

## **LEARNERSHIP/ STUDENT INTERNSHIP in Field Botany and Native Plant Gardening**

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

Beginning late May 2023 (3-6 months, exact dates flexible)

The Farmscape Ecology Program (FEP) 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 not-for-profit located on a farm in the mid-Hudson Valley of New York. It is comprised of a wildlife ecologist, a botanist, a social scientist, a biologist, an entomology lab manager, a botany technician, and a staff dog.

Our interdisciplinary research explores 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 2023 field season, we are looking for an intern or learner to assist us in the botanical aspects of our applied farmscape ecology work, which involves gardening, botanical research, and public outreach. The season will run approximately three months, from late May to late August. At the end of the three months, if both the intern and FEP agree, there may be an opportunity to extend the position for up to an additional three months in order to help us wrap up our field work and allow the intern/learner to complete an independent project, but that opportunity is not guaranteed.

**Activities:** The botany learner/intern will be involved in collecting scientific observations through on-farm and off-farm botanical monitoring (e.g. assessing vegetation composition and flower abundance throughout the field season) and phenology (e.g. conducting weekly monitoring of a phenology trail at Hawthorne Valley Farm). They will also participate in many horticulture activities (e.g. creating and maintaining perennial beds in a native plant garden; maintaining on-farm habitats like pollinator beds, beetle banks, hedgerows, and native meadows; and maintaining a small native plant nursery), which will include such tasks as hand weeding, weed whacking, watering, planting/transplanting, seed collecting and mowing. Botany learners/interns may also accompany FEP staff on ecological consultations with private landowners, and they will be involved in a variety of program outreach (e.g. facilitating weekly gardening activities with a small group of volunteers, leading tours of our butterfly house and native plant garden, posting ecological finds through our social media, and staffing an outreach table). The learner/intern will be expected to keep accurate records and to perform data entry. Optionally, the learner/intern may (depending on FEP and farm schedules) have the opportunity to work with the Hawthorne Valley farmers and farm apprentices in the commercial vegetable fields for ½ day per week.

**Qualifications:** We are looking for candidates with a strong interest in plants and in gardening or agriculture who also enjoy the outdoors and interacting with the public. The ideal candidate has some experience with plant identification and gardening and is eager to hone their skills in these areas, but will also be excited to learn about insects and their interactions with native plants and agriculture. Candidates should be comfortable living and working in a rural setting, be energetic, and thrive 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, able to interact with a diverse range of people of all ages and backgrounds, self-motivated, and can work independently with attention to detail. Most

importantly, we are looking for people who are eager to learn. We are seeking experienced students (incoming college juniors and seniors) and recent graduates, but individuals with other backgrounds who feel that they would be a good fit are still encouraged to apply. We expect the candidates to have basic computer skills (Word, Excel) and some academic and/or work experience in field biology, field ecology, natural history, environmental science, sustainable farming/gardening, environmental education, or related fields. A plus would be a candidate with experience in identifying fungi/mushrooms, as our technician has begun to incorporate them into our survey work. A valid driver's license would also be helpful, but is not required.

**Accessibility:** We aim to make this position accessible to applicants from diverse backgrounds who are excited by the opportunity, and we encourage people who are under-resourced, BIPOC, or have non-traditional backgrounds 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 botany learner/intern 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 \$1200/month. We don't want finances to be a barrier to taking this position, so upon acceptance, the successful candidate will be given the opportunity to apply for a need-based scholarship providing up to an additional \$500/month. Please refer to our scholarship description at <https://hvfarmscape.org/scholarship> to self-assess your eligibility for this additional funding. Additionally, if the learner/intern chooses to take the optional opportunity to work ½ day per week in Hawthorne Valley's commercial vegetable fields, they will be given access to produce from the farm.

**COVID-19 Considerations:** We take COVID-19 seriously. We require all interns to have their vaccinations up to date, including having the latest booster. While we recognize this is an ever-evolving situation, we 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. We can update you regarding current COVID conditions and protocols during the application process.

**Additional Information:** Information about the Farmscape Ecology Program is available at <https://www.hvfarmscape.org>. To read the mission of our internship/learnership program, please see <https://hvfarmscape.org/internships>. For more information about Hawthorne Valley Association, our parent not-for-profit organization, visit <https://hawthornevalley.org>.

**Application Process:** To apply, please send a résumé; a cover letter highlighting why you are interested in this position, what you hope to learn during your time with us, and any relevant experience you might bring; and contact information for three references to our botany technician, Josie Laing, at [jlaing@hawthornevalley.org](mailto:jlaing@hawthornevalley.org). We would prefer (but do not require) you to send us your application materials as a single PDF document with the filename "FEPBotany2023\_YourLastName" (replacing "YourLastName" with your last name).

Applications will be accepted until 11:59pm Eastern Standard Time on Sunday, February 5, 2023, and we will begin reviewing applications on Feb. 6. If necessary, the application deadline may be extended until the position is filled—if you wish to apply after the deadline, please check our internships web page (<https://hvfarmscape.org/internships>) to see if the position is still available.

If you have questions about the internship/learnership or how to apply, please contact Josie Laing by email at [jlaing@hawthornevalley.org](mailto:jlaing@hawthornevalley.org) or by phone at (518) 672-7994.