



**Earth University (*Bija Vidyapeeth*)**

# Bijak, Groups & Visitor`s Guide

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## INTRODUCTION

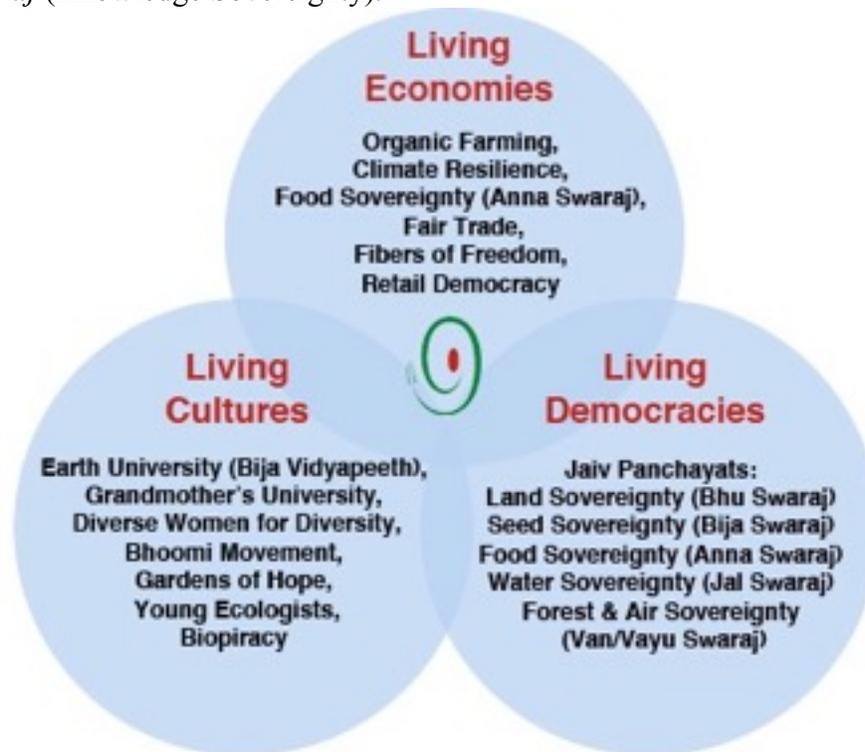
Thank you for your interest in Navdanya. Before applying to come as a Bijak, course participant or a member of a group, please read the following information thoroughly to ensure that your time with us will be fulfilling both for yourself and for our organization. We appreciate your enthusiasm.

### NAVDANYA'S MISSION STATEMENT

Navdanya is an earth-centric, women-centric movement for creating Earth Democracy through the principles of diversity, integrity, justice and non-violence. We strive to achieve the mission of *swaraj* (sovereignty/freedom) through both constructive, everyday level grass roots work as well as political campaigns to resist forces destructive to the Earth.

The current worldview, organized on the principles of greed, domination, violence and injustice has pushed species to extinction, destroyed ecosystems, destabilized the planet, and is robbing people of their rightful share of the Earth's gifts. This is deepening inequality, dispossession, deprivation, poverty and hunger. An alternative is desperately needed which respects the rights of nature and all living beings. We call this Earth Democracy. The 3 pillars of Earth Democracy are Living Democracy, Living Economies and Living Cultures.

We concretize the building of Earth Democracy through the mission of the following *Swaraj*: *Bija Swaraj* (Seed Sovereignty), *Bhu Swaraj* (Land and Soil Sovereignty), *Anna Swaraj* (Food Sovereignty), *Jal Swaraj* (Water Sovereignty), *Van/Vayu Swaraj* (Forest and Air) Sovereignty) and *Gyan Swaraj* (Knowledge Sovereignty).



## **THE NAVDANYA BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION FARM**

When Dr. Vandana Shiva started the Biodiversity Conservation Farm in the outskirts of Dehradun, her idea was twofold. On the one hand, she wanted to strengthen the Navdanya movement to prevent the disappearance of seed diversity in India caused by the Green Revolution, which created a market dependency for farmers, forcing them into a system of monoculture of high-yielding seed varieties (HYV), which then causes them to forget and forsake their ancestral legacy of agro-biodiversity. On the other hand, her ambition was to demonstrate to Indian agriculturalists tangible proof of the superiority of organic and biodiverse agriculture, compared to chemical farming, in terms of yields, preservation of the soil quality and maintenance of underground water purity along with an increased nutrition per acre. Hence, the Seed Bank was the first building constructed in 1996 on the farm outside the city of Dehradun in Ramgarh Village on Old Shimla Road. The farm now encompasses a total of 52 acres including mango and lemon orchards, farmland, a seed bank, a medicinal herb garden, a soil laboratory, and accommodations for the Navdanya community. From our mud and cow dung plaster walls to our grass and terra cotta roofed huts, the campus has been built on ecological principles, using local material and local skills.

The Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation Farm is an experimental farm and biodiversity conservation centre. It aims to provide the educational terrain for teaching Navdanya farmer members important and up-to-date information on organic farming methods and seed saving. In addition, we also create awareness among consumers, who are also our co-producers, about the importance and social, health and ecological benefits of organic farming, as the supply of products from organic farmers needs secure demands from consumers in order to be sustained.

The seed bank was the first building constructed on the Farm and one of our priorities is to grow crops for seed conservation and rejuvenation. The seed bank doesn't exist purely as a heritage museum; the intention is to re-introduce these seeds into agricultural production cycles. Every year, the saved seeds are distributed for free to farmers willing to cultivate their land organically and in a biodiverse manner. The next year, after harvest, the same farmers either return seeds to Navdanya with interest (in seeds), or give these seeds for free to two other farmers who are willing to distribute seeds in the same way. In this way, Navdanya promotes and spreads the practice of organic and biodiverse farming and ensures the prosperity and continuity of its seed bank. Navdanya also distributes seeds to farmers in need, those who have lost their crops or those who are facing the challenges of a changing climate and need climate-resilient seed varieties.

## **EARTH UNIVERSITY (*Bija Vidyapeeth*)**

Earth University was first established in 2001, and is also named *Bija Vidyapeeth*, which in Sanskrit and Hindi is 'Seed Learning Centre.' Earth University was created to promote living cultures and living economies in the spirit of developing an Earth Democracy. Earth University offers courses to diverse groups of passionate learners from many backgrounds including farmers (local and international), academics, activists, politicians, artists, students, and more. *Bijaks* (literally means 'the sower of seeds', which for us is learning and spreading the knowledge of

biodiversity and the practice of Earth Democracy) come from all over the world to Earth University. As a *Bijak* one becomes a part of a way of life here at Bija Vidyapeeth, learn to sow, care for and harvest biodiversity. Our intention is that these learnings, processes and this way of being are spread across the world through our *Bijaks*.

