative and environmentally-conscious manner, often employing key concepts of the day. Whether it's biomechanics or permaculture, we're integrating resiliency into our farming methods. Blackwood reminds us of humanity's intrinsic bond with the land. It teaches the interconnectivity of all living things. It suggests that great things can happen when we realize that this interdependence extends to our families and our communities as well. We are essentially a farm laboratory. We experiment with different resilient and regenerative agriculture techniques like permaculture in order to support the land as a system. Currently, we have the Kitchen Garden and the Hopscotch Garden. We cultivate in two high tunnels giving us 11,000 square feet of climate control space and one greenhouse. The growing space is 3.5 acres and therefore the remainder of our land is open to 3 different ecosystems which support our crops. We have a small flock of chickens for egg production and several colonies of bees. The bees, chickens and wildlife in turn support the health of the ecosystem and that helps our crops. At Blackwood, you can count on us for no synthetic chemicals, soil and crop diversity, self-sufficiency through the implementation of a closed-loop system, the ethical and humane treatment of animals, continually seeking to improve taste and increase the foods' regional viability, and utilizing low-energy resources as much as possible.

Job Description

The role of the Farm Assistant is to (1) facilitate the smooth operation of our farm, including cultivation, harvest, and production, under the guidance of the Farm Director, (2) manage crop rotations, harvests, and distribution of the Blackwood Bounty Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program, and (3) lead agricultural classes during school field trips. The Farm Assistant is committed to soil stewardship and restoration agriculture and is willing to utilize the regenerative practices employed by the Blackwood Farm. On the job training will be provided to this end, but the Farm Assistant should already have fundamental understanding of (1) annual and perennial crops in 8a-9b, (2) plant cultivation and harvest practices, (3) ecological systems, and (4) basic irrigation. Experience driving tractors or vehicles with manual transmissions is recommended. The goal for the Farm Assistant is to grow with Blackwood Land as we scale up production on the farm. The Farm Assistant is well organized, detail-oriented, self-sufficient, and able to take direction. Compensation and hours available will be based on level of experience. We are a strictly non-smoking farm.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

Production Operations

- Manage weekly cultivation and harvests for wholesale and CSA production
- Adhere to health and safety standards for proper fruit and vegetable processing
- Organize farm shares for CSA distribution

- Deliver produce to restaurant partners and CSA sites
- Assist farmer in crop rotation and maintenance

Farm Maintenance

- Follow soil stewardship practices employed by Blackwood, including composting and mulching
- Maintain crops (IE thinning, weeding, remediation) for weekly harvests and distribution
- Help manage irrigation for Gardens, Greenhouse, High Tunnels, and Hopscotch Field
- Assist Farm Director in seasonal maintenance activities, such as pruning, trellis building, and composting
- Handle greenhouse propagation, seeding, and general maintenance
- Prepare for and attend farm events such as Mornings in the Country and farm dinners

Educator

- Assist Farm Director in preparation for educational events on the Land
- Lead introductory classes and service learning activities for youth field trips and Farm School
- Work with Farm Director and Program Curator to integrate curriculum for new class and field trip offerings

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Must be able to comfortably lift at least 70 lbs

Handles tedious tasks with precision and efficiency

Adept at moving large quantities of heavy objects (soil, compost, stone, etc) efficiently

Able to work outside for extended periods of time regardless of weather conditions or time of day

Willingness to stay overnight on the campus as needed

JOB QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum 1 years experience managing operations on a diversified production farm

Basic knowledge of produce, plant biology, and environmental systems

Enthusiasm for mastering regenerative agriculture and soil stewardship practices

Zest for education and making the world a better place

Demonstrates thoughtful initiative and is a self-starter

Aptitude for learning new organizational systems

Enjoys eating and cooking delicious fruits and vegetables

Possesses a deep curiosity and willingness to investigate new subjects

Excels at critical thinking and relishes a challenge

Cleans up after themselves and maintains organization

Excellent problem solving skills

Works well individually as well as in large groups

Ability to work weekends and flexible weekday hours

Must have personal vehicle and current driver's license

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

It is the responsibility of every employee to contribute to a positive work environment and work towards the Blackwood mission.

HOW TO APPLY

Please email your cover letter and resume to farmer@blackwoodland.org.