

# North American Biodynamic Apprenticeship Program: Checklists of Skills

The checklists are an important tool in the apprenticeship program and serve several purposes. Mentor farmers use them to indicate which skills an apprentice can acquire on a given farm, apprentices and their mentors use them to document the apprentice's progress through the season, and the Regional Coordinators and Central Coordinator use them to keep track of the apprentices' progress between farms and through the program.

The skills **marked in bold** are the **minimum required skills**. (These must be applied to at least one of the specific skill areas described along the top row.) During the 24-month time frame of the program the apprentices must acquire proficiency in all the required skill areas in order to receive certification through the program. Proficiency here means the ability to successfully and consistently perform a task without supervision.

## *Instructions for mentors and apprentices:*

### **Mentor:**

1. Go through the set of checklists and determine **which skills an apprentice can learn on your farm** (*mark the relevant boxes with an x on the left side*). Write your name and the name and address of your farm on the bottom of each checklist and send a copy of all the checklists to the Central Coordinator, who will post them on the NABDAP website alongside your farm profile.
2. Use a copy of the same set of checklists when interviewing a potential apprentice and to record **which skills you agree to teach a particular apprentice that you accept** (*place a circle around the relevant x's on the checklists*). Fill in the name of the apprentice at the bottom of each individualized checklist and give a copy of all of them to the apprentice. (Revisions can be made by mutual agreement at any time.)
3. Use the individualized checklists to **document each apprentice's progress** throughout the season by making *three successive checkmarks* as the different tasks are 1) demonstrated and observed, 2) practiced under supervision, and 3) when you judge that the apprentice is able to perform the tasks independently. At the end of the apprentice's stay, make two *photocopies* of your checklists, enter the dates of the apprenticeship and then *sign* at the bottom of each photocopied page. Give your apprentice one set of the signed checklists and send another set to the Central Coordinator. (First photocopying the checklists and then signing them helps ensure that they cannot subsequently be altered.)

### **Apprentice:**

1. Carefully **review the skills checklists from each farm** where you are considering apprenticing. During your apprenticeship you will probably not be able to learn all of the skills listed (marked with an x), so when you meet with the farmer mentor, discuss exactly which skills you will be taught during your stay at that farm. The mentor will give you a copy of the checklists on which the specific skills you agreed on have been **circled**. (Revisions can be made by mutual agreement at any time.) Keep a copy of these checklists as you progress through the 24-month program and make sure that you are setting yourself up to *acquire at least the minimum skills required by the program* (listed in **bold**). (The Regional Coordinators are available to support and guide you with this.)
2. **Keep track of your progress throughout your training** by making successive checkmarks for each skill when you have 1) observed it, 2) practiced it under supervision, and 3) when you are confident that you can perform the task independently. During your meetings with your mentor, compare your copy of the checklists to your mentor's and discuss any discrepancies between them. When you leave a farm, **make sure you get a signed photocopy of your mentor's checklists**. Keep this signed photocopy as your record of achievement at that farm.

*Summary of the different symbols to be used in the skills checklists:*

×	this skill <b>can be learned</b> on this farm
⊗	this skill <b>will be taught</b> to this apprentice
⊗ ✓	apprentice <b>has observed</b> a demonstration of this skill
⊗ ✓✓	apprentice <b>has practiced</b> this skill or task under supervision
⊗ ✓✓✓	apprentice <b>is skilled enough to perform this task independently</b>

Note: a slash (/) in a checklist description means *or*. NA = not applicable.

## 1. Plant Cultivation & Management

<i>Type of Crop:</i>	Green-house Crops	Vegetables	Herbs	Grain Crops	Silage or Hay Crops	Bushes, Berries, Hedges	Fruit or Nut Orchards	Timber, Firewood or Sap	Other:
<u>Skills</u>									
<b>making compost</b>		X	X						X
<b>making special soil mixes</b>									
<b>preparing topsoil/primary tillage</b>		X							
<b>preparing seedbed/secondary tillage</b>		X							
<b>cover cropping/green manuring</b>		X							
<b>calculating spacing/quantities</b>		X							
<b>direct seeding/transplanting</b>		X	X						
<b>propagating/grafting</b>				NA	NA				
<b>weeding/pruning</b>		X	X						
<b>judging water needs/watering</b>		X	X						
<b>shading/freeze protection</b>		X	X						
<b>identifying weeds/diseases/pests</b>		X	X						
<b>judging readiness for harvest</b>		X	X			X	X		
<b>harvesting/mowing/felling/tapping</b>		X	X	X		X	X		
<b>post-harvest handling/hygiene</b>		X	X	X		X	X		
<b>record keeping</b>		X	X	X		X	X		
soil testing/determining fertility needs									
subsoiling									
supplemental fertilizing		X	X	X		X	X		
pollinating									
seed saving/cleaning		X							
designing cropping sequences		X	X						
selecting mixes/companion plants		X	X						
controlling weeds/diseases/pests		X	X						
other:									