Our faculty consists of scholars, philosophers, activists, scientists, writers, artists, and our team of Navdanya farmers. Our teachers include Dr. Vandana Shiva, Satish Kumar, Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche and many more well-known people from around the world. Some of our visiting Earth University teachers have included Fritjoff Capra, Masanobu Fukuoka, Arundhati Roy, Frances Moore Lappe, Jean Grossholtz, Debbie Barker, Wolfgang Sachs, the late Anita Roddick, and the late Edward Goldsmith.

The ethos of Earth University is strongly anchored in Gandhian philosophy, advocating nonviolence towards all sentient beings and the Earth, as well as promoting living cultures and living economies in the face of a collapsing, unsustainable global environment. Navdanya welcomes all visitors to embrace our philosophy and work towards the creation of an Earth Democracy.

## **LIFE ON THE FARM**

### **LOCATION**

Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation Farm and Earth University is located in Ramgarh Village, 23 km from the center of Dehradun city in Uttarakhand, Northern India. It is a one-hour bus ride from the city of Dehradun, which is a 6-hour express train ride from Delhi. Dehradun is located 2 hours from Rishikesh, 2 hours from Mussoorie, and 2 hours from Haridwar by road. [Google Maps](#)

### **ABOUT THE FARM**

Ramgarh village is home to followers of both Hindu and Muslim faiths, and you can hear the call to prayer from two neighbouring mosques each day. There are small shops for basic needs within walking distance from the Farm, and a village market held every Friday.

Ramgarh and Dehradun are located in the ‘Doon Valley,’ a flat strip of land at the base of the Shivalik Mountains. The Shivalik Mountains are the foothills of India’s Garhwal Himalayas. On a clear day, you can see the mountains and Mussoorie from the Farm

Life on the farm follows the rhythm of the two main seasons, the cold and dry season called Rabi (November-May) and the hot followed by a rainy season called Kharif (June-October). Regardless of the season, the Navdanya team is busy each day with farm, kitchen. *Bijaks* can get involved in any of these activities.

In addition to the courses held regularly on the farm (please visit our website for an up-to-date course calendar), there are many opportunities to learn and study, through both getting to know the staff and by reading books in the library. When a course is running, especially the 'A-Z of Agroecology , Biodiversity & Organic Food Systems' and the 'Gandhi, Globalisation & Gross National Happiness course, the daily routine follows that of the course. When there are no on going formal courses at Earth University the earth and her biodiversity and the farm continue to be the teacher. We invite you to make the best of this unique hands-on learning opportunity. In addition, the Navdanya community is always there with its tremendously rich indigenous knowledge to turn to for guidance. If there is something you would like to learn, you must search for it without hesitation, and this might require persistence. Like the organic seed which does not require external inputs and germinates organically interacting with the soil, water and sun, the first true learning at Earth University is Gandhi's principle of *Swaraj*- self-reliance and self-organizing.

Life on the farm is shaped by the philosophy of Earth Democracy and implementation of Navdanya's core programs on soil, seed, and food. As a Bijak, you will participate in our community through 3 aspects of community activity for 3 hours in the morning per day and learn through service.

- *Bija* (Seed) - you will be assigned for seed saving and biodiversity conservation activities of the community seed bank, in the growing, harvesting, and documenting of 732 varieties of rice, 222 varieties of wheat and other seed varieties by working on the fields, medicinal, kitchen and other gardens with the Navdanya Team, sowing, harvesting, weeding, planting, pruning, seed selecting, threshing and doing other seasonal & necessary activities.
- *Anna* (Food) - the biodiversity of the Navdanya farm and farms of our members in different parts of the country is the basis of the diversity of the Navdanya organic kitchen. We have brought back healthy, nutritious crops we call 'forgotten foods' in our recipes. You learn how to cook with Indian spices that are also medicines in the Indian Ayurvedic tradition. As a Bijak you will be assigned to help in working the kitchen and dining hall, harvesting, cooking, cleaning and serving with the Navdanya Team
- *Gyan* (Knowledge), Navdanya is based on knowledge as living and free, a dialogue with the intelligence of Nature and people. Education at Bija Vidyapeeth (Earth University) includes self learning but also courses for education for Earth Democracy and education for earth citizenship. As a Bijak you will be assigned by Bijak coordinators in the back-end support for farmer training, courses and group visits, this would include maintaining the library, Logistics, audio-visual systems, etc.

one hour will be dedicated to cleaning common areas as Navdanya's philosophy is based on taking care of and being responsible for the commons. The rest of your time may be divided into afternoon sessions from Navdanya team, other personal activities and interests or self-organized teaching and learning within the community.

On the Farm, effort is put towards conserving natural resources and utilising renewable energy. Rainwater is collected in an eighteen-foot deep water-harvesting tank and is used for field irrigation, mostly at the tail end of the summer, a time when water is at its lowest level. The water used for domestic purposes is pumped from underground at a depth of 65 feet near the dining hall. Also, the food at Bija Vidyapeeth is organic, and comes from our farm, as much as possible, and otherwise from our farmer members throughout the country.

### **SPECIAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION FEATURES AT THE NAVDANYA BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION FARM**

- Use of solar energy to supply warm water and supplemented electricity.
- Water harvesting for irrigation purposes.
- Water recycling for toilets in our new buildings.
- Cow dung and mud plaster on our walls.
- Bio-gas production for supplementing energy for cooking.
- Use of bullock carts for plowing instead of machine-power as much as possible.
- Compost production for soil fertilization.
- Consumption of mostly farm-grown or local products.
- Conservation of biodiversity and practice of mixed-cropping in order to increase food and nutrition output.
- Grass thatched roofing for our gazebo and some of our living quarters.
- We try to utilize sustainable cleaning supplies like dish soap from the Reetha soap nut tree, Loofah sponges from the *Toori* plant, and Lemongrass brooms as much as possible.

## **LIVING AT**

### **EARTH UNIVERSITY**

Some of Navdanya's team members live on the farm and therefore the farm is both their place of work and their home. It is important to respect cultural sensitivities and to understand that you are being welcomed into someone else's home. Therefore you are asked to respect established values and norms.

Earth University is a place to learn from nature and sustainable traditions and holistic knowledge systems. As it was founded in the spirit of Gandhian principles and self-organization, the atmosphere and well-being of everyone at Earth University must be created by each individual and group that comes to stay here.

*Bijaks*, as well as visiting groups, are expected to contribute each day to the functioning of the farm. This involves fieldwork, kitchen work, gardening, etc. Each guest is asked to contribute daily *Shramdaan* (Gandhian concept of the gift of labor for community service, please read page 32 for more information about Gandhian principles) through daily housekeeping chores such as cleaning the bathrooms and dining hall, sweeping, and helping with meal preparation and service, as well as field work.

Earth University can be a very active place or a very quiet place, depending on the time of year. For example, during the monsoon (Aug-Sept) there is less farm work to do, During the rice harvest and the start of the winter planting season (Oct-Dec), there is always something to do and people who need help.

