HOST GUIDELINES

Last updated: April 15, 2019

Welcome to the Coast to Coast WWOOF Canada organization. We are delighted that you would like to be part of the WWOOF Canada host/volunteer network. There are over four thousand volunteers per year who come from within Canada and from 40 other countries who look forward to an experience on a Canadian farm, homestead, or urban property. And there are now over 800 WWOOF Hosts.

We would like to offer some basic guidelines.

Over the course of the next year, the volunteer (WWOOFer) might be attracted by your write-up and send you an email. When this occurs is of course totally unknown. Experience says that March to November is the times most hosts receive inquiries, mostly via email. It may be someone from Japan, England, Germany or a fellow Canadian who will ask you if they may come and help you.

Speak slowly and clearly if you sense a foreign person is on the other end of the telephone. Feel free to ask them questions. Example: Yes, we are open to having help. May I ask why you would like to come here? Tell me, briefly, something about yourself. So, you as a host are free to conduct a mini-interview to get a sense of the volunteer. You are free to decide, and never under any obligation to accept someone, if it is not suitable at that time.

And please check to see if your WWOOFer is properly registered with WWOOF Canada. Ask for their ID number when they contact you, and look them up on the website to ensure they are an active member. (If not please contact us - it has happened in the past.) (Further details in section titled “Initial Contact with WWOOFer.”)

The MAIN requirement of a WWOOF host is that you are involved in organics in some way, growing or producing organic products, and that you will engage your WWOOFers in these activities in order to encourage organic growing and other sustainable living practices.

Being a WWOOF host will mean entering into some very special relationships. You’ll be allowing complete strangers into your home, to share your life and be part of your family. This guide is designed to help you make that relationship work. It has been put together from the feedback, comments and advice of your fellow hosts and WWOOFers. It will prepare you to enter the unique world of WWOOF and get the best out of your hosting. Our thanks to all the hosts and WWOOFers whose input has created this handbook.
Contents

THIS IS THE SERIOUS BIT.......................................................................................................................... 5
REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS.................................................................................................................. 5
  You can expect....................................................................................................................................... 5
  You are expected................................................................................................................................. 5
WHO WWOOFs? ........................................................................................................................................ 6
BEING ON THE WWOOF LIST .............................................................................................................. 6
Free WWOOF lists - Unverified organizations .......................................................................................... 7
Find a host List – and your host Profile ................................................................................................... 8
CURRENT AVAILABILITY POLICY .......................................................................................................... 8
  1) "Need Help Urgently" is primarily used when you have had a cancellation or no-show and need to schedule in a
      WWOOFer ASAP............................................................................................................................... 8
  2) We have advised that if hosts are not hearing from WWOOFers they can also use the "Need Help Urgently" as
      this is also applicable if you need to make reservations with WWOOFers even if in the future.................. 8
  3) In both instances we ask hosts to self-limit their use to a maximum of 2 weeks, and to not use the status again
      until needed........................................................................................................................................ 8
How to edit your Profile.......................................................................................................................... 8
What to include in your host Description ............................................................................................... 9
How your Profile Works ........................................................................................................................ 10
  Tips for Getting Noticed in the Find a host List ................................................................................... 11
How to Renew Your Membership ........................................................................................................ 13
Receiving Contacts from WWOOFers .................................................................................................. 14
Additional Services provided by Distributors ....................................................................................... 14
As a WWOOF host, certain things are expected of you. These are listed in detail on the following pages but we would like to stress:

a) You should provide warm, dry, clean accommodation and adequate food. These two things are the most common cause of complaints.

b) You must provide a safe environment and you must make sure that you and your WWOOFers are adequately insured.

If you do not fulfill the expectations listed below, your status as a WWOOF host is invalidated.

REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

Always remember that WWOOF is an exchange.
These expectations form the basis of that exchange.

You can expect...

- to receive volunteers who are genuinely interested in learning about organic growing, country living or ecologically sound lifestyles.
- to receive the agreed hours' help in return for your hospitality.
- to choose which volunteers you will accept.
- to be treated with respect at all times.
- to be able to complain to WWOOF if you feel these expectations have not been fulfilled.

You are expected...

- to negotiate with your volunteers, before they arrive, concerning the needs and expectations of both parties.
- to provide warm, dry, clean accommodation and adequate food.
- to aim to provide organic food.
- to be growing organically, be in conversion, or use ecologically sound methods on your land.
- to provide hands-on experience of organic growing, farming, country living, or ecologically sound lifestyles, and other learning opportunities where possible.
- to provide a safe environment, where volunteers are not expected to perform dangerous tasks or use dangerous machinery.
- to make sure that you and your WWOOFers are adequately insured.
- to reply to all contacts from WWOOFers, even if just to say ‘no’.
- to keep an open mind when meeting people from other cultures.
- to treat your volunteers with respect at all times.
- to inform volunteers promptly if you have to change or cancel arrangements.
- to tell WWOOF if your experiences of hosting fall short of what should be expected.

