Yerba Buena Farm Jamaica

Living and Promoting Economically and Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture

Essential Oils Internship- Local Medicinal Plants

Essential Oil Distillation Internship at Yerba Buena Farm, Jamaica

Our essential oil project’s results will provide much needed information on how to effectively use Jamaican medicinal and aromatic herbs for health. We need interns for this project! Come wildcraft herbs, distill, swim in our beach, write, research, work, enjoy...

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We have been interested in essential oils for a long time. We use them in our value added products to enrich and personalize them and also for personal health. Now, interested in the medicinal use of our Jamaican herbs, we plan to sensitively harvest the local aromatic plants, distill them and get the essential oil tested to find out what components make up the plants.

When we researched these native and naturalized plants, we found that the essential oils of many of them have been tested, but there is no information on some of them. We will distill around 60 of these plants and have the oils tested by Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry analysis.

Our goal is to produce a book or booklet that can provide a useful tool for anyone interested in using Jamaica’s aromatic plants medicinally. There are many books that describe the traditional herbalism use of these plants. But there is no readily available source of information that describes the chemical make-up of each plant and how each chemical component acts on our bodies.

Most of these plants will have an extremely low yield of essential oil, which is fine: we only need enough to test and to have at least one 5 ml bottle in our oil library. If a plant’s oil has been tested, we would like to see how those results compare with our Jamaican-grown wild plants.

As an intern, you will sensitively wildcraft and photograph the plants with us, prepare the plant material for distillation and will finally distill, distill, distill. You will clean the still and other equipment, keep excellent notes and spend time on the computer to find any research that has been done on that plant in other countries. Testing is expensive, so we will also need your help to fundraise (we are considering creating a Kickstarter campaign).

Resilience is a helpful quality to have in Jamaica, as things do not always work out as you plan, and you need to be able to bounce back, adjust and try again without losing your enthusiasm. Self-motivation is essential, as our normal life on our farm will demand our energy, and you need to be able to work independently once given direction.

Interns will be expected to work on this project 40 hours a week. We are a family farm, and cannot afford to support this project financially, so all interns must contribute $1500 per month for their room and three meals a day, along with plenty of snacks and fruit. We will also do our best to introduce the interns to the town and the people who live here in an informal way so that the interns can fully experience life in a rural Jamaican town. We require interns to keep a blog and to write regular posts.

You will also participate in life on our farm. Past interns have gone to the bat cave to collect guano for fertilizer, built a charcoal and sand water filter, gone to the nearby bamboo forest to collect bamboo for a natural building project, built a clay oven, cut guinea grass with machete to cover the ground in the watermelon field, and gone to our hillside farms to gather mango, jackfruit, jelly coconut and other fruits. Our Internships (https://yerbabuenafarmjamaica.com/internships) page has a slideshow that shows more of life here as an intern. To apply for this internship, please find the application here (https://yerbabuenafarmjamaica.com/internships/internship-application/).

We are happy to work with any student interested in obtaining academic credit for their experience with us, and with students who need to access funding through their school in order to participate.

To get a sense of what it is like to be an intern on our farm, please read the blog kept by one of our past sustainable beekeeping interns: http://deelesbees.blogspot.com/ (http://deelesbees.blogspot.com/). Our website’s Intern Blogs (https://yerbabuenafarmjamaica.com/internships/intern-blogs/) page features links to blogs kept by other past interns.

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