

2022 EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO URBAN FARM SCHOOL

Welcome!

Print this Guide to Bring with You

Students visiting Edmonton Urban Farm experience the production of food in the heart of the city! We've got a hive of bees, a flock of urban hens, and a wonderful garden. They'll get their hands in the dirt; they'll learn about bees, laying hens, and vegetables and have a great time.

General Information

Contact: If you have any questions about Urban Farm School, contact Patty Milligan, Agriculture Education Specialist, at the office 780-378-5111 via email pmilligan@exploredmonton.com or on her cellphone at 780-983-4010 (day of).

Location: Edmonton Urban Farm is located at the corner of 79th Avenue and 113 Street. On Google Maps it is listed as 11312-79 Street. ***Notice EUF is next door to Borden Park! Some classes pack a picnic lunch which they enjoy in the park before or after their visit to UF School.



Drop off: Buses drop off and pick up at the gate on the west side of 79th Street. For easiest drop off, buses can turn right/east on 113 Avenue towards Borden Park, pass 79th street, turn left/north to Borden Park Road and then come left/south on 79th Street. Look for the blue drop off sign on the west/right side of the street.

Parking: Buses and other vehicles are welcome to park at no charge in the gravel parking lot to the east of Northlands Urban Farm. There is no on-street parking.

Time: Morning tours are from 9:30-11:00 am. Afternoon tours take place from 1:00-2:30 pm.

Details

Accessible entry: The entrance gate at the bus drop off on 79th Street has three steps leading up to it. On the south side of EUF, off 113 Avenue, west of 79th Street, there is an accessible entry. Let us know if any members of your group require an accessible entry, and we'll guide you to the south gate.

Washrooms: There are two unisex portable toilets onsite. Students may want to visit the bathroom before they leave the school.

Hand washing: We've got hand-washing stations onsite. Hand sanitizer is also available.

Who is at EUF during our visit? A combination of Urban Farm staff and volunteers will host you! 60-100 students can visit at one time so we encourage 2-4 classes from one school to visit at one time. If your class is coming on its own, a class from another school may be present during your visit. We'll let you know in advance if this is the case. We try to match the ages, if possible, and classes move through the farm independently.

We have honeybees. We have one hive tucked away in a corner of the farm. Students observe the bees close-up and safely. Although the risk is small, we go over sting-prevention tips with your students when they arrive.

To minimize the risk of stings, students can 1) wear a hat 2) avoid floral patterns 3) avoid wearing strong scents. **Of these three points, wearing a hat is the most important.**

We have chickens. Students get to look at our six urban hens, but they don't touch them. They WILL however feed them and to check for eggs!

Other possible allergies: Students will sample honey and possibly greens, edible flowers, herbs, fruit, or veggies from the garden if they are available. They may also come into contact with plants, dirt, worms, or insects.

We're completely fenced-in. EUF is a 2-acre plot enclosed by a chain link fence. Inside we have a combination of uneven terrain, including trees, dirt, grass, wood chip paths, and gravel. Really, it's a typical garden. Most strollers and wheelchairs will do fine. For safety's sake, we ask that students do not run.

It can be very sunny! On a nice day, afternoon tours can be hot. We have some shade trees, and we ask your students have **water bottles, hats, and sunscreen.**

Sometimes the weather doesn't co-operate. Urban Farm School goes ahead rain or shine *in most cases*. If we have—or there is imminent risk of—a thunderstorm, severe downpour, or extreme winds on the day of your visit, we reserve the right to cancel as Urban Farm School is 100% outdoors and there is no adequate space to take shelter. We'll do this in as timely a manner as we can and we will work to reschedule if possible.

Before your visit

Review and copy this guidebook. We have extra onsite but you may want to give copies to any parent volunteers in advance—**particularly pages 4-8** which describe the activities.

Distribute Informed Consent Forms. Have the students' parents/guardians complete them. The main thing we want them to be aware of is the presence of bees. Occasionally we ask a photographer to document our programs at Edmonton Urban Farm. If we are going to have a photographer onsite, we'll let you know in advance and provide photo release forms.

