

# How to Get Started with On-Farm Education

## Farmer led educational activities

Your farm is a complex living system that can offer unique experiential education opportunities. But how do you move from seeing your farm as your place of work to seeing it as a destination that will captivate visitors? Try walking around it with friends. Ask them what they notice and find most interesting, then plan a route that includes those points of interest and avoids hazardous areas, uneven ground, or attractive nuisances.



Photo courtesy of Blades Orchard, MD



Photo courtesy of Mushroom Street Farms Urban Cultivators, TX

Your farm is a vibrant classroom, and as the farmer, you are the perfect teacher to translate all the happenings on your property to the public. Every corner of your farm offers valuable lessons on weather, history, microorganisms, soil, water, plant species, and farm products. You can engage guests through group or customized tours, field trips, workshops, tastings, and more.

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**Educational experiences don't have to be delivered person to person. With clear signage, a well-marked trail, or a map, visitors can lead themselves on a memorable journey.**

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## Self-guided educational activities

You can offer self-guided tours, but make sure someone is on the premises to greet visitors and answer their questions. Give visitors a map of your farm that points out interesting buildings, rough terrain, and/or areas that are off limits. You can also create a scavenger hunt that is unique to your farm and fun for all ages. Make sure you communicate clearly about any safety hazards on the property before sending guests off on their own.

## Take your self-guided educational experience to the next level

- Install interpretive signage
- Place signs along a path with facts about your farm's natural or cultural history
- Create a scavenger hunt
- implement a color wheel matching activities (e.g., find flowers that match the colors)



## Educational opportunities through school partnerships



Photo courtesy of Sugar Water Manor, MD

Partnering with local schools to host educational field trips on farms brings a multitude of benefits. It fosters a deeper connection between students and the sources of their food, promotes agricultural literacy, and cultivates a sense of appreciation for farming practices. Students gain first hand knowledge about sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, and the importance of local food systems.



**Need inspiration? Check out these resources for school partnerships**

[Farm activity suggestions for school-aged children](#)

[How to start a farm camp](#)

How do you know if the activities you planned will be appropriate for the age-group of the kids you're hosting? While some activities will be universal (think cow-milking, harvesting vegetables), some will need to be geared towards certain ages.



## Questions to consider before bringing visitors on your property

- Will everyone be able to get around the farm?
- Do you know of any visitors that have mobility issues and have you planned accordingly?
- Will the visiting group arrive by car or bus?
- Do you have a place for the bus to turn around?
- Where will the cars park?
- Will the group have access to the bathroom?
- Do you want people in your buildings unattended?
- Can your bathroom facilities handle all your visitors?
- Should you rent portable toilets?
- Is there anywhere to wash hands besides the bathroom?
- Will you cancel or postpone and reschedule if the weather is bad?
- Do you plan on having a rain date ahead of time?
- Where will visitors put trash during their visit?
- Will you supply garbage cans?
- Did you factor the cost of disposing garbage into your group price?
- Will you have a 'pack-in, pack-out' policy?

