

# Ajo Center For Sustainable Agriculture's Growing Our Own: Farmer Apprentice Program

## What is it?



- The Farmer Apprentice (FA) Program is a paid apprenticeship program, put on by the Ajo Center for Sustainable Agriculture, a non-profit urban farm located in Ajo AZ that works to reduce barriers to healthy, culturally appropriate, and locally sourced produce.
- The apprenticeship program teaches members the skills to successfully grow, market, and sell their produce to the community of Ajo. It is tailored to each apprentice and their needs.

•Skills gained during in the program include everything from irrigation to permaculture techniques, soil science to proper pruning, marketing to communication and more. All of these provide the FAs with the tools for success to perceive and sell marketable produce to the community of Ajo AZ, establishing a local food network.

## Background

- Located about 2 hours SW of a major metropolitan area, Ajo and its residents found itself isolated from locally sourced healthy food, requiring all food to be shipped in from afar, raising the cost and lowering the quality.
- Residents of Ajo, much like the rest of modern society, face the loss of agricultural knowledge and the skills required to grow one's own produce.
- Since the closure of the mine in the 1980s, this former mining town has been unable to effectively replace industry.
- There had been no local community food system, including growing, processing, distribution or education prior to the end of the 2000s.



## How does this address the communities needs?

- Food grown by FAs provides locally sourced organic produce, reducing the carbon footprint of our ingredients.
- The FA Program opens up career pathways for apprentices.
- In conjunction with other center's programs and events, food produced by FAs are turned into value added products & are used as a focus at events which attract



people to the Ajo area, and help people stay and make a living here in ajo.



**How to find out more**  
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