Note: Please do not post anywhere on-line - on blogs, Facebook, Twitter, or other Social Media sites - anything regarding your WWOOFer(s) - including names, addresses, contact information, pictures, stories or comments about their stay with you, etc. without their explicit permission. Doing so without permission is an invasion of privacy and a courtesy you should also expect in return.
WHO WWOOFs?

“What sort of people will be contacting me?”

WWOOFers are many and varied, from all walks of life.

- Many are young travelers, exploring the alternatives the world has to offer. However, WWOOFers can be of all ages, up to active retired people.
- Most are unskilled in farm tasks and know nothing about life in the country. WWOOF exists to help give them a first experience of life on the land. However, some are very experienced.
- WWOOFers are not there to take the place of paid labour. They are there to learn, which can demand a lot of time and effort on your part. Don’t expect too much from these ‘helping hands’.

"There have never been serious problems with the WWOOFers – it’s more a question of expectations. One tends to think that a volunteer will only add to the project and what really happens is that they also give us an amount of extra work." - Jo, (WWOOF host)

“Some WWOOFers work harder than our paid workers. Others should be at home hugging their Mummy. It is this rich variety of experiences that makes WWOOF and this world so interesting.” - Sue, (WWOOF host)

“WWOOF is a good way for recruiting people into the organic world – entice these would-be farmers to try it and go for it. Some of them have taken this very first experience in an organic farm as a turning point in their lives.” - Gill, (WWOOF host)

“WWOOFers expect to contribute to your project, giving a helping hand in exchange for friendly hospitality, information on the farming techniques, healthy food, mostly self produced, and some spare time to discover local surroundings and culture. If you have little time for new relationships, if you live in an isolated place, if you have no vegetables available, if you need hard workers from dawn to dusk, mention this explicitly. There will be WWOOFers who are not interested in chatting, who are happy left on their own, who want to work a lot, who are happy with the same pasta every day. Don’t be afraid to declare your diversity. It is very likely that somebody will choose you because of it.” - Claudio, President of WWOOF Italia

BEING ON THE WWOOF LIST

WWOOFers, when they join are given access to the list of hosts. They then look for hosts that interest them and make direct contact. Here are some initial pointers about hosting and your description:

Where there are two or more of you, all should be in agreement to take WWOOFers. It will be hard for WWOOFers coming into your home if not everyone is happy about it.

- Make sure everyone is involved in the decision to host WWOOFers.

Be honest in your description. It’s easy to find yourself describing what you want your place to become, rather than what it is right now.

- WWOOFers having an unrealistic picture of what your place will be like is the most common cause of things not working out.

Be very clear about how many hours you need your WWOOFers to give. We suggest a fair exchange is 4 to 6 hours per day, 5 to 5 ½ days per week.

- It can be hard to let your WWOOFers stop when you yourself will need to plod away for a few more hours.
- If you demand longer hours, you’ll attract harder-toiling WWOOFers but you may get fewer of them.
Make it clear whether farming is your profession or your hobby.

- WWOOFers will have different expectations of what they might learn, depending on whether your farm is commercial or not.

With a very few exceptions WWOOFers initial contact with hosts is by e-mail.

Put together an information sheet(s) as described on the next pages, which you could send to all enquirers. Instruct WWOOFers to phone you if, after reading it, they're interested in coming.

You can update your description anytime in any of these three ways.

Do it yourself online at: www.wwoof.ca (see further instructions in this guide)

E-mail the WWOOF Coordinator: admin@wwoof.ca

Or by post:

WWOOF Canada  
c/o Pamela Boyko  
47 - 30 Lusk Lake Road  
Enderby, BC  
V0E 1V5

Free WWOOF lists - Unverified organizations

All legitimate WWOOF organizations* are listed on this WWOOF website: www.wwoof.net

Beware if you find other websites and organizations that use the name "WWOOF". They often use unverified sources in creating their host lists, their information is often out of date, and participants are not screened or monitored to the same extent.

- You could be at risk. It has been noted that hosts and WWOOFers who have been removed from the valid WWOOF sites often join these other lists.
- An out-of-date list is a waste of your time. It also wastes the time of hosts who no longer take volunteers and WWOOFers who are no longer WWOOFing.
- Hosts on these lists may not be organic or offer the agreed 'WWOOF exchange'. They may not offer agricultural learning opportunities and many of the hosts may charge a fee.

