



## ABOUT THE 2011 EARTHDANCE ORGANIC FARMING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM...

We are excited to offer this opportunity – to learn how to grow food (and flowers!) organically on a real working farm – in the 3rd season of EarthDance. EarthDance has created a cooperative learning and working environment conducive to individuals who want to gain practical organic farming skills on a part-time basis. While it is most ideal to immerse oneself in farm work completely (full-time) to thoroughly understand what it takes to farm organically, this apprenticeship is intended to serve as an introduction to the principles of sustainable agriculture without requiring a complete lifestyle change. Apprentices are required to commit a total of 10 hours (minimum) per week to field walks, farm and market labor. In addition, the apprenticeship program includes monthly on-farm enrichment sessions/workshops, monthly field trips to local farms, and being a member of our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)!



Our vision for each class of Freshman Farmies is a community of people who will learn from one another as much as they will learn from the land. To this end, we are seeking a



group of apprentices diverse in age, ethnicity, and gender who will each bring high levels of passion, enthusiasm, dedication, and creativity to the program. We are also interested in bringing together individuals with a wide variety of skills, experience, and goals to further enrich our program (i.e. farming and gardening experience is not a pre-requisite to participating in the apprenticeship program). As our mission is to grow and inspire local FARMS – Food, Art, Relationships,

and Music, Sustainably – we are interested in complementing our program with activities, events, and skill-sharing sessions that celebrate the culture in agriculture and bring out the art and music in FARMS.

*Celebrating The Culture in Agriculture*

**Food • Art • Relationships • Music • Sustainably**

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In 2010, one of the major changes in the apprenticeship program was that EarthDance piloted a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)<sup>1</sup> program. CSA is an innovative marketing model for small farms; the farmer sells ‘shares’ of the farm’s harvest to members who pay up front for a season-long share. It’s an ideal way for the farmer to receive income when she or he needs it most – in the late winter/early spring, and for the consumer to receive a variety of fresh locally-grown foods during the entire growing season for a reasonable price. In our pilot year of the CSA, rather than opening up membership shares to the public, our apprentices (along with one lucky raffle winner from Pesto Festo 2009) were our first CSA members! We are now preparing to offer

CSA shares to the public for the 2011 season, and our apprentices will continue to receive CSA shares as one of the benefits of the apprenticeship program. Therefore, in addition to receiving top-notch training alongside our farm manager April Shelton, as an EarthDance apprentice you’ll receive a weekly share of the produce that we’ll grow together. As apprentices, you’ll be learning not only the in’s and out’s of running a successful CSA farm, but also the experience of being a CSA member.



We wish to emphasize that the EarthDance apprenticeship program is a serious commitment to undertake. While we have created it as a part-time program, the 10 hour time commitment must be met *each week*<sup>2</sup> to fulfill the apprenticeship requirements. In late March you will receive a schedule of the farmers markets that EarthDance will be selling at in 2011, and each apprentice will sell at 6-8 markets throughout the harvest season (April – Oct). Attendance at weekly field walks and monthly enrichment sessions is critical to gaining the full benefits of the experience, and as such, you will be expected to attend no less than 80% of these. The monthly field trips to local farms are optional, but strongly encouraged. This year’s apprentices cited the field trips as being one of their favorite aspects of the program; learning from other farmers and seeing their



<sup>1</sup> See [www.localharvest.org/csa](http://www.localharvest.org/csa) for more information on CSAs!

<sup>2</sup> With exception: apprentices are each allotted two weeks off throughout the growing season for vacations, down time, whatever! We ask that you let us know as early on as possible when your break weeks will be, so that we can plan accordingly!

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operations firsthand is an exciting part of the program. And finally, as part of our EarthDance mission entails community engagement, apprentices are asked to devote 10 hours (typically 2 events) throughout the course of the season to represent EarthDance in the community - such as at the St. Louis Earth Day festival, public farm tours, featured farmer dinners, health fairs, etc.

In your application, we want to learn about YOU. We want to hear about how you have come to be interested in organic farming and gardening and sustainable food systems. We also want you to consider this program as much as we are considering you. The program spans from mid February 2010 to mid November 2010, and consists of practical farm-based training including weekly field walks led by the farm manager, monthly enrichment learning (from farm-scale composting to greenhouse management), operating a 100 member CSA, selling at farmers markets, and monthly field trips to local farms.