Recruit parent volunteers. We recommend 1 teacher/parent volunteer to every 5 students. Parents will be moving around the site with small groups and helping the students engage and enjoy the Urban Farm.

Assign small groups to your classes. Students will move from station to station at EUF in small, mainly self-guided, groups. It is useful to assign them to groups with parent volunteers in advance.

What to wear:

- Closed-toe shoes—boots if it is wet or rainy
- Weather-appropriate clothing—rain jacket if it is wet or rainy
- A hat
- Avoid floral prints or strongly-scented body products.

What to bring:

- Water bottles
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent
- Name tags are useful but not required.
- Clipboards are also useful but not required.
- We have space to stow backpacks if students bring them.
- A small snack if your students require one.

You've arrived!

Your bus will drop you off right at our gate on the west side of 79th Street. Those who require an accessible entrance can be let off around the corner at the south gate on 113 Avenue.


Come on into the Urban Farm where staff and volunteers will greet you. We'll gather for a short welcome and orientation. Students receive an activity sheet and a pencil. Then we'll break into our small groups and set out to explore the farm.

We hope you enjoy the fresh air, green space, and exercise while learning about growing food in the city!

Urban Farm School Activity Overview

The students will be moving around the site in small adult-led groups. Together students will complete 24 activities on a bingo sheet. Here are a few notes about the stations:

- There are guides at some stations, but not all. If you have questions, find one of us and we'll help!
- Some activities take a short time; others take longer.
- At some stations, multiple groups can participate at one time; at other stations, you may need to wait until the group ahead of you finishes.
- The stations do not need to be completed in any particular order. These can all be completed within the 1.5 hours of your visit!
- Different opportunities arise at different times of the season. We often tweak these activities as the season changes.

Explore Edmonton Urban Farm School				
B	I	N	G	O
Taste honey	Help make compost.	Dig in the dirt.	Spot a bird.	Identify a bee.
Feed a chicken.	Touch a worm.	Read the temperature.	Look at the clouds.	Feel a honeycomb.
Learn a veggie fact.	Plant a seed.		Say hi to some fungi!	Test the soil.
Pick a rock.	Pretend you're a bee.	Smell the leaf of an herb.	Make a plant pot.	Weed a dandelion.
Find an egg.	Pick up a piece of garbage.	Identify a strawberry blossom.	Water a plant.	Eat a green.

Notes on BINGO activities for Adult Guides

B	
Taste honey.	The bee hive is in the far SW corner of NUF. Traci is there with tons of information about honeybees including some honey for you to taste from OUR HIVE! Please note the bees that are onsite are in an observation hive. The students can observe them safely. Dustin, our beekeeper, is nearby too.
Feed a chicken.	Our chicken coop is near the gate where you came into the farm. You'll see seven hens of different breeds who lay eggs that are a variety of colours (light green, tan, and white). See if you can spot all the hens. They'll appreciate receiving a handful of food. Toss it gently onto the ground in front of them. Watch how they scratch for it.
Learn a veggie fact.	<p>The whole east side of the farm has been planted to vegetables. You're welcome to walk through, just remember to stay on the paths. Say hi to our farmers if they are there working. Ask Dustin about a veggie fact, or maybe your kids already know one? Here are a few examples you can share if you need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corn is a member of the grass family. ● Technically, the tomato is a vegetable. ● If you eat a lot of carrots, your skin can turn orange. ● A vegetable's peel contains the highest amount of nutrients.
Pick a rock.	Rock-picking for most farms is a yearly chore. There are a lot of rocks at Northlands Urban Farm! There used to be houses on this land, and they had driveways with gravel on them. Luckily, our rocks are quite small. Pick as many as you like. Toss them into the tin pails provided. When the pails are full, and we'll empty them for you!
Find an egg.	One of our guides will show you how to look in the nest box to see if the chickens have laid their eggs. Go ahead and pick one. Hold it gently. What colour is it? Does it feel warm? Then we have to put it back.