Usually there are between 10 to 25 *Bijaks* living at the farm. This number can increase dramatically if there is a course or Groups (Schools, University etc). It is common for the kitchen to cook for up to 100 people per meal including the farm team.

*Bijaks* should be prepared for unexpected tasks to arise and be flexible and helpful, assisting the farm staff when needed, especially when there are courses happening or school groups visiting

Many come to the farm with extra skills to share with the group, such as yoga and massage. It is common for *Bijaks* to self organize and give presentations to the group to share their knowledge and skills to other *Bijaks* after scheduling the slot for session with *Bijak* Coordinators. Finally, please be aware of cultural differences when it comes to relationships with the opposite sex. In India, intimate relationships are only expressed in private, even among married couples. The same behavior is expected of *Bijaks*, course participants and visiting groups. If you arrive at the farm as a dating or married couple please discuss with the team in the office in advance whether it is possible to have a shared room. Dormitories are separated by sex, and to sleep in a dormitory of the opposite gender is not part of our culture here.

### **WORKING ON THE FARM**

Work varies according to the season, but often includes planting, weeding, harvesting, seed saving and seed cleaning. *Bijaks* are welcome to focus their time and energy on the tasks that

interest them the most by discussing with Bijak coordinator. No previous farming experience is necessary, but willingness to learn is a must.

Farm work in India is very different from other parts of the world. Most of the farm workers work in flip-flops or bare feet. The work often requires patience (such as weeding and seed cleaning), but there is always good humor and time for *chai* breaks. Repetitive work is a form of learning, something that has slowly been replaced by technology or outsourcing, and allows us to learn by doing. The hand is not the only source of learning; when we use our hands and hearts we learn at a deeper, more holistic level. At Navdanya we celebrate the work we do with our hands, and we invite you to be part of this celebration.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

Most people rise between 5:30 am and 7:00 am to do their own yoga or meditation practice. Breakfast is at 8:00 am. At 8:45 am a meeting of all Bijaks takes place in what is called a `Morning Circle`, where announcements are made, tasks of the day are presented and questions are addressed. From 9 to 10 am cleaning of all common spaces takes place, followed by the morning work period from 10 am to 1 pm. At 1 pm lunch is served. Afternoon session from 3pm to 5pm. Dinner is at 7 pm during the winter and 8 pm during the summer. Quiet hours begin at 10 pm till 6 am in the morning.

During times of courses at Bija Vidyapeeth the schedule does change to suit that of the course. Bijaks will be informed of this before a course begins.

The farm work is carried out 7 days a week, though *Bijaks* are invited to take Sunday off. If you need to leave the farm to run errands or make a visit to Dehradun, please inform the Bijaks Coordinators in advance and sign out of the register. If going anywhere overnight we request you leave a letter detailing your name, where you are going, when you plan to return and any contact information.

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT THE FARM

Earth University has a number of resources that students and researchers may find useful including a library, soil laboratory, gardens, experimental fields, a seed bank, composting areas, and DVD library. There is also an archive of reports by Navdanya and ex-interns and researchers. Please ask the Bijak coordinators for more info if you can't find what you need in the library.

Permanent team members at the farm include experienced women seed keepers, an agro-ecologist, a traditional herbalist, national community organizers, and many dedicated organic farmers. The team is happy to work with researchers. Please note that the team members at Earth University are unable to act as translators.

The farm is a place where members of Navdanya's national seed keepers' network and organic farmers periodically come together for courses and idea sharing. Courses at Earth University provide researchers with the opportunity to make connections with farmers, activists, and scientists from all over India.

Dr. Shiva visits Earth University regularly, particularly at the time of courses. She is very open to speaking with students and researchers about their projects. If you would like to interview Dr. Shiva in New Delhi (where she is based) please email [navdanya@gmail.com](mailto:navdanya@gmail.com) to find out her availability. Navdanya cannot guarantee *Bijak's* will meet Dr. Shiva outside of a scheduled trip to the farm.

## **ROLE OF THE BIJAK, COURSE PARTICIPANT, OR VISITING GROUPS**

Visitors to the Navdanya farm include *Bijaks*, course participants and groups. Every person joining the community is an active contributing member during their stay. All *Bijaks* must propose their purpose for coming, and how they will contribute to the farm. All are required to fill out the [Bijak Application](#). We ask that *Bijaks* commit to their time at the farm. Aside from weekend trips, if you would like to travel to different parts of India please arrange to do so after your committed internship or volunteer apprenticeship

### **BIJAKS**

The opportunity to join us for an informal internship throughout the year as a *Bijak* (which literally means ‘the sower of seeds’, which for us is learning and spreading the knowledge of biodiversity and the practice of Earth Democracy). As a *Bijak* you become a part of a way of life here at Bija Vidyapeeth; you learn to sow, care for and harvest biodiversity. Our intention is that you take these learnings, processes and this way of being with you and sow these seeds in your community.

*Bijaks* can stay either for a short term or long term.

**Short term *Bijaks*** are visitors who come to the farm for less than two months, the accommodations available are the double and single rooms with shared baths (please read through the accommodation section for more information). **Long terms *Bijaks*** must be over 18 and able to commit to a minimum of 2 months at Earth University, are eligible for the dorm accommodation, in addition to single and double rooms with shared bath. Those interested in the dorms must arrive on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month to ensure space. Strong candidates for either of these are flexible, self-directed, and capable of carrying out multiple projects at the same time.

This informal opportunity is unpaid, so applicants should be able to support themselves during their entire stay at the Navdanya Farm.

As a *Bijak*, you can participate in our community through 3 aspects of community activity:

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tradition. As a Bijak you will be assigned to help in working the kitchen and dining hall, harvesting, cooking, cleaning and serving with the Navdanya Team

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Each *Bijak* will participate in one of these activities for 3 hours per day and learn through service. In addition to this, one hour will be dedicated to cleaning common areas as Navdanya's philosophy is based on taking care of and being responsible for the commons. The rest of your time may be divided into sharing their knowledge and skills to other Bijaks plus afternoon sessions from Navdanya team.

Not all *Bijaks* come from an academic background; if you feel you have something to offer and something to learn from being an Bijak at Navdanya, we are open to applications from people of all backgrounds and ages (all walks of life).

Prospective *Bijaks* should apply at least 2 months in advance to give time for necessary communications before your arrival and to ensure that there is space for you during your stay. We prefer if you do not apply to join us more than one year before the date you intend to arrive. Please be aware that space may be limited at certain times of the year due to particular courses or school groups and we cannot always guarantee space. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and start dates are decided according to your schedule. Prospective *Bijaks* should apply to Navdanya by filling out [Bijak Application](#) form and sending it to [earthuniversity@navdanya.net](mailto:earthuniversity@navdanya.net). Please reconfirm your arrival one week in advance. Any applicant wishing to discuss joining the Delhi office should contact [navdanya@gmail.com](mailto:navdanya@gmail.com).

