

# 2009 Corinna Wood Apprenticeship Orientation Letter

Updated Nov 14, 2008

Thank you for your interest in Corinna Wood's Apprenticeship positions. These are wonderful opportunities for women (or couples) to experience life at an emerging ecovillage and deepen their trust for the wisdom of the plants, the Earth, and your own body.

Apprenticeships can also be physically and emotionally demanding. The lifestyle at our developing ecovillage is rustic and close to the elements. As you will see, we have taken on a huge project of manifesting an ecovillage in a generation. We expect a lot of ourselves, and we expect a lot of our apprentices too.

As our elders knew, true apprenticeships center around the opportunity to ground the knowledge you are gaining in your daily work. You'll be soaking in an understanding of a way of life—while you're fixing a snack for Corinna's son, you'll be learning how to make lacto-fermented pancakes. You'll make sourkraut; Corinna will show you how to collect beneficial wild plant seeds to increase their abundance in certain areas; you'll participate in natural building projects.

In addition to the herbal and natural health knowledge you will be learning, you'll have the opportunity to deeply ground your understanding of community living, ecological building, off-grid living, growing food, communication, women's wisdom, women's power, and much more.

No previous experience working with plants is needed.

## 1) Timing

Apprenticeships last 3-6 months, beginning as early as April and ending as late as October. See the Application for current start dates.

## 2) What you will give

### 1. Your work: 36 hours/week of your work

<i>Description of Work</i>	<i>Hours per Week</i>
Work for Corinna	32
Earthaven Community Work	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>

If you fall behind on your hours, they must be made up. In addition to the hours above, you will do cooking and cleaning (and sometimes food shopping) chores that are considered part of the maintenance of your daily life.



We request that you come with money for food as well as personal expenses, such as toiletries, medical expenses, or gas. You will also want to have some spending money for community events, dinners, dances, etc. You are asked to not make additional work commitments during your stay, as you will need to conserve your time and energy.

### **3) What you will receive**

- **The opportunity to live at Earthaven** (camping or rustic accommodations) & coverage of Earthaven fees and supporting membership during the months you are there.
- **Placement** in a cooperative kitchen with some Earthaven residents (most dinners have rotating cooking/cleaning; food costs are at your expense—2008 weekly food fees started around \$65)
- **Educational programs** that fall during your stay. See Apprentice Class Calendar pdf on sewisewomen.com. You will be in an assistant role for Corinna's classes.
- **Regular contact with Corinna:** Learning by being involved with Corinna's day-to-day role modeling of life skills, communication, mothering, entrepreneurship, manifesting dreams, emotional expression, nutrition, women's empowerment, etc
- **Opportunities to build skills** through the work you will be doing

### **What you may learn while you are here:**

Depending on the educational programs offered during your stay, classes will cover much of the following:

- Plant identification
- Wild food harvesting & preparation
- Making tinctures, infusions, oils, salves, & vinegars
- Herbs for every cycle of a woman's life
- The wise woman tradition
- Herbal first aid
- Healing foods
- The six steps of healing
- Communication with plant spirits
- Fertility awareness for natural birth control

Through the work that you will be doing, you will put much of the above into practice. In addition, there are other areas you will learn, not in a classroom setting, but by osmosis. That includes learning about:

- Running a small business
- Honest & direct communication
- Sustainable building techniques
- Permaculture design
- Ecological living
- Herbs for common ailments
- Honoring and loving yourself as a woman
- Being responsible, efficient, and organized

### **4) Corinna is looking for the following attitudes and values in you:**

- Self-motivated
- Good listener & communicator
- Show up for work on time
- Basic office/computer skills
- Organizational skills
- Enjoy children
- Strength to lift firewood & do other small building projects
- Responsible for actions & emotions
- Follow through on commitments
- Attention to detail

## **5) Nature of your work**

Corinna understands the depth of the knowledge we can absorb through daily life from her own apprenticeship with Susun Weed 15 years ago. For example, as Corinna learned from Susun how to make gallons of pesto from the abundant garden basil in the late summer to freeze for the year, so do Corinna's apprentices!

**Your work may include, but is not limited to, tasks such as:**

- **Gardening:** Working with a variety of neighborhood gardens on edible, medicinal, and ornamental annuals and perennials
- **Family Support:** childcare, food prep, cleaning, "solar" laundry
- **Home & neighborhood support:** Firewood prep & fire building, light carpentry, building projects, general maintenance within your skill level
- **Projects & workdays** for Village Terraces neighborhood where Corinna lives (for more on Village Terraces, see [earthaven.org/village-terraces/](http://earthaven.org/village-terraces/))
- **Class Support:** preparing supplies, logistics, edit class outlines, etc
- **Other:** Special projects like researching class material, installing locust decking, etc

Be prepared to be in a service role to support Corinna in a wide variety of ways, to free her up to focus on tasks that she needs to be the one to do herself. Your tasks may seem mundane at times. Sometimes, you & Corinna will be working side-by-side, such as during classes, many maintenance workdays, and others. You'll often be "on your own" carrying out tasks, such as walking in the woods with her son, a building project that Corinna may not be involved with, watering the garden, or editing a class outline.

