

Date: December 23, 2009

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MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

Farm Apprentice Program
P.O. Box 170 Unity, ME 04988
(207) 568-4142
email: mofga@mofga.org web: www.mofga.org

FARMER APPLICATION

Farm Name	Darthia Farm	MOFGA Member?	Yes
Contact Person	Bill & Cynthia Thayer & Lily Montgomery	Phone	207-963-7771
Mailing Address	51 Darthia Farm Rd.	Best time to call	7 – 8am, 5 – 6pm
Gouldsboro, Maine	04607	County	Hancock
E-Mail	darthiafarm@gmail.com		
	Website www.darthiafarm.com		
Number of apprentices sought	2-3	During what time period?	March – December

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, hoop house, farm store, and various outbuildings, including a commercial processing kitchen and apprentice bathroom, 2 apprentice living quarters and our farm manager's house. Our son built a post and beam, solar electric house on the property. The nearest town of any size is Ellsworth (22 miles away) and we are within one hour of Bangor and Bar Harbor.

Describe your farm operation (e.g., livestock, crops, bees, herbs, forestry work, greenhouse, orchards, building projects, haying, maple sugaring, meat processing, level of mechanization, products made, marketing, dairy, stock dogs, etc.):

We currently have a few head of cattle, a small meat/wool sheep flock, 2 Haflinger horses and 2 Fjord horses, laying hens, barn cats, 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. Our income comes from spinning sales, beef, pork, pulpwood, turkeys, vegetables, Cynthia's writing, 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 27 member CSA and sell at one local Farmers' Market.

Are all your crops organically grown? Yes. If not, to what degree are organic methods used on your farm?

We are certified Organic by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association for vegetables, small fruits, and preserves. Our livestock do receive some commercially raised grain but are mostly fed on pasture or farm raised foods. Our meat is not certified.

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. In the summer, apprentices share work in the farm store, farmers' market, CSA, harvesting, 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 and herb vinegar making for the farm store and the mail order. In September we go to the Common Ground 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 for working in the store. There are always small carpentry projects.

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 labour, time off, etc.):

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 5am, 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 if they are at the farm 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 intend to provide instruction and training to an apprentice (e.g., work along with the apprentice, demonstration, apprentice working alone, training "classes," reading to be done, extent of supervision by yourself or others, etc.):

Every Monday, the apprentices will meet with our garden manager to discuss the week's projects. We try to include apprentices in decision-making. Independent projects are encouraged and arranged. Bill and Cynthia will work with apprentices in the areas of haying, spinning and dyeing wool, fence work, animal husbandry, etc. 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 works full time on the farm. Cynthia writes in her yurt and is available to teach spinning and dyeing. Lily is on the farm full time directing apprentices. We all have some other commitments; teaching, community service, various musical bands, theatre production, so one or two of us may be gone occasionally.

**Can you pay a stipend or a wage in addition to providing room and board? __yes_____
If so, what are you offering and under what conditions? (i.e., experience level, duration of commitment, graduated scale)**

This is essentially an exchange of labor for room, board (farm-raised food including vegetables, meats, fruit, etc. – we have six freezers and a root cellar), and a good learning experience. We pay a monthly stipend of \$200.00 plus \$50.00 to cover non-farm raised food.

Do you require a prospective apprentice to visit your farm before a final arrangement is made?

Yes, if possible.

Do you require a trial period?

If we agree to take someone sight unseen, a trial period for both parties is important.

Explain the room and board arrangements (e.g., would the apprentice live with the family, live apart but eat with the family, are there young children, what household duties would the apprentice share, are a vegetarian household, would you provide vegetarian meals, are there rules about smoking/drinking/drugs, are there any other important considerations?):

Apprentices live either in a rustic two bedroom house or an A-frame cabin on the property. There are cooking facilities but water must be brought in.. We have an apprentice bathroom 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. No cigarettes, please. We eat meat - our own. It is difficult to have someone here who requires a special diet and does not eat the food we raise, animals being an integral part of an organic operation. 15 ex-apprentices have settled in the area and socialize together. Friends and family are welcome to visit if we have some notice.

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

We are Cynthia, 66, Bill, 73 and Lily, 26. Lily comes from Freeport Maine and when she isn't in the garden, she'll be knitting or spinning or dyeing. Our son's girlfriend, Riley, often helps out. Grandchildren often visit. Bill and Cynthia were teachers before moving here 30 years ago. Cynthia is a novelist. Bill plays jazz drums. We often have relatives and friends visiting the farm and the able ones are expected to help out. 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.

Are you interested in participating as a mentor and/or host farmer in MOFGA's Journey person program for advanced training in organic farming? Yes.

References

Sam Hazlehurst & Rachel Katz, Stovepipe Alley, Monroe, ME 04951	207-460-7258
Former apprentice reference	email phone

Paul Birdsall Horsepower Farm, BlueHill, ME	207-374-5038
Personal reference	email phone

Please return your completed application with the \$25 fee (\$35 for non-MOFGA members) to: MOFGA Apprenticeship Program, P.O. Box 17, Unity, ME 04988 or email to education@mofga.org. Thanks!

MOFGA Apprenticeship Program
Farm Synopsis Form

Please write a synopsis of your farm in 50 words or so. 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 or market grower, 4. Methods of marketing - farm stand, CSA, farmers' market, 5. Livestock - yes or no, 6. Livestock - major kinds, 7. Major crops of particular interest - small fruits, herbs, orchard, grain, 8. Power used - tractor, draft, hand tools, 9. 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 will be posted on the web.

Farm Name: ____Darthia Farm_____

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, draft horses. Market garden, jams, herbs, spinning, dyeing. Horse, tractor, hand cultivation. Liberal views and music lovers.

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