

Group Visits to Common Roots Urban Farm

Description:

Common Roots Urban Farm, located at the corner of Robie St. and Bell Road, is a volunteer-run urban farm where you can learn where our food comes from. Virtually all work on the farm is done by volunteers; groups are welcome to join in our daily work activities and thus also contribute to growing fresh local food for our community.

Common Roots Urban Farm is a hybrid garden, consisting of a community garden, market garden, edible landscaping, a food forest, flower farm and compost area. The market garden is our main educational area and is where our Farmer guides the labour that grows vegetables for market. Half of the food we take to the Parker Street Food Bank, and the rest we sell to local restaurants and families. The edible landscaping includes native, medicinal, and ornamental plants in a variety of gardens, including a food forest. Depending on the interest of the group and the work needed on the farm, there are many options to guide group activities.

Activities:

Specific activities that groups will be involved in will depend on the season and on the day's work plan. This may include:

- Moving soil
- Preparing beds
- Mulching pathways
- Mulching beds
- Planting
- Watering
- Weeding
- Harvesting
- Learning about the farm through a self-guided "scavenger hunt"

Learning materials:

Due to limited resources, we cannot prepare learning materials or activities for your group. We can offer an orientation, hands-on activities, and access to a rich learning site for adults, youth and children. We ask that you prepare your group by sharing basic information about our farm and food issues (see our website at http://partnersforcare.ca/urban_farm).

There is a wealth of information available to teachers to support student learning related to food and farming issues, including the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture bank of curriculum-linked activities organized by grade level at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/agaware/schoolgarden-guide.pdf>.

Scheduling group visits:***The farm schedule:***

Mondays – please call for availability
Tuesday – afternoon preferred
Wednesday – afternoon
Thursday – not available for groups
Friday – please call for availability
Weekends – please call for availability

The best time for group visits for us is Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons. The farm is active, but not chaotic those days. Tuesday morning could be arranged.

Thursdays are busy: in the mornings we are busy harvesting, and in the afternoons two groups already come regularly.

Friday mornings we are usually not available because we are at market. Friday afternoons are very busy on the farm: we have our on-farm market, workshops and cooking demonstrations from 3-6pm. Friday afternoons might be a nice time for a group visit, depending on the group.

We occasionally will accept a group on a weekend or a Monday.

To schedule a group:

Call Jayme Melrose, Project Coordinator, at (902) 441-4288 or email commonroots@partnersforcare.ca to inquire. Alternatively, feel free to contact Carolyn van Gorp, Volunteer Host: cvangorp@gmail.com

Cost:

Suggested donation \$50 - \$100. Although we have not yet secured long term funding and fundraise for all of our operations, we don't want to turn anyone away because of lack of funds.

Farm Courtesy Guidelines:

Please share these basic "farm courtesy" guidelines with your group before coming:

- Respect others around you; we are working together to produce food for our community.
- Stay safe; wear closed-toe shoes, use tools safely, listen to leaders. Bring hats, sunscreen, and drinking water.
- Follow the posted farm rules.
- Ask questions! There is so much to learn!
- If you enjoyed your visit, return anytime; this is a community farm and all are welcome to visit and volunteer.

When planning your visit, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- There is a paid parkade next door but no on-site parking.
- We have one "Johnny on the spot"
- Practice patience; most people involved in the farm are volunteers.
- Bring enough adults to support smaller group activities.
- There may be other groups on the farm during your visit; we cannot take responsibility for the actions of farm visitors and volunteers.
- After your visit, please give us feedback to help us with our planning.

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