



Internship Program Information

About Us

Root Radical Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) provides vegetable shares and egg shares to Kingston area households. We offer two vegetable share sizes and a wide assortment of vegetables throughout the season. Most of our work is done by hand or with human powered tools. We also use tractors for spreading compost and tilling the garden in the spring, moving our pasture henhouse weekly and for other heavy lifting and moving. We have a 1150 square foot greenhouse for starting our own plants and last fall we added a second 1800 sq ft unheated hoop house for winter chicken housing. Both are also used to grow heat loving summer crops. We use drip irrigation systems in our gardens and do some seed saving.

To supply our year round egg shares we have about 80 hens. The hens have free choice organic grains and all the pasture and insects they can forage in the growing season. Our summer henhouse is portable and we move the house weekly to ensure that the hens always have access to green pasture.

Root Radical CSA is located on Howe Island, which is about half way between Kingston and Gananoque on the St. Lawrence River. The CSA garden is one and half acres on Doublejay Farm, an organic dairy farm. With mainly clay soils, the farm is mainly Class 2 and 3 farmland. Some portions of the farm, including the CSA garden, are tile-drained. The farm is approximately 300 acres, including hay fields, permanent pastures, gardens, riverfront and wooded areas. Kingston is where we deliver our CSA shares and do most of our errands and socializing. Including the ferry ride, Kingston is approximately 40 minutes driving distance from the farm or a hour to an hour and half by bicycle.

Emily Dowling is the main CSA farmer, receiving support from her partner, Aric McBay, and her dairy farming parents, Peter and Dianne Dowling. In 2010, we will offer one internship position. Other folks the intern will work with are our work exchange members, and one or two other staff including Emily's brother Tim Dowling.

Emily grew up on the family farm and has eight seasons of experience with organic gardening. For two seasons before launching Root Radical CSA, Emily and Aric had a large family garden on the farm growing their own food and selling or giving away the surplus. Prior to that, Emily interned on a farm near Guelph, Ontario, grew vegetables in back yard and community gardens and volunteered on organic farms in Ontario and western Canada. She continues to develop her skills and knowledge through talking to other farmers, reading and attending workshops and conferences and through doing!

In 2010, Emily and Aric are building a straw bale house and the intern will participate in that project as time and interest allows.

About the Internship Position

The internship position is designed for a person with limited farm experience who wants to develop the skills and attitudes required to launch a CSA of their own. The internship might also be suitable for people who just want test the waters and experience what farming is all about, but are not sure if they want to be a farmer.

This is a hands on internship. As the main method of learning, the intern will participate in the day-to-day tasks involved in the operation of our CSA. The intern be expected to work hard and to persevere when feeling challenged. Sweating, getting dirty, having sore muscles and being tired at the end of the day are not uncommon events for an intern, especially as they adjust to the routine in the spring. The intern will rarely work alone so s/he will have lots of opportunity to ask questions and learn while working. The "Learning Components" section below further illustrates how the internship is designed to deliver a well rounded learning experience.

The CSA team starts the work day at 7:00 am and we generally work 8 hours in the field Monday to Friday. One harvest day per week, the intern will be expected to start work at 6:30 and to work late to ensure that all of the tidy up is completed. At other busy times in the season when the farmer is also working longer hours, the intern will be expected to work one or two evening sessions per week from about 6 PM to dusk. Weekend work is not required and interns are encouraged to take full advantage of the break and to spend time away from the farm if they wish. The two exceptions are our Harvest Celebration in September and one weekend in August when Emily will be away. This will be an opportunity for the intern to independently manage Friday evening drop-off, care for the chickens and any irrigation requirements. The internship runs from the beginning of May to the end of September and a commitment to the entire period is required.

The intern will be paid a \$250 stipend every other week and will be provided room and board. EI premiums and CPP contributions (approximately \$7) will be subtracted from the stipend. A bonus will be paid upon the completion of the season.

The intern will be expected to take a turn preparing dinner for the household at least one evening per week and to take turns doing dishes and other household chores. These responsibilities are an important contribution to the household. The majority of the food we eat is from our farm (vegetables, meat, eggs and dairy) and we eat home cooked meals and do a lot of vegetable preservation and storage for winter. An intern who is unfamiliar with local, seasonal cooking and eating will have the opportunity to learn these skills through living with us. We encourage interns to live on the farm for the fullest possible farm experience, but we understand that an intern may want to live off-farm. In that case, a vegetable share will be provided.

The intern is expected to bring their own work gloves, rubber boots, rain gear (i.e. good quality water proof coat and pants), sunscreen, sun hat and work clothes. Safety boots are useful on occasion if the intern already has them but probably would not be used not often enough to justify purchasing a new pair just for this internship. We recommend 3/4 length or full pants (i.e. protected knees). On the hottest days quick-dry pants are most comfortable. In more moderate weather heavy work pants are recommended.

Light weight (ie. cotton or silk) long-sleeved collared shirts are great for summer. Long johns and layers are best for the spring and fall. Waterproof or neoprene gloves are useful in the fall on harvest days.

Learning Components

1) Skills Inventory:

We have developed a skills inventory for our internship program. The inventory includes all of the "hard" and "soft" skills the intern should be able to learn on our farm.

This inventory will be reviewed in the intern's first week at the farm. Specific learning objectives of the intern will be discussed at this time and skills in the inventory related to the intern's objectives will be tagged. We will revisit the inventory monthly to ensure that the intern is receiving a well-rounded learning experience that meets their learning objectives. As well, this monthly meeting will also be a structured opportunity to discuss any conflicts or other issues as needed.

2) Independent Project:

In the first month of the internship, the intern will have the opportunity to select an independent project to be completed throughout the season with guidance from the farmers. If appropriate the project will be presented to an audience through a workshop or at our annual Harvest Celebration in September. The project should be somewhat complex and challenging so that it provides the opportunity for the intern to use and develop their creative thinking and problem-solving skills in a farm context.

Possible projects include:

- Researching the feasibility of adding a bedding plant or seed growing enterprise to Root Radical CSA.
- Running trials of 3 cover crops (alfalfa, hairy vetch and red clover)
- Building small scale food processing equipment (i.e. solar dehydrator for seeds and herbs)
- Incubating and raising a batch of replacement laying hens
- Any other farm project that fits well with our operation

3) Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT):

We are part of the Kingston area CRAFT network. As a member farm of the CRAFT network, the intern will attend CRAFT-Kingston field days on other organic farms once per month. Each CRAFT day includes a farm tour, work bee and workshop as well as a potluck lunch. For more about CRAFT visit <http://www.craftontario.ca/>.

Application Process

If you would like to be the Root Radical CSA intern for the 2010 season, please prepare your resume and a one page letter outlining why you would like to do an internship at our farm. Our application deadline is April 5, 2010. After we receive your resume and letter we will contact candidates about setting up an interview and farm visit. We hope to fill the position in time for a starting date of May 3, 2010. Applications can be sent to: Emily Dowling, Root Radical CSA, 454 North Shore Rd, RR#4 Gananoque, ON, K7G 2V6 or emily@rootradicalrows.com.

Thanks very much for your interest!