

Tyddyn Teg Traineeship 2023

Overview

Tyddyn Teg is looking for two to three trainees to join us for the 2023 growing season (beginning of April to end of September). We grow 50+ different crops agroecologically on about 8 acres, and are constantly working to improve the sustainability and efficiency of our farming operation. We run a CSA box scheme for about 180 households, a self-service shop and deliver our vegetables to some local restaurants and shops. There will be lots of hands-on experience with the practicalities of running this operation plus half a day per week of classroom-based learning on the theoretical aspects of agroecological farming. There will also be opportunities to visit and learn from other sustainable veg growers in Wales as part of the training.

Conditions

Location: Tyddyn Teg, Bethel, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 3PS

Remuneration: Accommodation & food provided, plus £75/week stipend

Hours: 6 hours a day, 5 days a week (average), for 6 months

Deadline for application: Midnight on Sunday the 12th of February.

To apply: Please send CV and cover letter to info@tyddynteg.com

About Tyddyn Teg Cooperative

Our 31 acre holding lies on the south facing slopes of a small valley between the majestic mountains of Snowdonia and the graceful beauty of the Menai Strait. We are constantly refining our growing methods to move towards minimum tillage and low input/high output.

Tyddyn Teg is a 12-member workers' co-operative. We share a commitment to the importance of quality local food and to social and environmental sustainability in the twenty-first century. We see ourselves as part of the global family of small farmers.

Our growing operation is broadly divided between the garden & polytunnel crops, which are grown on a no-dig raised bed system, and staple/storage crops, which are grown in our field-block rotation. The garden and polytunnel crops are primarily grown using hand-tools and techniques, whilst the field-blocks rely on some cultivation and tractor use (but still with extensive use of hand-tools). We produce the majority of our own transplants in our nursery. In addition to growing and selling vegetables, we run a small artisan bakery on the farm.

We host a variety of public events, educational visits, and volunteering days. Historically, these activities have been important, but a smaller part of what we do than might have been the case for a city-farm, for example. However, we will be launching and promoting our community share offer in 2023, so are likely to have more community events than usual this year.

In addition to the humans, Tyddyn Teg is home to one dog, several cats, a flock of chickens, and a variety of wildlife. You can get a sense of the sort of place and people we are from our Facebook/Instagram feeds, or a short film that WWF Cymru recently made about us: <https://www.wwf.org.uk/updates/tyddyn-teg-land-our-future-stories>

Role Descriptions

You will work from approximately 9.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. You will spend the majority of your time working with the growing team. This will be split approximately equally between the garden, polytunnel and field crops, although there will be scope for you to focus on the areas you are most interested in. When working with the field crops team, you will have the opportunity to learn to use tractors and tractor equipment.

Key tasks will include:

- Establishing new no-dig beds and “turning around” existing ones
- Planting out and direct-sowing crops
- Plant propagation and nursery management
- Climate management in polytunnels
- Crop maintenance (weed management, pruning, disease control etc.)
- Mechanical land preparation
- Establishment of green-manure cover-crops
- Irrigation
- Compost management
- Harvesting, packing and retailing produce
- Data collection and analysis
- Planning the week's veg box and work schedule alongside the growing team

In addition to your main work with the growing team, you will also have the opportunity to help out with public events such as open days, equipment maintenance, shared domestic duties such as cooking weekday lunches, and the bakery.

What we expect from you

ESSENTIAL

- Keen interest in sustainable farming/gardening/food
- desire to work in sustainable farming sector
- Hard working and productivity-focused
- Conscientious and quality-aware
- physically fit and happy to work outside in all weathers
- Ability to work well both alone and in a group
- Practical

DESIRABLE

- Willingness to learn and operate a tractor and digger for various jobs
- driving license
- some prior farming/gardening/allotment experience

- Basic IT literacy (checking emails, basic use of word and excel)
- Welsh language ability

What you can expect from us

Accommodation

You will have either a room in a shared two-bedroom static caravan, or a smaller touring caravan to yourself. You'll have access to a well-stocked and equipped shared kitchen/dining room (used by other members of the co-op as well), washing machine, and a toilet and shower block about 100 m from the caravans. All the caravans have electricity and heating. Unfortunately there isn't any WIFI/internet provision in the trainee caravans or other living areas. There is generally good 4G mobile internet signal on many common networks, and you should plan to use your own smartphone for internet access. Occasional personal printing and scanning can be done in the farm office.

The shared kitchen/dining room serves as a lounge area with books, games, and a piano, and you are welcome to use it whenever you like. We have a large workshop for bike maintenance etc., and the potential for trainees to borrow bicycles for local travel.

The accommodation is fairly basic, but we aim to provide most of the essentials for living. There are some pictures of our trainee accommodation below.



Clockwise from top left: The trainee caravan field; inside the static caravan; inside the touring caravan; one of the static caravan bedrooms.



The lounge area (left) and kitchen area (right) of the shared kitchen.

Training

There will be about half a day of “classroom” training most weeks, covering theory and practical skill. Our aim is that you will finish the traineeship ready to apply for paid grower positions at existing farms or to start your own growing business, although this will depend on self-study through books and online resources as well (we will make recommendations during our training sessions). Six months is not long enough to learn everything there is to know about vegetable growing, but our aim is that by being part of our team, and studying hard, for that time, you will be in a position to start your career as some part of a better food system.

We’re part of the Landworkers’ Alliance Cymru training network. The funding that the network has run on for the last two years has now finished, but it is very likely that we and the other involved farms will arrange at least some residential training weekends between ourselves irrespective of what happens with ongoing funding. So, whilst your weekends will generally be free time, we do hope that there will be several opportunities to attend residential training weekends at other farms.

Food

Eating well is important to us, and you won’t go hungry here! We eat lunch communally Monday-Friday. We fill in a chores rota at the start of each week, taking turns to cook or wash up (and also do other cleaning and tidying jobs in the public areas of the farm). Communal meals are vegan/vegetarian (occasionally with a meat option). We have a shared dinner one evening most weeks, but there’s no obligation to come to this. For breakfasts, most evening meals, and the weekends, people cook and eat independently, helping themselves to whatever they need from the shared kitchen or the fields/polytunnels themselves. Staple foods such as vegetables, bread, milk, tea, coffee, muesli, grains, baking ingredients, eggs, tofu, beans and pasta are freely available. “Luxury” items such as chocolate and ice-cream can be taken from our farm shop and put on your tab if you wish.

Weekends, Travel and Recreation

Weekends will mostly be free time. Assuming there are some residential training weekends, these will count as part of your working hours and we’ll give you time-off in the week instead.

The farm is on the edge of Bethel, a small village. Public transport links from Bethel aren't great, but there are a few buses to Bangor, Caernarfon and Llanberis. Our nearest train station is Bangor. Having a car or bicycle would be useful if you think you'll want to explore the area (which you should!) at weekends. We are within easy reach of the mountains and the beaches.

Application Process

Please send a CV and covering letter to info@tyddynteg.com before midnight on Sunday the 12th of February. We will normally confirm receipt of your application within one working day. We will review all the applications as soon as we can after this deadline and produce a shortlist of candidates to interview via Zoom or Skype. We will conduct interviews towards the end of February.

Your CV should tell us your previous education, work, training, volunteering or other experience. Your covering letter should explain why you want to be one of our trainee growers, and why you think our traineeship will complement and build on what you have done before to help you to be part of a better food system.

Ideally, we would like the successful candidates to arrive on the weekend of the 1st/2nd of April ready to start on Monday the 3rd, but we can be somewhat flexible on this.