

Valley Flora Farmhand - Job Description

About our Farm: We're a diversified fresh market farm in Langlois, Oregon, located on the (very) rural Southern Oregon Coast (70 miles north of California, 45 miles south of Coos Bay, 2 miles east of Hwy. 101). We grow over 100 varieties of vegetables, berries, flowers and orchard fruit for sale to local restaurants, retail stores, our 80+member CSA, and to u-pickers. Ours is a family operation, comprised of my mother (Betsy), my sister (Abby), and myself (Zoë). Each of us manages a different aspect of production on the farm: Abby mainly cultivates salad greens; Betsy focuses primarily on greenhouse production (tomatoes, peppers, cukes, zukes, basil); and Zoë grows raspberries, strawberries, asparagus, artichokes, flowers, and over 50 other outdoor annual row crops. Zoë has a team of draft horses that she uses for tillage and cultivation on the farm, in addition to use of the tractor. The farm is not certified organic, but fully subscribes to organic growing practices and principles.

We are in search of a full-time employee who will work primarily with Zoë on the farm (see job description below), and who might also be employed by Valley Flora for bi-weekly produce deliveries. The job will begin Spring 2010 (ideally early April). Ideally, we are looking for someone who wants to make a minimum two-year commitment to the farm and would prefer someone who could make at least a three-year commitment.

This is an ideal position for someone who has completed a farm apprenticeship or two, is passionate about farming, and wants to move up into a salaried, mid-range farm job. Part of our mission is create employment opportunities on the farm that fall into the “journeyperson” category – a job that is better paid with a higher level of responsibility than an apprenticeship, and well-suited to someone who wants to gain more skills and experience before starting their own farm. Our goal is to pay a living wage so that our employee can save a little, provide exposure to every aspect of running the farm business, and create a fun, rewarding workplace. We would love to find someone with the skill set listed below, but would also hire someone who has less experience and then provide them with more on-the-job training if they were willing to commit for a longer chunk of time.

We emphasize to all applicants that the farm is in a remote corner of the state, rich in natural beauty and wildspace but isolated from major cities (Eugene is 3 hours north, Portland is 5 hours north, San Francisco is 9 hours south). We have a wonderful little community in Langlois, but it's probably not the place for someone who craves the thump and bustle of nightlife, high fashion, or city bling. Honestly, sheep outnumber people by the thousands where we live. Whoever comes to work with us needs to know that, and be good with it.

To apply, please email the following to valleyflora@valleyflorafarm.com:

- A cover letter that describes why you want to work at Valley Flora, plus:
 - Describe a brilliant system that you have seen or developed on a farm (or at another job).
 - What's the hardest work you've ever done?
 - What stresses you out at work?
- Resume

- 2-3 references

Or send it by mail:

Zoë Bradbury
PO Box 91
Langlois, OR 97450

Application deadline is rolling, though we encourage folks to get us their applications early in 2010 while things are calm on the farm and we have more time to review candidates. We will accept applications until we find the best fit, so the sooner the better!

Job Title: Farmhand/Farm Journeyman/woman

Duties and Responsibilities: Working primarily with Zoë, the farmhand will participate in all aspects of production, including: greenhouse management, seeding and propagation, transplanting, direct seeding, irrigation, harvest, post-harvest, pack-out, delivery, weeding and weed control, mulching, compost management, crop culture (tying, trellising, etc.), record-keeping, draft horse care (including moving horses through grazing rotations, electric fence set-up, hay loading, feeding, stall mucking, and general care), and special projects (building, new infrastructure, etc.). Also partly responsible for comic relief, good communication, and keeping the farm workplace enjoyable, fun, and light.

