

Sooke School District #62

SUMMER GARDEN WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

We are working to build an agroecological work experience program. Agroecology is the study of the interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment within food production systems.

This program aims to introduce interested students to the possibilities of regenerative agriculture and traditional food systems, to help empower a flourishing, biodiverse food future.

Program will be partially modeled on the successful Seed the City Project running in School District #61: [Click here to watch a video about this program and its benefit to students.](#)

About

The program is coordinated and hosted by the Edward Milne Community School Society. The EMCS Society's Garden Coordinator, who has 15 years of experience supporting youth garden learning, will be present as a supervisor at all times. The Society will provide Work Safe coverage for all participants and insure all participants complete appropriate safety training.

An enrolling teacher from the Sooke School District #62 will provide support in orienting students to this program. The enrolling teacher will oversee the administration of Work Experience 12A or 12B.

Location

Program will take place one day per week at Edward Milne Community School and one day per week at Royal Bay Secondary. Participants will be responsible for getting to and from each location.

Requirements

To be eligible to enroll in this program, students must:

- Have completed CLE 10
- Be at least 15 years old
- Be in grades 10 or 11

What Students Learn

Land Care:

- How to build soil health to support vegetable, shrub and tree growth
- How to propagate and care for a wide variety of annual and perennial plants
- How to create habitat for local animals (birds, insects, bats and snakes)

- How to produce food sustainably without the use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides

Job Skills:

- How to manage your energy and work effectively as part of a team
- How to communicate clearly and effectively to diverse audiences, in diverse mediums (online, in person, over the phone)
- How to manage money and lead sales at farmgate stand
- Opportunities to pursue careers in food systems innovation, agriculture and land care

Sustainable Technology:

- Rainwater capture and storage
- Waterwise irrigation systems
- Appropriate use of a variety of hand and power tools

What Students Get

Course Credit: Everyone who completes this program will receive 4 credits for completing Work Experience 12A or 12B.

Resume Experience: This program will look good on resumes for a wide variety of jobs. Your program supervisor will be able to provide detailed references to support your future job or education applications.

Ideas and Advice: This program will expose you to a variety of opportunities to further pursue education and work in fields related to food, sustainability, environmental restoration and community development.

Sample Daily Schedule

2 days / week

Wednesday and Thursday

July 5 - August 26

9:30-10:00: Welcome and warm up. Site tour. Create to do list.

10:00-12:00: Land care. Hands on work.

12:00-12:45: Lunch.

12:45-1:30: Learning topic.

1:30-3:30: Harvesting. Food processing. Land care. Market sales.

Sample Schedule of Learning Topics

WEEK 1

- Welcome and orientation

- Tools and techniques

WEEK 2

- Propagation from seed and cuttings
- Preparing produce for market

WEEK 3

- Soil health and decomposition
- Marketing and sales

WEEK 4

- Water systems
- Plants as medicine: teas, balms and lotions

WEEK 5

- Creating nesting habitat
- Preserving the harvest: freezing, dehydrating and canning

WEEK 6

- Plant health / pest management
- Permaculture

WEEK 7

- History of agriculture in Canada
- Indigenous food and land stewardship

WEEK 8

- Reciprocity
- Harvest Celebration

To Apply

Please contact your school's career centre.

For more information about this opportunity, please contact the program lead, Matthew Kemshaw: mkemshaw@sd62.bc.ca

Questions

What if I have to miss a day or a week of the program?

If you need to miss program time we will work with you to make up those hours outside of the regularly scheduled program days. If you can't complete the hours during summer, you can continue your work experience with this program into the fall.

Will we get to eat the food we grow?

Each week you will get to take home seasonal fruits and vegetables harvested during the program.

Do I need any previous gardening experience?

All levels of experience are welcome. This program is inclusive and welcomes students from all backgrounds, identities, and experiences. Beyond learning gardening skills, we will be working to cultivate community, friendships and an experience of personal empowerment and growth.