*Bijaks* are responsible for getting the correct visa for India, we recommend a tourist visa as it is the least hassle and is easily accepted. Navdanya cannot supply the necessary invitation letter.

All *Bijaks* are expected to adhere to the Community Living Guidelines (see below).

Contact: Office Manager and Bijak Coordinators

Email: [earthuniversity@navdanya.net](mailto:earthuniversity@navdanya.net) Phone: +91 135 2693025 (in India) +91 135 2693025 (Outside India)

## **BIJAKS WITH FELLOWSHIPS OR SCHOLARSHIPS**

Bijaks with fellowships or scholarships are asked to disclose their projects and specific needs and requirements of the Navdanya team. Prospective researchers who conduct independent academic work affiliated with an educational institution and/or fellowship should fill out the online application form and attach a detailed project proposal. Permission to conduct research must be granted by Navdanya prior to the researcher's arrival. Researchers are typically based at Earth University. Preference is given to applicants who demonstrate that their research will benefit not only their own academic pursuits but also the movements and communities with which Navdanya works. While at Earth University, researchers are also expected to contribute to the daily work of the farm, Bija Vidyapeeth,

A Navdanya team member (Manager or Bijak Coordinator) will fill out any forms required by your university and serve as your internship supervisor.

## **COURSE PARTICIPANTS**

Course Participants are similar to Bijaks but come to the Navdanya Farm for a specific Earth University course being offered. This may be a weekend, a ten-day course, or more. Course participants are welcome to stay after their course. Please be sure to fill out the [Bijak Application](#) in addition to the course registration form, if this is the case. All course participants are expected to adhere to the Community Living Guidelines (see below). To register for an Earth University course please go to [www.navdanya.org](http://www.navdanya.org) and click on course registration here you will find a form. Please do complete this form and send it to [earthuniversity@navdanya.net](mailto:earthuniversity@navdanya.net). Course participants are expected to follow the same Navdanya Farm Community Living Guidelines (listed below), participate, when possible, in the fields and in cleaning. These activities are included in the course daily schedule, which you will receive on arrival at Bija Vidyapeeth. For queries about registration please email [earthuniversity@navdanya.net](mailto:earthuniversity@navdanya.net), for queries regarding Bija Vidyapeeth, accommodation etc.

## **GROUPS**

Navdanya welcomes visiting farmers, schools, colleges, and University groups from all over the world and India. If you are interested in bringing a group to the Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation Farm please do contact [earthuniversity@navdanya.net](mailto:earthuniversity@navdanya.net) for coordination, logistics and costing. Schedules for groups are coordinated with the Navdanya Team and vary according to the needs of the group. Nonetheless, visiting groups are expected to follow the Navdanya Farm Community Living Guidelines (below).

## **NAVDANYA FARM COMMUNITY LIVING GUIDELINES FOR BIJAKS, GROUPS AND VISITORS.**

Living in our community is different from independent living arrangements because every action and/or lack of action has an effect on the entire community as a whole. In order to ensure that Navdanya functions at its best, it is imperative that you agree to the following rules and regulations during your stay.

### **1. I agree to participate in the mission/goals of Navdanya and Earth University.**

- It is important that all visitors understand that living at the Navdanya Farm is different from a hotel or hostel environment. While socializing and having fun are welcomed, we also expect that Bijaks and visitors are here first and foremost to learn and to contribute to sustainable farming, food security, and food democracy.
- I am here to learn more about food democracy and sustainable agriculture, and/or I am here to contribute towards the improvement of this community.
- I am enthusiastic and willing to participate and contribute to the community (i.e.- research, organization, field work, cooking prep, sessions) or to get involved with projects that are already in motion.
- I am willing to participate in *shramdaan* (Gandhian concept of the gift of labor for community service.) every day. This can be applied in the field, in the kitchen or cleaning.

### **2. I agree to keep Navdanya clean.**

- I will follow and respect the cleaning guidelines posted throughout the campus.
- I will return cups and dishes to the dining room immediately after use (otherwise the kitchen runs out of dishes, and the dirty dishes in your room attract bugs and animals)
- I'll throw out all food wrappers, papers, trash, food wastes in the appropriate bins found in the hall outside the rooms.

### **3. I understand that smoking, drinking, or drug use is not permitted under any circumstance on the Navdanya farm.**

- To respect the sensibilities of the earth community on the farm, the Navdanya farm is a meat (including eggs), alcohol and drug free environment.

- Smoking, drug use, or drinking alcohol on the Navdanya campus, in any common or private space, is not permitted.
- Smoke leaves a scent residue on the curtains, on the sheets, on the walls. It's also a fire hazard and imposing on the health of people who do not smoke. If you are a smoker, you are required to restrict your smoking to the designated smoking area located outside the gates.

**4. I agree to remain respectful to all guests and staff and adhere to quiet hours between 10pm to 6am.**

- Please respect this by not playing music or talking loudly during these hours. If you wish to have evening social gatherings, please feel free to use the round hut or lecture hall if they are not being used (i.e, away from sleeping areas). Please also try to keep music and other noises down during daytime when people are working.

**5. (Bijaks) I understand that attending each and every sessions, work and meeting is mandatory.**

- Be on time.
- Our meetings are a chance for new people to introduce themselves and to meet the others and feel welcomed by the group.
- Our meetings, work and sessions are a chance for the Navdanya Team, *Bijaks* and visitors to make any group announcements or any concerns, questions for the betterment of the living community.
- Our group meetings, work and sessions are a chance for you to share what you are currently working on at Earth University. They are a chance to communicate what you've been learning and what you intend to learn. They are an opportunity to inspire and to be inspired by each other.

**6. I agree to eat vegetarian while at Navdanya**

- We choose to prepare only healthy, vegetarian food in order to comply with Navdanya's food security mission. Vegetarianism (no eggs) has many benefits on an environmental, political and personal health and wellness scale.

**7. I agree to inform the office if I plan to leave the campus anytime**

- I will sign the office register book located in the office with my departure and return date and time. This includes day trips into town.
- Regarding day trips, I will return to the Navdanya campus before dark for safety reasons.
- If you are going to leave the farm for any reason please contact the office manager or Bijak coordinators during office hours. You should also notify them when you've returned. This is for security reasons.
- If you wish to take personal trips away from the farm during your stay we ask that these be done over the weekend if possible or agreed with the office team with plenty of notice.
- For overnight trips on weekend, I will leave a letter detailing where I am going, estimated return and contact information.
- If you wish to leave soaps, cosmetics, clothing, shampoos, shoes etc. please do so in the designated bin outside the dorms. Leaving without donating your items to the team or to a friend will add to the clutter of the space.

## LOGISTICS

### **FOR BIJAKS**

Navdanya Bija Vidyapeeth is a self sustaining learning centre where people ( all walks of life) applying at Navdanya will need to pay for their food and accommodation as leaning here is free.