Name of Mentor: Sally Voris

Name & Address of Farm: White Rose Farm

Name of Apprentice: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Apprenticeship: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Animal Husbandry

<i>Type of Animal:</i>	Cattle	Horses	Pigs	Sheep	Goats	Poultry	Bees	Other:
<u>Skills</u>								
<b>basic safety procedures</b>			X			X		
<b>feeding/watering</b>			X			X		
<b>bedding/housing</b>			X			X		
<b>grooming/cleaning</b>			X			X		
<b>moving/herding/handling</b>			X			X		
<b>erecting/maintaining fences</b>			X			X	NA	
<b>pasture management</b>			X					
<b>hayage/forage collection</b>			X			X		
<b>manure composting/prepping</b>						X		
<b>collecting milk/eggs/fleece/honey</b>						X		
<b>post-collection hygiene/storage</b>						X		
<b>raising young stock</b>			X			X		
<b>record keeping</b>			X			X		
breeding/inseminating								
assisting pregnancy/birth							NA	
castrating/docking/clipping							NA	
checking health/treating simple illness								
culling/slaughtering							NA	
other:								

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### 3. Biodynamic Preparations

<i>Preparation:</i> <i>Skills</i>	500	501	502	503	504	505	506	507	508	Barrel Comp.	Peppers			Other:
											Weed	Inverteb.	Verteb.	
<b>“prepping” compost pile</b>	NA	NA	X	X	X	X	X	X	NA	NA				
<b>stirring preparations</b>	X	X	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			X				
<b>calibrating sprayer/spraying</b>	X	X	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA							
<b>storing appropriately</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
<b>record keeping</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
collecting/grinding minerals	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
harvesting plant parts		NA	X	X	X	X	X	X				NA	NA	
collecting/”potentizing” manure		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	X	NA	NA	NA	
acquiring animals/animal parts	NA	NA			NA			NA	NA	NA	NA			
stuffing animal sheaths					NA			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
selecting hanging/burial sites								NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	
hanging/burying/exhuming								NA	NA		NA	NA	NA	
evaluating finished preps														
selecting ashing times	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA				
burning specimens	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA				
spreading/spraying peppers	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA				
other:														

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## 4. Machine-Powered Equipment

<i>Equipment:</i>	Electric			Internal Combustion						Pneumatic Handheld Tools	Other:
	Hand Power Tools	Bench Tools	Welding Tools	String Trim- mers	Chain- saws	Walk- behinds	ATVs	Trucks	Tractors		
<i>Skills:</i>											
<b>safety procedures</b>	X			X		X		X	X		
<b>emergency procedures</b>	X			X		X		X	X		
<b>basic operation</b>	X			X		X		X	X		
<b>record keeping</b>	X			X		X		X	X		
using implements/attachments						X		X	X		
troubleshooting	X			X		X		X	X		
routine maintenance											
small repairs	X			X		X		X	X		
other:											

## 5. Draft Animals

<i>Type of Animal:</i>	Oxen	Horses	Mules/ Donkeys	Other:
<i>Basic Skills</i>				
harnessing/hitching				
multiple hitches				
maintaining equipment				
driving/carting				
plowing/log skidding etc.				
powering stationary machines				
training young animals				
record keeping				
other:				

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## 6. Basic Business Management

<u>Skill</u>	Skill Level
supervising crews	X
dealing with customers	X
dealing with visitors	X
dealing with schoolchildren	
dealing with journalists	
dealing with regulators/inspectors	
designing/producing newsletters	X
organizing festivals/public events	X
planning/budgeting	
accounting	
market research	X
marketing/designing packaging	X
setting up a CSA	X
other:	

## 7. Basic Crafts

<i>Craft:</i>	Sewing/ Clothes- making	Felting/ Spinning	Natural Dyeing	Knitting/ Weaving	Tanning/ Leather- work	Soap- making	Candle- making	Basketry	Other:
<u>Skills</u>									
safety procedures									
using materials									
using tools									
simple projects									
designing									
other:									

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## 8. Basic Processing

<i>Food or Medicine:</i> <u>Skills</u>	Milk	Meat/ Poultry	Fish	Grains	Vege- tables	Herbs	Fruits	Other: flowers
general cooking/baking								
making butter/cheese			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
preserving/drying/fermenting				X		X	X	
concentrating juice/sap	NA	NA	NA			NA	X	
extracting oils/fats		X						
making sausage				NA	NA	NA	NA	
making wine/beer	NA	NA	NA	X		X	X	
making tinctures/essences	NA	NA	NA					X
making salves								
other:								

## 9. Basic Construction

<i>Type of Construction:</i> <u>Skills</u>	Carpentry	Masonry	Machining	Electrical	Plumbing	Road- building	Other:
safety procedures							
using tools							
using materials							
simple projects							
surveying/layout							
blueprint reading							
estimating materials/costs							
other:							

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