We also encourage you to attend our upcoming information session about the EarthDance Organic Farming Apprenticeship Program:

***So You Want to Be a Farmer?***  
Monday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
7pm, @ St. Stephen's  
33 North Clay  
Ferguson, Missouri 63135

**This program was developed because the need for small-scale organic growers, especially in the St. Louis region, is increasing every day. All people who wish to engage in growing food in a cooperative working and learning environment are great candidates for this program and more specifically:**

- *Recent Graduates:* Recent graduates of area colleges and universities interested in organic farming, sustainability, environmental science, environmental / experiential education, agroecology, and other related careers
- *Career Changers:* Individuals interested in pursuing a different career path, and considering starting their own farm enterprise
- *Ferguson Residents:* Local community members interested in creating healthier lifestyles through increased activity and greater access to fresh food
- *Educators:* Educators wanting to incorporate sustainable food production into their teaching, and perhaps interested in starting a school garden





## **WHO**

Perhaps you?

- 30 Farm Apprentices, the 2011 Class of Freshman Farmies
- 5+ Sophomore Farmies (returning apprentices from the 2010 season)
- Program designed and led by Molly Rockemann, Founding Director of EarthDance, April Shelton, EarthDance Farm Manager, and Rachel Levi, Farm & Community Education Coordinator.
- Curriculum collaborators and guest instructors to include Vicki Lander, John Wilkerson, Kris Larson, Mimo Davis, Paul Krautman, Amy Cloud and several others.

## **WHAT**

Field work, CSA, field trips, farmers markets, enrichment sessions.

An opportunity to learn how to grow food organically on a real working farm – not far from home! Freshman Farmies commit a minimum of 10 hours per week to the program – which includes weekly field walks and farm and market labor. Additionally, on-farm enrichment sessions and field trips to local farms are held monthly. Plus, beyond receiving education and training in sustainable agriculture, you'll also receive a weekly share of the harvest as part of our CSA!

## **WHEN**

Program runs mid-February through mid-November

- Part I. Basic Information - Submit online - Due at 12pm Nov 30th, 2010
- Part II. Online - Due at 12pm on December 10th, 2010
- Part III. Mail in - Due December 10th, 2010
- Freshman Farmies Class of 2011 announced December 20th, 2010!
- Tuition fee (\$550) is due in full January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011
- Program begins mid February and continues through mid November
- Weekly field walks take place on Mondays from 5:30 – 7:30pm
- Field work takes place 6 days/week (Sunday – Friday). You will have several shifts to choose from to participate in field work; CSA pick-up days are on Tuesday & Friday.

## **WHERE**

Mueller Farm,  
Ferguson, MO  
63135

The EarthDance Organic Farming Apprenticeship will take place on 4-5 acres of rented ground of the Mueller Farm, on South Dade Avenue in Ferguson, Missouri. The Mueller Farm has been in organic production since 1883, making it the oldest organic farm in Missouri. The farm was named a Ferguson Historical Landmark in 2003. During the past two seasons, we farmed without irrigation and without regular mechanization (i.e. tractor). This winter we will be buying a tractor for the farm and installing irrigation in the fields in the spring.

## **WHY**

To grow food *and* farmers for the region

This program was developed because the need for small-scale organic growers is increasing every day. There is also a great demand to learn the skills of organic farming. The EarthDance Organic Farming Apprenticeship is designed to meet both of these needs – grow more affordable, healthy food for the region and train more individuals in organic farming techniques.

## **HOW MUCH**

\$550

The application fee is \$25, nonrefundable. Thanks to the generosity of donors and foundations, enrollment in the apprenticeship program is only \$550 per person for the entire 9 month season, and includes a weekly CSA share during the harvest season. The full tuition is due January 31<sup>st</sup>, or can be paid in 2 installments of \$260 (first due Jan. 10th, second due Jan. 31st). You will be asked to purchase 2 tools for your use during the season, and for you to keep afterwards (approx. \$50 cost total). Food and transportation costs for field trips are not included in this fee.

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