**Please note that there is not a formal educational component to the work.** For example, you'll be instructed on mulching the comfrey, yet Corinna won't go into depth with you on how and why to use comfrey. If you pay attention, with time, you'll learn this other ways over your stay, through the classes, reading materials, dinnertime conversations. You will learn by doing, but you may not even realize all you are learning until later.

**We ask you to have a lot of flexibility with scheduling** your hours based on Corinna's needs for the week, the weather that affects harvesting, classes, etc.

**Apprenticeships can be physically and emotionally demanding.** Please be sure to take care of yourself in terms of rest, good food, and any other personal self-care that will help you stay healthy and strong.

## **6) Talking stick:**

Your apprenticeship places you with a woman who is committed to speaking her truth, living in her bodies, and following her bliss. You will be introduced to a form of communication called "talking stick," which gives each of us a chance to speak our truth.

Connecting with others at Earthaven is encouraged; complaining behind people's backs is not. If you have a concern about your apprenticeship, bring it to Corinna. Talking stick is one opportunity to bring up concerns.

The intent of a talking stick is to:

- Check in about logistics regarding your stay & work here
- To share our truth about our deeper experiences and feelings
- Reduce the amount of resentment that builds up when frustrations are not expressed
- Offer a means to collectively resolve communication challenges

## **7) Living at an Ecovillage. . . what's it like?**

Earthaven Ecovillage has a complex social, economic and political environment. You will receive a comprehensive orientation as well as a handbook. Please read the handbook and questions in order to get oriented towards the culture here. Expect that deeper understanding will happen over a period of time. We expect you to:

Read the "New Roots" Handbook

Attend an Earthaven Tour – Saturday mornings at 10:30

Attend a Council Meeting shortly after you arrive

Earthaven Ecovillage is an intentional community dedicated to caring for people and the Earth by learning, living and demonstrating holistic, sustainable culture. On 320-forested acres, Earthaven now supports 58 full members, and a steady stream of visitors and students. Staying at Earthaven is an adventure! Although we are surrounded by babbling creeks and natural beauty, it is a primitive scene, and there is a significant amount of building construction in process.

Earthaven is off-the-grid and derives its electricity from solar panels and a small hydropower station. Please be prepared to conserve energy and resources while you are staying with us. Most of us do make use of heavy equipment and power tools when clearing land and building. Our drinking water comes from fresh springs on the land and is not treated with chlorine. We do have filtered water available and encourage you to bring your own water bottle to carry with you at all times. People at Earthaven usually follow the pattern of the sun – early to bed early to rise – so we ask you to respect the quiet in the evening. Enjoy the symphony of the frogs and the crickets!

Attend our Council and see how we make decisions by consensus. We are not a perfect utopia; we are real people working hard to create another way. We encourage you to ask questions when you don't understand, and to respect Earthaven village life, our challenges as well as our gifts.

### **Toilets and showers**

One of the most noticeable differences about life at Earthaven is our composting toilets. We believe strongly in returning our fertilizer to the Earth and for this reason, there are a number of outhouses for public use. You are encouraged to pee anywhere (except near creeks, springs, trails, and paths) and to poop in the toilets. We use our processed "humanure" on fruit and nut trees, and we acknowledge that some of the toilets smell due to the learning curve of making design mistakes.

Our two bathing rooms have hot water; one has a bathtub, and the other room has a shower. These bathing rooms serve as many as 45 people in the summer and are equipped with water saving devices. We ask that you respect water conservation and remain mindful of the number of people that these bathing rooms serve.

### **Men**

We usually take women only as apprentices, although we make some exceptions, especially for couples. You will be around men as well as women for most of your time here--eating meals, working for Earthaven, your "off time."

### **Sexuality**

We strongly recommend that new residents at Earthaven do not become sexually involved with people at Earthaven for at least the first two months of your stay. Stating your boundaries clearly is almost always met with respect here. We've seen all kinds of challenges arise from apprentices at Earthaven becoming quickly involved with a new partner, from miscommunications (such as inadvertently stepping on the toes of someone who was recently partnered with them) to unwanted pregnancies. Consider taking this opportunity to soak in sisterhood of the women you are working with and to strengthen your self-love.

If you *are* sexually active with someone new here during your stay, please use condoms! Although Corinna teaches Fertility Awareness classes, the method takes months to learn, and is highly effective, yet only when practiced with great diligence. Regardless of your birth control situation, condoms are essential to use with new partners due to the risk of sexually transmitted infections. This may seem like very personal advice, but the daily lives & choices of apprentices during their stay with us impact us all.

### **Pets , domesticated animals, and wildlife**

Earthaven has a strict pet policy, and we are not able to accommodate your pets.

Some people at Earthaven raise chickens, rabbits, goats, cows, and occasionally pigs for some of our food, as well as some vegetables. If you have concerns about our raising of animals for food, please let us know.

Earthaven is also home to a diverse mix of flora and fauna; there are many poisonous plants and snakes and we ask that you respect our biodiversity. If you are extremely allergic to poison ivy, bee stings, or snakes, we ask that you come prepared.

### **8) Application steps**

1. Read this Orientation Letter
2. Fill out the Application form (available at [sewisewomen.com](http://sewisewomen.com), or contact us for a copy)
3. We will contact you within 2 weeks

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

*Green Blessings,*  
**Corinna Wood**  
**(828) 669-3655** [cw@sewisewomen.com](mailto:cw@sewisewomen.com)