Notes on BINGO activities for Adult Guides

I	
Help make compost.	<p>In the middle of the farm, near the spruce tree, you'll find our compost bin. If you pick any weeds, you can dump them into the bin. Compost usually has two components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) "Browns" which are carbon-rich things like stalks of plants, dry leaves, cardboard, or newspaper. They help make the STRUCTURE of the soil. 2) "Greens" which are nitrogen-rich things like coffee grounds, egg shells, grass clippings, or green weeds. They add nutrients to the compost. <p>For every layer of browns, a compost should have a layer of greens. Add a few browns AND some greens to our compost. If a watering can is handy, you can also water it. Grade 4s will make their own Compost-in-a-Cup.</p>
Touch a worm.	<p>You may find a worm while you dig in the dirt OR you can look in our worm compost bin--the blue bin on the ground near the driveway. We feed our worms food waste; they happily eat it. When it passes through their body, they leave behind castings--a very rich fertile soil. Dig very gently around the edges of the worm bin, you'll see worms inside. Look carefully, and you may see 1) babies--tiny white worms 2) cocoons--small, yellowish balls that the babies hatch out of. You can pick up worms and hold them, just be gentle. It is a good idea to hold them OVER the bin in case you drop them, they'll fall back into their home. Please don't remove worms; the worms in the bin are called Red Wigglers, and they are a different type of worm than our regular earth worms. . USE THE MAGNIFYING GLASSES to look at them!</p>
Plant a seed.	<p>FIRST MAKE A PLANT POT! Once you've made your newspaper pot, fill it with soil, and choose a seed to plant. Cover it with soil. Place it in the tray for your class so it can be taken to the bus when your visit is over.</p>
Pretend you're a bee.	<p>There are lots of ways to do this! On a cold day, you can try to do what they do: Bees handle the cold by clustering into a ball and vibrating their flight muscles in order to generate heat. When the bees on the outside of the ball are chilly, they move in and the bees on the inside move out. The queen stays in the middle all the time. Try it!</p>
Pick up a piece of garbage.	<p>We've got lots of pieces of garbage floating around. People leave it behind or the wind blows it in. We appreciate your help in keeping Northlands Urban Farm tidy. NOTE: Honey tasting sticks or toothpicks can be composted! ALSO NOTE: If you find something on the farm that looks like it might be an artifact--a piece of pottery, an old spoon, a key, please bring it to us! We have a collection that we like to share with our visitors.</p>

Notes on BINGO activities for Adult Guides

N	
Dig in the dirt.	We've got a ton of trowels for you to dig with. As you dig, see what you spot in the soil. Any bugs? Any worms. We've got magnifying glasses for you to use!
Read the temperature.	Together we'll check the temperature, rain gauge, and wind! Is it cool, warm, or hot out? How do you think the temperature affects the plants and their growth? What about the wind and the rain?
Smell the leaf of an herb.	The herb garden is in one of the raised beds in front of the red shed. You'll find spearmint, two different kinds of basil, and lemon balm. Gently rub a leaf of each of the plants and then smell your fingers. What do you smell? Can you tell which is which?
Identify a strawberry blossom.	Our strawberry plants are within the roped off area to the north of the compost bin. Without going inside see if you can spot any small white flowers with yellow centres. The blossom is almost finished; if you can't spot a flower, make sure you know what the plant looks like!

