

## Summer Experience Studying Insects on Farms.

### A Learnership / Student Internship

With the Farmscape Ecology Program, Hawthorne Valley Farm, Ghent, NY

Late May – late August 2021 (3 months total, exact dates are flexible)

Interested in working with insects? Thinking of a career in conservation or on-farm ecology? Enjoy working outside and on farms? If so, perhaps consider applying for a summer entomology experience with the Hawthorne Valley Farmscape Ecology Program in upstate NY. During this three to six month position, you will get experience collecting and identifying various groups of Northeastern insects while living on a farm in a rural part of the State. You will also have the chance to be involved in public education and outreach around insects, farming and their intersection. All we ask you to bring is a willingness to learn, an eagerness to help, and a good team spirit; we can train you in techniques. If you already have some entomological background, this position would offer you the chance to deepen your experiences.

**Who We Are:** The Farmscape Ecology Program is dedicated to exploring the human and natural dimensions of the landscape in and around Columbia County, NY through research and outreach. The Program is part of Hawthorne Valley Association, an educational non-profit, and is comprised of a wildlife ecologist, a botanist, a social scientist, a conservation biologist, two research technicians and a pair of staff dogs.

Our interdisciplinary research explores the many dimensions of the historical, current, and potential future interactions of people with the land. An important part of our work is applied farmscape ecology, which involves documenting synergies between agricultural production and nature conservation, as well as creating, managing, and monitoring experimental on-farm habitats for beneficial wildlife.

For the 2021 season, we are looking for someone to assist us in monitoring insect life on farms and other lands. The season will run approximately three months, starting in late May or early June and ending in late August or early September; the exact start and end dates are somewhat flexible. At the end of three months, there may be an opportunity to extend the position for three months in order to include an independent project, but that is not guaranteed. We welcome inquiries from graduate students who feel their projects may fit our research objectives. We would also be glad to collaborate with undergraduate students whose universities offer the opportunity for them to earn independent credits.

**Activities:** The chosen applicant will participate in collecting and processing standardized insect samples as part of our applied farmscape ecology research. The work will involve collecting and processing insects in the field using sweep nets and malaise, vane, and pitfall traps. It will be necessary to accurately identify and count both living insects in the field and preserved insects (with the aid of a dissecting microscope) in the lab. We can train these skills. The selected applicant will be responsible for accurate record keeping, including data entry. S/he occasionally might also be asked to assist with horticultural tasks (e.g., work in the native plant nursery) and with on-farm habitat management (e.g., weeding in native wildflower plantings, invasive plant removal and planting of shrubs in hedgerows). S/he will also be asked to help FEP staff in the upkeep and staffing of a small butterfly house.

**Qualifications:** We are looking for candidates with a strong interest in insects, their conservation, and their role in agriculture, and who enjoy the outdoors and interacting with the public. Candidates should be comfortable living and working in a rural setting, be energetic, and thrive in the outdoors even when the going gets rough (think long, hot days in a field without shade!). Given the work environment, it is important that candidates are sociable and communicative, able to interact with a diverse range of people of all ages and backgrounds, self-motivated, and have attention to detail. Most importantly, we are looking for people who are eager to learn. We expect the candidates to have basic computer skills (Word, Excel). Some academic and/or work experience in field biology, field ecology, natural history,

environmental science, sustainable farming/gardening, environmental education, or related fields is a plus, but not a requirement.

**Accessibility:** Our intention is to make this position accessible to applicants from diverse backgrounds, who are excited by this opportunity. We encourage people who are under-resourced, BIPOC, or with a nontraditional background to apply. If you have any concerns or questions about the accessibility of this learnership/student internship for your situation, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

**General Conditions:** The position is based at Hawthorne Valley Farm, a 500-acre organic and biodynamic diversified farm located in the heart of Columbia County, NY. Successful applicants will be expected to work 40–45 hours per week, which will occasionally include hours that are earlier or later than normal work hours and time on weekends.

**Compensation:** The successful applicant will be provided with housing (a small, private room with a shared kitchen and bathroom) in the Farmscape Ecology Program building and a stipend of \$1,000/month. We don't want finances to be a barrier to taking this position: upon acceptance, there will be the opportunity to apply for a needs-based scholarship (maximum an extra \$500/mo). Please refer to this scholarship description (<https://hvfarmscape.org/scholarship>) to help you self-assess your eligibility.

**COVID-19 Considerations:** We take COVID-19 seriously. While we recognize this is an ever-evolving situation, we will have a shared protocol for Farmscape Ecology Program staff that outlines how to work at and around the office safely. Those living in the shared apartment will work with one another to determine a COVID protocol that they are both comfortable with. Because COVID may limit abilities to carpool, it would be ideal for applicants to have their own car (mileage reimbursement is provided). However, we do not want this to limit you from applying to this position; please reach out to us if you're enthusiastic about this position but don't have a car, and we will see if we can work something else out. We can update you regarding current COVID conditions and protocols during the application process.

**Additional Information:** Information about Hawthorne Valley Association is available at <https://hawthornevalley.org>; for more on the Farmscape Ecology Program itself, see <https://www.hvfarmscape.org>.

**Application Process:** Please email us ([fep@hawthornevalleyfarm.org](mailto:fep@hawthornevalleyfarm.org)) a CV including contact information for three references along with a cover letter highlighting why you are interested in this position and any experiences that you think are relevant. Accepted candidates will then have the opportunity to apply for the need-based scholarship. If you have questions, please contact Conrad Vispo at 518-938-1109 or via the email address provided above.

We will begin reviewing applications on February 15, 2021, but will continue to accept applications until the position is filled. (If you intend to apply after Feb. 15, please check <https://www.hvfarmscape.org/internships> to see if the position is still available).