



Island Grown Initiative

Gleaning Assistant and Farm Field Crew

Island Grown Initiative is a non-profit on Martha's Vineyard that works to build a regenerative and equitable food system for our community. We operate a 42-acre farm in the center of the Island, and are in the process of transitioning our field acreage to low till, regenerative practices. We seek a hard-working and community-oriented Field Hand and Gleaning assistant to help us build soil and share food throughout the 2024 growing season.

This position will be split between our farm and Gleaning program. Gleaning is the act of gathering food that would otherwise not be sold. This includes harvesting surplus crops with volunteers, receiving surplus food, and harvesting or receiving food grown specifically for donation. Our Gleaning program serves local food distribution programs, public schools, and prepared meals programs. In 2023, IGI gleaned 67,000 pounds of food, 52% of which was grown by our farm for the Gleaning program. In addition to local produce, we also receive fish donations and venison through a collaborative Venison Donation Program.

This position starts on or around June 3, 2024, and ends December 31, 2024. Work averages 40 hours a week over the course of the season, with the expectation that some days will be longer than others depending on the season and needs of the farm. Daily start and end times are subject to change during the hot summer months.

Field Crew Responsibilities (50%):

- *Field work:* Seeding, planting, laying irrigation, greenhouse work, weeding and hoeing, mulching, moving tarps and landscape fabric, regular lifting and moving of sand bags and irrigation pipes, and more.
- *Vegetable processing:* harvesting, washing, sorting, packing, and labeling produce for CSA distribution or other customers.
- *Other:* Tracking and entering field data, interaction with CSA members and other farm visitors.

Gleaning Assistant Responsibilities (50%):

- Direct volunteers during gleans at IGI and other Island farms.
- Make deliveries to food pantries, local organizations, and schools with an Island Grown vehicle.
- Facilitate gleaning field trips for local school groups of various ages and ability levels.
- Occasionally coordinate with farmers and gleaning recipients via text and email.
- Track and record gleaning data.
- Wash and pack produce, maintain gleaning supplies, perform various farm-based tasks.
- Assist with IGI's Venison Donation Program, including processing whole deer.

What we're looking for:

- Job and/or educational experience in agriculture (vegetable experience is a plus).
- Detail-oriented, focused, organized, tidy, and computer literate.
- Excellent listening skills, with a willingness to learn and discuss new ideas.
- Skilled in both verbal and written communication.
- Ability to adapt and to respond to dynamic needs of IGI programs.
- Self-motivated, able to work effectively both independently and as part of a team.
- Willingness and ability to work hard while maintaining a positive attitude.
- Safe and conscientious driver with a clean driving record and up to date driver's license.
- Physically capable of sustained manual labor, including the ability to safely lift 50 pounds repeatedly.
- Ability to work in all weather conditions, including rain, wind, heat, cold, etc.
- Willingness to work with and around animals slaughtered for food (butchering experience is welcome but not required.)
- Ability to pass CORI background check

Compensation: Pay is commensurate with experience. Field crew members enjoy access to the food they grow.

To apply, please send a cover letter and resume to astrid@igimv.org. Thank you!

More about the Island Grown farm:

Martha's Vineyard (Noepe) is the homeland of the Wampanoag people, who have been here for at least 10,000 years and are still here today. The Island is full of striking natural beauty, with lots of walking trails, conservation land, and one-of-a-kind beaches that our employees are encouraged to explore during their time with us. The Island hosts a large summer population, and is home to a vibrant year-round community. Visitors and residents alike love this place for its intense seasonality, beauty, and small-community atmosphere.

Our farm sits on a 42-acre parcel at the heart of the island, on land that served as hunting and fishing grounds for Wampanoag people for many generations. At the edge of the farm lies a kettle hole, a year-round fresh water pond, one of the few year-round sources of freshwater in the center of the island, which made this area an important thoroughfare for Wampanoag people and early European settlers. The land has been in agriculture for at least 400 years.

Island Grown Initiative was gifted the farm in 2012, and leased the land to local growers and graziers. 2019 was the first year we prioritized a transition to regenerative principles in our fields, to rebuild soil vitality and help restore life on the land after years of disruptive and chemical-dependent agriculture. We began the transition on eight acres of the farm fields, dramatically reducing soil disturbance, increasing our use of ground covers and cover crops, integrating livestock rotations, utilizing tarps to prepare planting beds and suppress weeds, and are trialing new systems of carbon and compost applications. The changes we've seen in soil health and crop productivity on this acreage have already been dramatic.

In order to help address growing community food insecurity brought on by Covid-19, we expanded our growing space from 8 to 14 acres in 2020. For the 2023 growing season, we will continue to utilize all 14 acres for crop production while furthering our experimentation and development of new growing systems, including the creation of tools and tractor implements to make these systems as labor-efficient as possible. We are also undertaking more projects in 2023 to help regenerate this land—creating native pollinator habitat, installing more perennial plantings, further reducing soil disturbance, and transitioning away from single use plastics in the field.

About two thirds of the food we produce is sold through our summer and winter CSAs, our discounted price mobile farmer's market (which accepts SNAP and HIP benefits), and to a few wholesale outlets. The remaining third is distributed for free through our Gleaning Program to support good food access for all in our community and strengthen food security. We share produce with IGI's Food Pantry and Prepared Meals Program, every Island public school, and other food distribution programs. We produce 60-70,000 pounds of food each season from the field, and another 8-10,000 from our indoor soil based growing systems.

Our farm is a community space, and crew members will not only assist with all aspects of food production and soil health activities, but will interact with a broad swath of community members. This includes a diverse cast of local and visiting volunteers and our dynamic Island Grown staff who work on programs from food waste capture and composting to farm to school education. We are a busy, multi-faceted non-profit, and we hope to have more passionate food-system advocates join our team!