

### About the Position of Vegetable Gardener: Odiyan Retreat Center 2017

We are recruiting one or two gardeners. This position involves maintaining 2 acres of non certified organic mixed vegetable production. The goal of this production is to sustainably provide all the vegetables for our community of 40 people throughout the year. Our approach to agriculture recognizes that food is a byproduct of soil, and that the primary job of the gardener is to build and maintain healthy soil. We also recognize that ecological diversity is crucial to sustaining healthy soil, plants and people. Our techniques include the "biointensive" practices of double digging and heavy compost applications, as well as small tractor row cultivation. We grow all the major vegetables on rotation throughout the year, and maintain a substantial winter garden. In addition, we grow many unusual food, ornamental, pollinator, and medicinal annuals and perennials.

Working at the Odiyan vegetable gardens involves responsibilities similar in some ways to other small farms. You will start vegetable seedlings in our propagation greenhouse. You will prepare ground for planting, sometimes with a shovel and a wheelbarrow, sometimes with a tractor and plow. You will plant, sometimes direct sowing into prepared beds, sometimes hand transplanting. You will do lots of weeding, by hand and with tools like hoes, brushcutters, and mowers. You will build and maintain drip and sprinkler irrigation systems. You will harvest, wash, and bring produce to the kitchen, and sometimes freeze and can excess production. You will spend lots of time moving compost around, repairing fences, digging thistles, repairing broken pipes, planning crop rotations, making trellises, sorting potatoes.

In other ways, working at the Odiyan vegetable gardens is a unique experience that differs substantially from other farms. To start, you will be living and working in a religious community that practices a rigorous and disciplined lifestyle. Although Odiyan does not have resident monks and nuns, it is constructed like a monastery. There is a monastic quality to living at Odiyan with a the six-days-a-week routine and not a lot of personal time, social time, or entertainment time. This lifestyle emphasizes focus, discipline, and endurance, rather than leisure or working in order to have 'time off'.

You participate in our weekly classes on Buddhist philosophy, teachings, and Tibetan yoga, and some of our monthly Buddhist ceremonies. Additionally, people who enjoy this way of living, working and developing themselves may be invited to engage more aspects of Odiyan's mission and vision in a longer term of residency following the first six months.

Another unique aspect of the Odiyan vegetable gardens is that there is no marketing. All produce is consumed on site by Odiyan residents. The food is simply harvested, washed, brought to the kitchen, and put in the fridge, freezer, or processed for long term storage (canning, pickling, drying, etc). The advantage here is that superficial cosmetic concerns can be mostly ignored, and there is room to experiment with unusual or unknown crops. The disadvantage is that there is no financial motivation to work. Therefore, you have to be strongly interested in growing food *for its own sake*, rather than for any financial or even social gain.

This quality of independent motivation is generally important at Odiyan, and especially important for managing the vegetable gardens. You will be stepping into a work situation with good infrastructure, including a large greenhouse and two large hoop houses, large sprinkler and drip irrigation systems, three good wells, large compost operation, small egg poultry operation, small mushroom production, excellent tools, and large commercial kitchen with

extensive food preparation and preservation capacities. One of our goals is the integration of these resources into efficient food producing systems. Another goal is to extend these systems through the winter to provide 12 months of harvest. You will work with a small team to learn the basics of our setup, and you will have the space to experiment with and expand on any of our current projects. You will *not* be stepping into a work situation where you will always be told exactly what to do, or where you can follow long, well established routines. So this job will require a good deal of independent motivation, critical thinking, and problem solving.

Yet another unique aspect of Odiyan is that our food production supports but is not the central mission of the center. Thus, during your time here you will also work on projects completely unrelated to farming. You will do some ornamental landscaping, you will work in our bronze foundry or in our book bindery, and you will be involved in numerous small to large scale sacred art projects. You will cook one or two meals per week for the whole community. You will have the opportunity to be involved with our large fruit orchards. This variety of work can be challenging, but we believe it encourages an internal flexibility and openness that is important to our spirituality

If you are interested in this position, please go to the Contact/Apply page or call our office at 510-981-1987. We prefer applicants that have some gardening, farming, agricultural or horticultural experience.