



GROWER JOB DESCRIPTION

April 2024



Hours negotiable, depending on availability.

*Approx 28 hrs per week March - October, 16 hours per week November - Feb
(with potential to increase in coming years)*

Overall purpose of the role: To work alongside another grower, and volunteers, to produce vegetables for 65 members of Common Soil CSA. (With potential to expand the membership in the coming years, up to 100).

Common Soil is a Co-operative (registered as a Community Benefit Society) and has a roughly flat management structure. Team members take leadership of different areas of work that suit their skills and experience. There is currently one other part-time grower dedicated to growing for the veg box scheme, and this role is to work alongside them to co-hold responsibility for the member boxes.

There is a part-time co-ordinator who handles the finances, fundraising and communications with members.

There are two part-time growers dedicated to the community market garden area, which grows produce for wholesale and to supplement the veg boxes, as well as focusing on community sessions.

The food growing area is within a certified organic field and we work to the same principles, although the produce is not currently organically certified (due to administration level and cost and the fact that our members do not require it).

RESPONSIBILITIES

Onsite at the farm

- To carry out, along with the other grower, efficient, commercial-scale plant-raising for the veg boxes, from seed to harvest, and to undertake all agricultural operations to achieve this (including soil preparation, sowing, planting, weeding, harvesting and other activities that support crop production such as pest, disease and grass management, fertility building and development of infrastructure).
- To produce at least 65 veg boxes (weekly or fortnightly, depending on time of year) in time for collection from 4pm on a Wednesday and to document the harvest, with the other grower and co-ordinator.

- To arrange and be jointly responsible for essential tasks such as watering/irrigation schedule, sowing and propagation schedule etc. At times, this will include weekend watering.
- To support volunteers or seasonal workers in their work and allocate tasks, including planning and running volunteer work sessions.
- To keep the site tidy and safe, as much as is possible on a working farm. This will include mowing and strimming at times.
- To maintain tools and light machinery/infrastructure or arrange their servicing.
- To uphold the principles and aims of Common Soil, including sharing these with others through guided farm tours where necessary.
- To honour and respect the land and the beings that we share the land with.
- To communicate as clearly and honestly as possible with other members of the team and invest in working together.
- To ensure that the farm continues to innovate in growing techniques, varieties, seed saving etc.

From the office

- To work with the co-ordinator to input to the annual budget, vegetable sales and promotion.
- To purchase items needed for food growing.
- To provide occasional content for a quarterly member newsletter (rotated responsibility with others).
- To contribute to plans for new infrastructure, machinery and input to funding applications.
- To attend core group meetings (bi-monthly) and AGM (yearly) and input to strategic plans for the organisation.
- To attend and contribute to member events and celebrations (arranged by co-ordinator).
- To work with the co-ordinator to sell excess produce, if needed.

The nature of the job requires flexibility on a day-to-day basis and may require additional tasks to be undertaken from time to time.

Essential skills/qualities/experience

- Passion for food growing, protection of the land, biodiversity, soil health and connecting people to the land.
- Commercial, all-year-round organic veg growing experience, ideally a minimum of 2 years. Willingness to learn more.
- Hard working, strong, able to carry out physically demanding work and reliable in all weather.
- Good communication, team-working and leadership skills, as well as ability to work independently and alone.
- Ability to work efficiently, prioritise, make decisions, while maintaining a keen eye for detail and good quality.

Desirable skills/qualities/experience

- Maintenance and infrastructure skills.

- Understanding of biodynamic farming methods and/or permaculture principles.
- Experience of crop and harvest planning.
- Experience of leading and teaching volunteers or workshop attendees.
- First aid training and safeguarding experience.
- Experience of using farm machinery.
- Full UK driving licence.

HOLIDAYS AND PAY

Salary: The starting salary will be £23,795 - £26,000 per annum pro-rata (depending on experience). The salary will be reviewed periodically.

Hours: Flexible hours, depending on availability, but something in the region of 28 hours per week (01 March to 31 October) and 16 hours per week in winter (01 November to 28th February).

Holidays: Pro-rata equivalent of 28 days paid holiday.

Probation: There will be a three-month probation period for the role.