Direct Supervisor: Zoë

Qualifications

Knowledge - Our ideal candidate will have 2-3 years of vegetable and berry production experience. We are looking for someone who is a quick study and is ideally already familiar with these aspects of sustainable and organic farming:

- Irrigation, including: drip and overhead systems, pump and filter maintenance, pressure regulators, irrigation scheduling, fertigation, etc.
- Greenhouse operations, including: seed propagation, greenhouse watering, hardening off, pest and disease control, bottom heat maintenance (involves handling propane and monitoring system), temperature regulation, etc.
- Harvest, including: proper harvest techniques, prioritizing harvest order, efficient harvest systems, quality control, etc.
- Post-Harvest, including: proper wash and pack-out techniques, prioritizing pack-out, filling restaurant orders, packing CSA totes, quality control, etc.
- Transplanting and direct seeding.
- Crop culture, including tying tomatoes, trellising, weeding, thinning, etc.
- A general feel for direct marketing, including working with restaurants, chefs, retail stores, community supported agriculture, and the public.

Skills

Our ideal candidate:

- Is proficient at using farm tools, including: hoes, hand weeders, flame weeders, knives, files, scales.
- Has a solid foundation in basic building skills. Good at pounding nails and using carpentry hand tools. Comfortable and safe using power tools like drills, chop saws, circular saws, table saws, etc.
- Keeps clear records, including: yield data, planting and propagation records, labor timesheet, CSA distribution information, and more.
- Is experienced driving a stick shift and has a clean driving record. Good highway and on-farm driving judgment. Comfortable driving a large delivery van in town and in traffic.
- Communicates well and is willing to address issues in a timely, non-violent, mature manner. Is committed to a drama-free workplace.
- Is comfortable being part of a family workplace run by strong women.
- Listens well and acts on instructions.
- Can problem-solve on the fly and prioritize effectively when working alone.
- Natural horsemanship experience, including working horses safely, gently, and effectively in harness, is a bonus on our farm.

Qualities:

Our ideal candidate:

- Is time-aware and wears a watch.
- Has excellent attention to detail and a sense of aesthetic.
- Is tidy and organized.
- Is inclined to hustle, move and think quickly, and be efficient at work.
- Is willing to work alone at times.
- Has endurance and a good attitude towards demanding physical work under long hours during the summer and inclement weather during the winter.
- Is willing to get up early in the summer.
- Is fun, friendly, conscientious, energetic, and shares our passion for food & farming.

Experience/Education: At least two years farming experience.

Conditions:

- ***Salary:*** \$16,000 - \$20,000 DOE, with opportunity for performance-based raises.
- ***Pay Period:*** Once per month, paid first work day of the month.
- ***Work Schedule:*** Average 36 hours/week over the whole year, with seasonal fluctuation. The work-week runs Tuesday-Saturday during the peak months, June-November. See attached schedule.
- ***Work Breaks:*** Two 10 minute breaks/day. Lunch time is unpaid.
- ***Paid Vacation:*** 10 days/year (8 hour days), no more than 5 days to be taken during peak season, June-November.
- ***Other Benefits:*** Farm food year round; flexible work hours; lots of time off in the winter; shared lunches twice/week; beautiful work environment; great swimming hole; opportunities to propose and spearhead new enterprise ideas on the farm (for instance, we

are interested in incorporating laying hens into the mix and would be open to exploring it with our employee); health insurance TBD (we're working on it!).

- **Employee responsibilities:** Housing, reliable transportation to and from the farm, and appropriate farm clothes, gloves, footwear and raingear.

Monthly Work Schedule

Month	Hours/Week
January	0 (flexible)
February	16 (flexible)
March	24
April	32
May	45
June	50
July	55
August	55
September	55
October	45
November	32
December	24

Peak Season Weekly Work Schedule (June – November)

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Berry Harvest Restaurant Harvest CSA Harvest Restaurant Pack CSA Pack	Set up U-pick Delivery – am -Bandon -Coos Bay Field Projects - pm Close U-pick	CSA Pre-Harvest TuTuTun Harvest TuTuTun Deliver Field Projects	Berry Harvest Restaurant Harvest CSA Harvest Restaurant Pack CSA Pack P.O. Delivery - pm	Set up U-pick Delivery – am - Bandon Field Projects - pm Close U-pick