Bathrooms, Indian and Western style, for all accommodation types are common and shared. Dorms are available for long term *Bijaks*, those staying two months or more only. There are only 15 spaces available in the dorms and will be given on a first come first serve basis. We ask you to arrive on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and depart by the last day of the month so that we may ensure dorms are allocated appropriately.

For *Bijaks* staying less than two months, single and double rooms are available. Our capacity is 7 rooms that may fit a double in each.

The food at Bija Vidyapeeth is organic, from our farm, as much as possible, and our farmer members in different parts of the country.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Living standards at Earth University are simple and rustic but comfortable. Don't expect a hotel! Long term *Bijaks* have the option of staying in dormitories, which have 4-6 people, or twin rooms that are utilized as either single or double occupancy. Course participants generally stay in double occupancy, and private rooms are available on special request. All rates vary accordingly. In addition to beds, each room has a desk, a chair or bench, and bookshelves. Bedding, pillows, blankets and mosquito nets are provided, but towels are not. Living accommodations are not heated in the winter, but warm bedding is provided.

Bathrooms are shared amongst the dorms and the double occupancy rooms. Toilet paper is provided, and some bathrooms are equipped with western toilets.

Bathroom cleaning duties are shared. Private stalls for bucket showers are on the campus next to the dormitories, and solar-heated water is available when there is enough sunshine.

Buckets are available for hand-washing laundry, and there are clothing lines in several outdoor locations for drying clothes. There are also pick up/delivery laundry services available that charges about Rs 10 per article of clothing. We can share with you the details of the charges on your arrival.

## WHAT TO PACK

People in rural India dress conservatively and keep arms and legs covered. For men t-shirts or long sleeve shirts are acceptable, as well as trousers or knee-length shorts. Taking your shirt off during work, even in the summer, is not a customary practice. Women should be mindful of wearing shirts that cover their shoulders and long trousers or skirts. Sleeveless and cleavage cut shirts, or short shirts, are not customary. There are plenty of excellent places in Dehradun to buy comfortable and suitable clothes and fabrics, including hand spun and fair-trade fabrics. Also, keep in mind that during the winter months the temperature drops down to 4C/38F, and dorms and rooms are not heated. Please bring enough warm clothing if visiting during these months.

Navdanya provides beds, sheets, pillows, warm blankets, and mosquito nets. The following recommended items are not provided. Dehradun is a bustling city and almost everything on this list can be found there at reasonable prices if you forget to bring it.

- Towel
- Good quality power adapter: (220 Volts). The ones bought in India tend to break quickly.
- Laundry soap: Biodegradable. (Laundry service is available as well)
- Toiletries: Biodegradable and eco friendly products please.
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Reusable water bottle
- Reusable shopping bag (canvas, etc.)

- Pocket-knife
- Laptop if required by you.
- Headphones: For transcribing interviews and listening to music.
- Earplugs: If you are a light sleeper, guard dogs can be loud in the night and the local village call to prayers happen in the early morning.
- Dictaphone: If you intend to be doing interviews as part of your studies.
- Clothing: Clothing for farming (nothing sleeveless, no short trousers) will be helpful. Lightweight flexible clothes, cotton is best. The sun is very strong in the valley, light long-sleeved shirts are recommended even in summer months. Also consider bringing a sun hat. For time in villages and/or cities, it is very affordable (and enjoyable) to pick up a few Indian outfits or just a lightweight shawls or *dupatta*. During the winter (October-March) it is warm in the day and quite cold at night (you will often wake up to see the fields covered in frost). Please be advised that temperatures drop dramatically starting mid-November. Winter clothing is advisable for these months, especially as rooms are not heated. While the beds are very warm, sleeping in layers is recommended. Also if you take weekend trips into the mountains, it will be even colder. Bring a coat or fleece, a warm hat, gloves, thick warm socks, and long underwear if you plan to be here during the winter months.
- Shoes: Rubber trekking sandals (Keens, Tevas, Merrells, etc.) are ideal for field work and living on the farm. In the winter, the temperatures drop and hiking-like boots or sneakers for this time of year may be desired. Flip-flops are also convenient for bathing, lounging and some field work.
- Gardening gloves: If you are adjusted to working with gloves, please bring them with you.

## **FOOD AND WATER**

All meals are vegetarian and consist primarily of seasonally-available organic fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes, grown on the farm as much as possible or from our farmers. Food is served three times a day at 8 am, 1 pm, 7/8 pm and is included in your accommodation fee.

Chai (milk tea) is consumed several times a day in India, and the farm is no exception. There is also a guest kettle in the dining hall for making your own teas.

Vegans may have a hard time in India since milk, yogurt, and ghee (clarified butter) are common ingredients in almost every meal. Please let us know before your arrival if you have any specific dietary restrictions or food allergies, and we will let you know if we can accommodate your needs.

The drinking water at the farm is safe and clean, as it comes from a deep well. If you are concerned about water, please only drink from the canteen outside the dining hall, which is boiled before consumption. There are other water stations around the farm that supply ground

water and are not boiled. Most guests have no trouble drinking this water after they have been on the farm for several weeks.

## HEALTH

**It's very important to bring electrolytes packets.** If you have an incident with diarrhea or heat exhaustion, it is imperative you drink electrolyte water to replenish. They are also available here in town, and on the farm for emergency. But it is best for you to have with you when you need it.

Please make sure you consult your doctor before leaving to have the necessary vaccinations. There is currently no malaria in the area, but it is always good to get up-to-date advice. The main place that *Bijaks* seem to pick up illnesses is when passing through Delhi, so when you are there, please be careful not to drink unpurified water and take full precautions against mosquitoes, etc.

If you suffer from dust or mold allergies, the Navdanya farm might be difficult for you. The farm work is naturally dusty (though other work can be found) and the rooms are rustic and made using natural building techniques. If you suffer from hay fever you may want to bring your own treatments with you.

## INTERNET

There is wi-fi at the farm but please note that the quality of reception can vary greatly because of the rural area we are located in. The best time to use it is before and after the office work hours, for reception quality and in order not to disturb those working in the office. There is also a computer in the library, which *Bijaks* are welcome to use.

Please note that electricity at the farm can come and go and it is not guaranteed all the time, for this reason we recommend you bring a power surge protector. Also, while working online it is advised you save files frequently. Many *Bijaks* find it useful to bring a memory stick or small portable hard drive to share project files because of the electrical and internet unpredictability.

## **LANGUAGE**

English, Hindi, and Garhwali are the most commonly used languages at the farm. Navdanya Team Members are happy to help volunteers practice Hindi or Garhwali while they are working.

*Bijaks* have found having some basic Hindi very helpful and many have started their trip with a language course before coming to the farm. Some groups have created language study groups to support each other's learning.

