



OGI Internship in Organic Horticulture

Host farm profile

DRIPSEY CASTLE ESTATE

Carrignamuck, Dripsey, Co. Cork



FARM DETAILS

Owner/ Manager Name	Orla Rutherford Colm Ó Nuanáin (Horticulture Manager)
Company Name	Dripsey Castle Estate
Address	Carrignamuck, Dripsey, Co. Cork
Web:	www.dripseycastle.com

ABOUT THE FARM

The organic farm at Dripsey Castle Estate is part of a 110-acre historic estate. The core business that supports it all is the hospitality element providing luxury accommodation and venue for events ranging from weddings to conferences to small festivals. There are 45 acres in pasture and 65 acres in established woodland.

The estate is powered by a recently upgraded private hydroelectric generator onsite. It is an essential part of the business to be as low impact and green as possible.

We are growing produce both for the guests and to go to market. We work with a mixture of direct to business and wholesaling to two distributors.

We are currently developing a 4.5-acre field towards a 2–3-acre market garden section and 1–2-acre commercial orchard. There are two 30m x 9m polytunnels ready for planting, and 100m x 50m are covered in mulch ready to be converted into permanent beds. We will be doing this with a mixture of hand tools and a tractor which is due in the first quarter of this year. We will be using a precision seeder and transplanting trays and making soil blocks where appropriate. We have a heated and lit nursery where we can plant out early and get a stretch on the seasons.

Another element of the operation later in the year is orchard work. We have a heritage orchard in a walled garden consisting of very old, but very healthy apple trees which we hand harvest and send for juicing. We are in the planning stages of planting a hazel nut and alder windbreak and a commercial orchard of ~1 acre. Work on parts of this may begin in 2026.

We employ standard organic farming methods using compost and mulches and organic amendments mixed with elements of Korean Natural Farming, spreading IMO and using fermented plant extracts/lactic acid bacteria and other KNF amendments as needed by the crops.

We have a 5-year detailed rotating cropping plan just completed. This year most work will be in the market garden element, planting, tending, weeding, harvesting and preparing orders for clients and delivering as necessary. In late Autumn we will be harvesting apples and sending them for juicing.

Once a month Klaus Laitenberger comes to do a course, training staff and guests and doing a presentation on a progression of organic farming subjects.

ETHOS

We are focused on developing this project to commercial success, drawing from as much knowledge and as many techniques as possible. We currently use a mixture of established organic market gardening techniques inspired by Eliot Coleman and JM Fortier and also, we engage with Korean Natural Farming.

We warmly welcome new techniques and insights that can make us produce more in less time, but it must be regenerative and building the soil. We are against extractive profit driven activities.

FARM SIZE

Total:	45 acres
Field crops:	4500m ²
Protected crops:	540m ²

PRODUCE

Tomatoes, cucumber, chilies, radish, onion, carrot, aubergine, scallions, cabbage, beetroots, parsley, coriander, turnip, swede, courgette, beans, apples, aronia berry

ACTIVITIES

Propagation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Soft Fruit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Top Fruit	X
Poultry	X
Livestock	X

ROUTES TO MARKET

Box Scheme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Farm Shop	X
Catering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Market Stall	X
Wholesale	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

TEAM

Current team/no. of employees: 1 full time, 1 part time
Are there volunteers on the farm? No.

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

ABOUT THE ROLE

How many hours work/week is available and what is the payment rate?

32-40 hours per week at €14.50 per hour. 8-hour day with paid lunch hour. (Negotiable depending on experience).

What are the ideal start and finish dates?

February/March to October/November

Will weekend work be required?

☒ Sometimes

Flexibility will be required on Saturdays where needed – Sundays are a non-working day, but they are rare e.g. watering in drought times, dealing with storm damage, special client delivery requests. In general, we try to keep it Mon-Fri.

Will the role involve the use of machinery?

☒ Yes ☐ No

- Horticulture specific: Two wheeled tractor with attachments. Flame Weeder. Precision Seeder. Strimmer. Leaf Blower.
- Other: Low loader on site – experience in driving these would be helpful for some tasks.

Will the role involve direct sales at markets or shops?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Delivery may form part of the role.

Do applicants need to have a full driving license?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Yes.

Is accommodation on-farm an option?

☐ Yes ☒ No

No

APPLICANT PROFILE

What are the most important attributes you are looking for?

- A can-do attitude. A keen interest in sustainable food production. Someone who is looking to produce food to a high standard for a career.
- Someone interested in ways to increase efficiency in organic market garden production, constantly trying to find ways and systems to streamline the work of food production and harvesting so we can do more with less time, while conserving our energy.
- An interest in regenerative methods of farming and willingness to learn.

OTHER INFORMATION

We are in our third year of production. There are understandable startup issues which we are addressing as they arise. We are not perfect and we do not claim to know it all. What is important is not knowing the answers to everything, but knowing how to solve the problems and where to find the right information and knowledge to move onwards and upwards. Please share what you are learning with us when you see something we are missing...we may still drive on with another idea, but we value input from someone currently studying and being trained. Everyone has missed a lesson or two along the way at some stage in their life.

LOCATION



Approximate location of farm.