Notes on BINGO activities for Adult Guides

G	
Spot a bird.	We've got lots of birds in the city. Check out our feeder near the picnic tables. Do you see any birds? Quite often we see a robin visit especially after we've done some weeding. When we turn over the soil, there's a huge buffet of bugs to be found! YUM! We also see magpies, pigeons, and seagulls.
Look at the clouds.	What do the clouds tell us about the weather today? What is good for the plants about the weather? What might not be good about the weather today? Do you remember the names of the different kinds of clouds?
Say to some fungi!	We've got some mushrooms growing in a bed near the spruce tree. The sawdust has been inoculated with mushroom spores; with moisture, nutrients, and time, the mycelium (a fine network of white filaments) develops and then the mushroom (which is a fruiting structure) starts to grow. These mushrooms are edible! Please look at them, smell them, but please don't touch them--they're quite delicate.
Make a plant pot.	Grades K-2 will fill up a cup with dirt and plant seeds. Grades 3 and up will make a plant pot and then fill it and plant their seeds in it! At the picnic tables you'll find materials and tools to make a pot that you can then plant your seed in. Here are the steps: 1) Lay down a long narrow strip of newspaper on the table. 2) Take the mold (it's round, wooden with a handle) and lay it at the short edge the newspaper strip. 3) About 2 cm or so of the long edge should extend beyond the bottom of the mold (this will form the bottom of your pot). 4) Roll the mold along, rolling up the newspaper as you go. 5) When you've finished rolling, lightly fold in the bottom 6) Squish the mold with the newspaper on it (and the bottom rolled in) onto the bottom part of the mold. Press down hard and twist the mold around. This makes the bottom a bit more solid. BEFORE the pot is removed, have each student write his/her name on the pot.
Water a plant.	You'll find a few watering cans at Northlands Urban Farm. Go ahead and water some of our plants. If you'd like you can water some of the flowers we've planted along the yellow & brown fence where the solitary bee houses are. Or you can always water the herbs or the edible flowers in front of the red shed. Water gently. If you find the watering cans have already been emptied, let a NUF person know and we will refill them.

Notes on BINGO activities for Adult Guides

O	
Identify a bee.	Most of the honeybees you see will be workers. Look at the pictures so you can tell what a drone or a queen looks like. In Alberta, there are 300 different kinds of bees. Most of them are solitary, do not make honey, and do not sting. They do, however, all carry pollen. When you see an insect carrying pollen, especially on its back legs or its belly, you know it is a bee!
Feel a honey-comb.	Touch the honeycomb that the bees build to store their honey in. The queen also lays eggs in the comb. She lays one egg in each cell. When you see lighter coloured comb, you know that only honey has been in it. If the comb is a brown colour, it means the queen has laid eggs there. Bees make the honeycomb out of thousands of hexagons! It is the strongest, most efficient way to store their honey. What does it feel like? What does it smell like?
Test the soil.	The best soil to grow vegetables in is called loam. It is a mixture of sandy soil and clay. You can do a simple test that tells you if the soil is sandy, loam, or clay. Take a handful of soil and wet it with water from a watering can. Roll the soil between your hands as though it were play-dough. Does it roll easily into a long snake? If yes, then it is clay. Or does it crumble immediately? Then it is sandy. Soil that will roll a short snake (2-3 centimetres long) before it breaks is loam. What kind of soil do you think we have at NUF?
Weed a dandelion.	You probably know what dandelions look like! If you don't, just ask and we'll tell you. Go ahead and find the weeding area--there are dandelions, trowels, and pails there. Dig out a dandelion—or if you can't find a dandelion then any other weed available! Use your hand or a trowel, and then throw it in a pail! Once a pail is full, you can carry it to the compost. Weeds are considered "greens"--they add nitrogen (nutrients) to the compost.
Eat a green.	It IS possible to eat dandelions, but before you chow down on one, check with us--we'll have something for you to taste from the garden!

If you still have time left over when you finish your adventures, let us know! We'll find you some some jobs!

When we've finished our time together (10:50 am or 2:20 pm), we'll gather near the red shed to say good-bye and so students can pick up their backpacks and flats of seed pots before they head back to the bus.

After you leave

Thank you for participating in Urban Farm School! We hope you and your students enjoyed the experience. We value your feedback so watch for a follow-up survey.

We appreciate your commitment to agriculture literacy and we hope that Northlands Urban Farm School inspires you to teach your students about food and farming throughout the year.

Look for other ag-education opportunities at Northlands:

- Hall A of the Expo Centre at K-Days (July 19-28)
- Open Farm Days here at the Urban Farm (August 13, 2022)
- Urban Farm School—Fall version (Sept 16-October 11)
- Explore Agriculture at Farmfair International (November (6-8))

If you have questions, require guidance, or you would like to find out about other educational agriculture programs Northlands offers, please contact us at urbanfarm@exploreedmonton.com or at 780-378-5111.

Thank you for visiting Urban Farm School!