## **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

On the Navdanya Earth University Organic Farm we try to be a waste-free zone. Upon arrival, you will receive more detailed information about our waste management system. When packing for your trip, please consider the amount of waste your products will create, and how they will be disposed of while you are at Earth University. We encourage you to be as plastic-free as possible.

## **ARRIVING IN INDIA**

### **NAVDANYA IN DELHI:**

#### **Arriving in Delhi by Air**

At Indira Gandhi International Airport, there is a prepaid taxi stand just outside the arrivals waiting area. A long queue usually precedes the stand and people tend to push in front of one another. Be patient. This is the most affordable way to get a taxi to your guest house.

Guesthouses are found all over the city, but a neighborhood called Pahar Ganj has the most affordable ones. Beware, however, that Pahar Ganj is very crowded and touristy. Exercise caution about who you talk to there, especially if it is your first time in India. There have been incidents where new arrivals are told their guest house has been burned down or destroyed and are directed elsewhere, ask a number of people to confirm this (not from the same group). There are also guest houses and B&B's located in Hauz Khas near the Navdanya Delhi office. We recommend that you consult a guide book and make your reservation before arrival.

#### **Navdanya's office in New Delhi**

Navdanya's main office is located on the south side of New Delhi at A-60, Hauz Khas, a few blocks from Hauz Khas Market. Because the street address system in Hauz Khas can be confusing, we suggest that you go to Navdanya's shop in Hauz Khas Market (which is quite visible) and ask the manager to point you in the direction of the office. There is a new metro system in Delhi that has just opened as of September 2010. The nearest stop for Navdanya's

office is Green Park. It is slightly nearer than going to Hauz Khas station.

## TRAVELING TO THE NAVDANYA FARM IN DEHRADUN, INDIA

### TRAIN

**From Delhi to Dehradun by train:** The nearest train station to the farm is Dehradun. If you wish to travel by train you must book your tickets in advance with an agent at an Indian Railways booking office in India, or online. To check which trains exist for a given route, visit: <http://www.erail.in> . Once you have decided on a train, go to <http://www.irctc.co.in> (This site may not accept a foreign credit card) or [www.cleartrip.com](http://www.cleartrip.com) for booking. [www.cleartrip.com](http://www.cleartrip.com) might be the best for international participants. **At the station, please be certain not to entertain strangers who claim to be railway officers and say your ticket is not valid; only talk to people in identifiable uniforms.**

From the Dehradun train station take an auto rickshaw or taxi directly to the farm. Tell the driver “Old Shimla Road, Navdanya, Ramgarh village.” (16km up Shimla Bypass on the left). Most taxi (small car) and vikram (three wheeled taxi colored blue) drivers know Navdanya. The trip should cost no more than INR 400 and will take about 45 minutes. A private taxi outside the railway station should cost INR 600, except at night when you may need to pay INR 800.

At about 16km from turning onto Shimla By Pass, there is a big yellow sign on your left hand side that says, “Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation Farm.” Be prepared that some auto rickshaws and cars will not take you up driveway, but definitely request that they do and follow the path to the gated fence. If you are dropped off at the road, it is about a 5-minute walk along a bumpy pathway through the mango orchard to the farm. Entrance is on your left. If you are arriving at night, it is important you have a flashlight and that you have communicated with someone about your arrival.

More economical: Hire private vikram (as mentioned above) or take the blue public vikram #5 (INR) on a set route to Old Shimla Bypass. Tell either driver "Old Shimla Bypass." Once at the bypass, walk to the Punjab Bank ATM near the fruit stands on Old Shimla Bypass road and wait for a bus on that side of the road heading up Old Shimla Road. The bus drivers and other local people know where Navdanya Farm is. Just tell them you are going to Navdanya, Ramgarh Village. The bus will arrive in front of the farm entrance after about 30-45 minutes. The driver will let you know when you are there. Vikram to Old Shimla Bypass: public INR. Bus: INR 18

### BUS

**From Delhi to Dehradun by bus:** Government busses (non A/C) or private luxury buses to Dehradun leave several times per day from the Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) near Kashmiri Gate in Old Delhi. Reservations are not required.

From the Dehradun bus terminus take an auto rickshaw or taxi directly to the farm. Tell the driver “Old Shimla Road (same as Shimla By Pass), Navdanya, Ramgarh village.” Most taxi (small car) vikram (three wheeled taxi) drivers know Navdanya. The trip should cost no more than INR 300 and will take about 45 minutes. A private taxi outside the bus station should cost

INR 500, except at night when you may need to pay up to INR 700.

At about 16km from turning onto Shimla By Pass, there is a big yellow sign on your left hand side that says, “Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation Farm.” Be prepared that some auto rickshaws and cars will not take you up driveway, but definitely request that they do and follow the path to the gated fence. If you are dropped off at the road, it is about a 5-minute walk along a bumpy pathway through the mango orchard to the farm. If you are arriving at night, it is important you have a flashlight and that you have communicated with someone about your arrival.

More economical: take the blue public vikram #5 (INR 9) on a set route to Old Shimla Bypass. Tell either driver "Old Shimla Bypass." Once at the bypass, walk to the Punjab Bank ATM near the fruit stands on Old Shimla Bypass road and wait for a bus on that side of the road heading up Old Shimla Road. The bus drivers and other local people know where Navdanya Farm is. Just tell them you are going to Navdanya, Ramgarh Village. The bus will arrive in front of the farm entrance after about 30-45 minutes. The driver will let you know when you are there. Vikram to Old Shimla Bypass: INR 9. Bus: INR 18.

## **AIR**

**From Delhi to Dehradun and the Navdanya Farm by air:** Dehradun’s Jolly Grant Airport is situated halfway between the city center and Rishikesh, and about and 1 hour drive to the farm. Flights are available to Jolly Grant daily from most cities throughout India.

From the taxi window outside the Dehradun terminal, hire a taxi directly to the farm. (Rs 1200-1500) Tell the driver “Old Shimla Road (same as Shimla By Pass), Navdanya, Ramgarh village.” At about 16km from turning onto Shimla By Pass, there is a big yellow sign on your left hand side that says, “Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation Farm.” Be prepared that some auto rickshaws and cars will not take you up driveway, but definitely request that they do and follow the path to the gated fence on left. If you are dropped off at the road, it is about a 5-minute walk along a bumpy pathway through the mango orchard to the farm. If you are arriving at night, it is important you have a flashlight and that you have communicated with someone about your arrival.

## **PRIVATE TRANSPORT**

**From Delhi to the Navdanya Farm by private transport:** From Delhi, a private car will cost between Rs 5000 and Rs 6,000. Please arrange this from your residence in Delhi.

## **NAVDANYA CONTACT INFORMATION**

**DEHRADUN FARM:** Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation Farm, Village Ramgarh, Old Shimla Road P.O. Sherpur, Dehradun – 248 197 Uttarakhand, INDIA

**Office Phone Tel:** +91 – 135 – 2693025, 2111015

**Bijak Coordinators :** Mr. Drona D Chetri, mobile number :8191802777 and Ms. Anugrah Bhatt :8191802666

Email: [earthuniveristy@navdanya.net](mailto:earthuniveristy@navdanya.net)

**Farm manager:** JP Khali, mobile number: 8191802087 (If outside of Uttarakhand, dial 0 before, if outside of India add +91)

**DEHRADUN OFFICE:** 105 Rajpur Road, Dehradun – 248 001, Uttarakhand, INDIA  
Tel: +91 – 135 – 2743175 Telefax: +91 – 135 – 2749931

**DELHI OFFICE:** A-60 Hauz Khas, New Delhi – 110 016, INDIA Tel: +91 – 11 – 26853772,  
26532561, 26561868, 26968077 Fax: +91 – 11 – 26856795

## FURTHER RESOURCES

### GOOGLE MAP OF FARM LOCATION



[Goggle Map of Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation Farm](#)

## WEATHER ON THE FARM

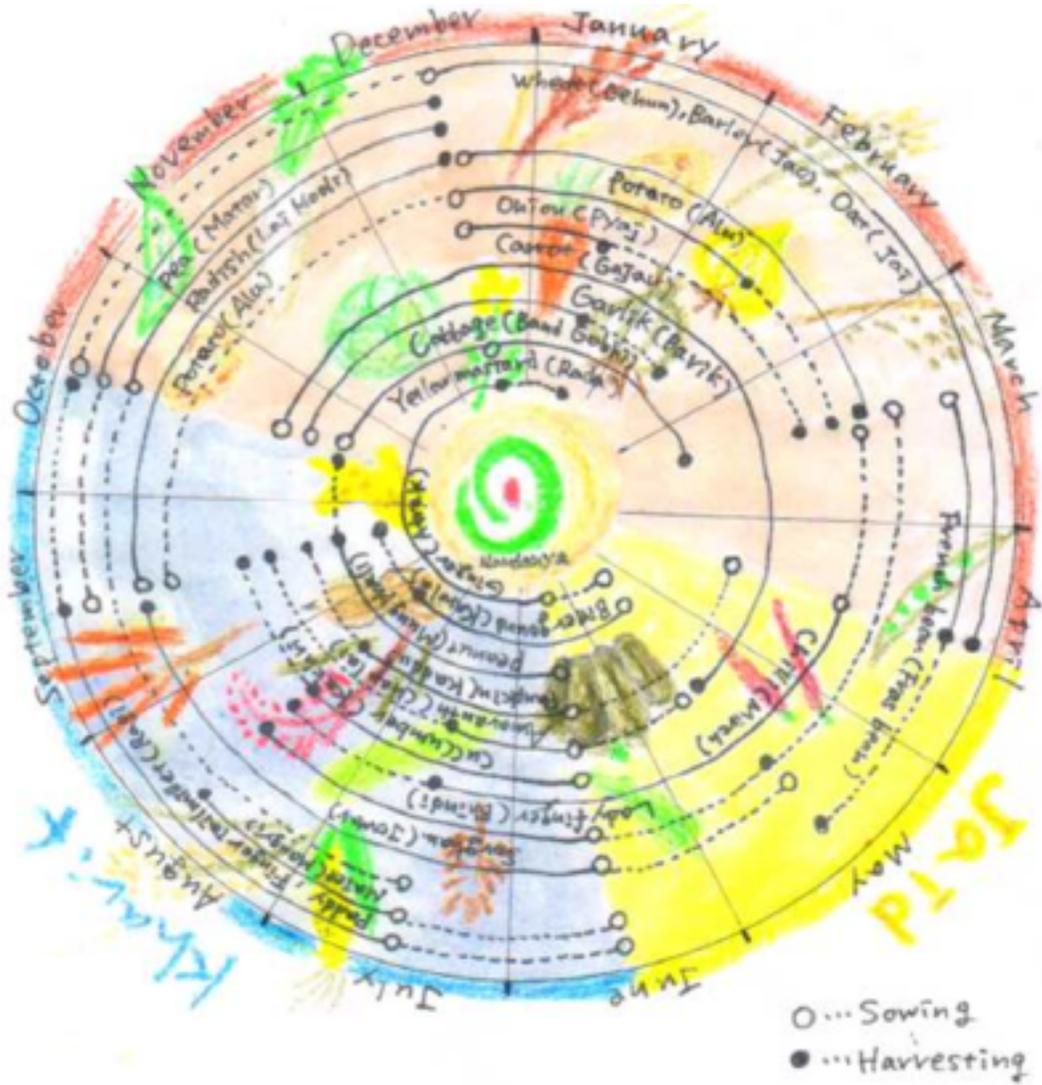
The Climate of the district is generally temperate. It varies greatly from tropical to severe cold depending upon the altitude of the area. The district being hilly, temperature variations due to difference in elevation are considerable. In the hilly regions, the summer is pleasant, but in the Doon, the heat is often intense, although not to such degree as in the plains of the adjoining district. The temperature drops below freezing point not only at high altitude but even at places like Dehradun during the winters, when the higher peaks are also under snow. The area receives an average annual rainfall of 2073.3 mm. Most of the annual rainfall in the district is received during the months from June to September, July and August being rainiest. Climate Data of Doon Valley for all the months is as under on the basis of mean of last 25 years.

Month	Rainfall (mm)	Relative Humidity (%)	Temperature		
			Max	Min	Ave.
January	46.9	91	19.3	3.6	10.9
February	54.9	83	22.4	5.6	13.3
March	52.4	69	26.2	9.1	17.5
April	21.2	53	32	13.3	22.7
May	54.2	49	35.3	16.8	25.4
June	230.2	65	34.4	29.4	27.1
July	630.7	86	30.5	22.6	25.1
August	627.4	89	29.7	22.3	25.3
September	261.4	83	29.8	19.7	24.2
October	32.0	74	28.5	13.3	20.5
November	10.9	82	24.8	7.6	15.7
December	2.8	89	21.9	4.0	12.0
<b>Average Annual</b>	<b>2051.4</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>20.0</b>

## YEARLY FARM ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Month	Activities on the Farm
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weeding in the vegetable and pulses fields, as well as in the wheat, Barley, oats, Mustard, and linseed areas</li> <li>● Cleaning of the Seed bank</li> <li>● Filling of all compost</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Irrigation of the different crops</li> <li>● Cleaning of the Seed bank and of the entire campus</li> <li>● Some work in the compost unit</li> </ul>
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Harvesting of the Barley, linseed, mustard, of the vegetables and of some pulses</li> <li>● cleaning, drying and storing of the seeds in the seed bank</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Harvesting of the wheat, collection of all the different wheat seed varieties and yield data and other varieties like barley, oat, mustard, linseed, vegetables and pulses.</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Harvesting and thrashing of wheat, barley, oat, mustard, linseed and pulses</li> <li>● Cleaning and storing of different seeds in Seed Bank</li> </ul>
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sowing seeds for green manuring, sowing of Kharif season pulses and vegetables ( Corn/maize, cucumber, peanut, oilseed, millet varieties, rain field rice and fodder varieties)</li> <li>● Sowing of conservation varieties for renewal of seed stock:multiple rice varieties nursery planting</li> <li>● Preparing rice field</li> <li>● Weeding in maize/corn, peanut, rain-field varieties, and vegetables</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Uprooting of different varieties of rice from nursery</li> <li>● Preparing rice fields for transplanting through process of “Paddlig”</li> <li>● labeling of all planted Kharif season varieties</li> <li>● Weeding of vegetable varieties</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Making of map of all varieties</li> <li>● Weeding and irrigation of rice fields</li> <li>● Protecting of crops from wild animals</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Harvesting of corn, cucumber, sesame, millets</li> <li>● Collection of farm yield data</li> <li>● Seed bank and Vermicompost unit cleaning</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rainfield rice varieties, pulses, vegetables harvesting</li> <li>● Harvesting of all rice varieties and peanut in last week</li> <li>● Threshing of rice varieties</li> <li>● Collection of farm yield data</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Drying, labelling and storing of all crop seeds in seed bank</li> <li>● Plowing of all fields</li> <li>● Sowing of wheat, Barley, oats, vegetables, and pulses ( Last week of the month)</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sowing of wheat, Barley, oat, vegetables and pulses ( first week of the month)</li> <li>● Labeling of all planted Rabi season varieties ( writing of the name tags, tagging in the fields)</li> <li>● Mapping of the wheat, vegetables, pulses and all Rabi crops ( last week of the month)</li> <li>● Starting of the weeding</li> <li>● Irrigation of the different crops</li> </ul>

NAVDANYA'S MAIN CROP CALENDAR



## PRINCIPLES OF GANDHIAN LIVING

### ***Satyam (Truth)***

The pivotal and defining element of Gandhism is *Satyam*, a Sanskrit word usually translated into English as 'truth'. The literal meaning is 'what actually is'. Gandhi believed that the principle of *Satya* should pervade all considerations of politics, ego, society and convention. *Satya* is interpreted subjectively. Gandhism does not demand that its adherents agree to Gandhi's own principles to the letter, but in spirit.

### ***Ahimsa (non-violence)***

*Ahimsa*, or non-violence, was another key tenet of Gandhi's beliefs. He held that total non-violence would rid a person of anger, obsession and destructive impulses. While Gandhi's vegetarianism was inspired by his rearing in the Hindu-Jain culture of Gujarat, it was also an extension of *ahimsa*.

### ***Brahmacharya (self perfection through self-control and contentment)***

For Gandhi, *Brahmacharya* meant "control of the senses in thought, word and deed." *Brahmacharya* means the pursuit of virtue and to strive for excellence in all domains of activity and relationships.

### ***Swadeshi (Self Reliance)***

*Swadeshi* (Self-reliance) is mainly understood to mean a protectionist technique that Gandhi employed against the policies of the British, whereby the masses were urged to abstain from cloth manufactured outside India, and instead to use cotton, silk, or wool cloth made in India. But Gandhi gave it a broader meaning: " *Swadeshi* carries a great and profound meaning. It does not mean merely the use of what is produced in one's own country. That meaning is certainly there in *swadeshi*. But there is another meaning implied in it which is far greater and much more important. *Swadeshi* means reliance on our own strength. We should also know what we mean by 'reliance on our own strength'. 'Our strength' means the strength of our body, our mind, and our soul. From among these, on which should we depend? The answer is brief. The soul is supreme and therefore soul-force is the foundation on which man must build".

### ***Yajña and Service***

Gandhi teaches that work should be done with pure motives, without desire for any type of reward, in a spirit of service. When work is thus performed, it becomes an act of *yajña* (sacrifice). He writes: " *Yajña*' means an act directed to the welfare of others, done without desiring any return for it, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature. 'Act' here must be taken in its widest sense, and includes thoughts and word, as well as deed. 'Others' embraces not only humanity, but all life."

### ***Oneness and Equality of Religions***

Gandhi teaches that all faiths spring from the same ultimate, timeless, eternal Religion. He writes: "The root of all religions is one and it is pure and all of them have sprung from the same

source, hence all are equal.”

**Sarvodaya** -*Sarvodaya* is a term meaning 'universal uplift' or 'progress of all'. It was coined by Gandhi in 1908 as a title for his translation of John Ruskin's 'Unto This Last'. Later, nonviolence leader Vinoba Bhave used the term to refer to the struggle of post-independence Gandhians to ensure that self-determination and equality reached the masses and the downtrodden. *Sarvodaya* encourages the celebration of everything and everyone as well as uniqueness and individuality. It is a celebration of the unity / oneness that can be found in diversity.

**Simple Living**- Gandhi teaches the practice of giving up unnecessary expenditure, embracing a simple lifestyle including the washing his own clothes, Gandhi called "reducing himself to zero" Gandhi espoused an economic theory of self-sufficiency and simple living. He envisioned a more agrarian India upon independence that would focus on meeting the material needs of its citizenry prior to generating wealth and industrializing.

## RECOMMENDED READING

*An Agricultural Testament* by Sir Albert Howard

*Violence of the Green Revolution* by Dr. Vandana Shiva

*Earth Democracy* by Dr. Vandana Shiva

*Monocultures of the Mind* by Dr. Vandana Shiva

*Health per Acre* by Dr. Vandana Shiva and Dr. Vaibhan Singh

*Water Wars* by Dr. Vandana Shiva

*Soil Not Oil* by Dr. Vandana Shiva

*The GMO Emperor Has No Clothes* coordinated by Navdanya

*Stolen Harvest* by Dr. Vandana Shiva

*Biopiracy* by Dr. Vandana Shiva

*Making Peace with the Earth* by Dr. Vandana Shiva

*Seed Freedom Report* coordinated by Navdanya

*Staying Alive* by Dr. Vandana Shiva

*Wealth Per Acre* by Dr. Vandana Shiva and Dr. Vaibhan Singh

*Annam Food As Health* by Dr. Vandana Shiva with Maya Goburdhun and Navdanya Team

*Biodiversity Heritage Books - Akshat, Masale, Bhoole Bisre Anaj, Kanak & Thilan.*

*And Many more...*

For information about what we grow here on our Biodiversity Conservation Farm:

*Nature's Harvest: Rejuvenating Biodiversity in Doon Valley* by Dr. Vandana Shiva and Dr. Vinod Kumar Bhatt

For information about the medicinal properties of plants, trees and shrubs from the Doon Valley:

*Nature's Pharmacopeia* by Dr. Raghubir Singh Rawat and Dr. Vinod Kumar Bhatt

All these texts are available for reading at the Bija Vidyapeeth Library and available for Sale.