* Legitimate WWOOF organizations adhere to the original ideals of WWOOF (as set out by WWOOF's founder, Sue Coppard in 1971). We are an international network of country-based organizations. Our network aims to maintain agreed levels of operational standards to both hosts and volunteers. We also strive to provide a clear structure to help people take part in the WWOOF exchange anywhere in the world. Please support us by only joining legitimate WWOOF organizations and verifying your WWOOFers are active members.
The write-up that you enter on your on-line profile will be part of the WWOOF Find a host List as it is commonly referred to and found at https://wwwoof.ca/hosts/search where the full host Profile can be viewed by members, including pictures and map location. But do note that only the first 35 words are what the WWOOFers first see in the previews of Find a host List and are what will, or will not attract their interest and their inclination to view your full profile.

Please do not put any personal information in your host Description as it is visible to non-members. All contact information in your profile: names, physical address, email address, and phone numbers are kept private and confidential and only members can contact you via a contact form that you receive directly in your Email Inbox.

Once you have created your profile, we recommend you view the Find a host List and verify your Profile is visible in the Region you have specified.

To update your Profile: Go to Update My Profile from your User Menu, makes changes as needed, and click the SAVE button.

All Find a host search results are sorted first with “Need Help Urgently” at the top, then with most recently updated profiles following. So as before, you can bump yourself to the top of the list by saving your profile.

Change your Current Availability status to “Need Help Urgently”

Consider that WWOOFers are filtering the list and not looking at all hosts at once, so your opportunities for getting nearer the top of the list are greater if keeping your profile updated periodically, and when in need of WWOOFers.

CURRENT AVAILABILITY POLICY

1) "Need Help Urgently" is primarily used when you have had a cancellation or no-show and need to schedule in a WWOOFer ASAP.

2) We have advised that if hosts are not hearing from WWOOFers they can also use the “Need Help Urgently” as this is also applicable if you need to make reservations with WWOOFers even if in the future.

3) In both instances we ask hosts to self-limit their use to a maximum of 2 weeks, and to not use the status again until needed.

How to edit your Profile

You can make all the edits you want to your Profile, and WWOOFers will always have access to your most recent updates. To edit your Profile:

a) After logging in to your host Account, in the upper right hand corner click on your Name, picture or “person icon” to bring up the dropdown list. Choose Update My Profile

WWOOFers have the ability to search the Find a host List in many ways - by region, by specific word or phrase, or by assorted other search terms. When searching by specific word or phrase, the search focuses only on the host’s profile “Description”. Be sure and include any key words in your description that you think WWOOFers might be looking for in a host, which are applicable and describe you. Some sample key words: “horses”, “market garden”, “internship”, “speak French”, etc. We think the search feature will help to make suitable matches between hosts and WWOOFers.

c) NOTE: When your updates are complete be sure to scroll near the bottom of the page and choose "SAVE ". A green message at the top of the page will inform you “Your Profile has been updated", or a message in red will advise of corrections that need to be made. The fields with errors are outlined in red. After making your corrections scroll to the bottom of the page and again choose SAVE.

b) You now have the option of using the “Availability Calendar” found in your dropdown list in the User menu. Instructions on how to use the calendar are found on the Availability page.
What to include in your host Description

Give as much information in your profile "Description" as possible. Read other listings for ideas. Include in your description:

i. **A description of your property** with details of what you are producing, how, and why; it’s main features, whether or not you have animals, what growing methods you use (e.g. permaculture) and an outline of the kind of tasks you do.

ii. **Describe yourself / selves** – whether you’re a single person, a couple or a community, for example. If there are children, give their ages. (Keep this up to date.) Say how many of you there are. Say whether the farm is your sole occupation or not. Point out any particular guiding philosophy, ideology or focus that you have – Christian, Pagan, Marxist or whatever! (Some WWOOFers look for hosts with particular spiritual or political leanings – others want to avoid them.)

iii. **What learning opportunities are there?**

iv. **The type of accommodation provided and food and diet arrangements**: These generate the most complaints from WWOOFers! Tell them in advance what accommodation they can expect – single room, shared room, caravan, tent? If they’ll be sleeping in a shared room, how many people does it sleep? Is it single-sex or mixed? Spell out the arrangements for meals. Say whether meals include meat or you only eat vegetarian or vegan. Say whether or not you can cater for different diets. Tell them whether meals are eaten together or not. Let them know whether or not you expect help with preparation and washing up. If finances are tight, let WWOOFers know they won’t be able to help themselves to snacks but that meals will be wholesome, if basic.

v. **An outline of the tasks to be done and the expected hours of labour**: Keep this part of your information file regularly updated with a list of jobs you need help with at any given time (subject to the season/weather). Indicate what these jobs involve. Ask WWOOFers to spell out their experience or lack of it!

vi. **What to bring and what’s provided**: This may include waterproof clothing and boots; clothes to get dirty in; gloves; a torch; a towel. If the WWOOFer is only coming for a short stay (e.g. a week), you could ask them to bring a sleeping bag. If they’re coming for longer, it is usual for the host to provide bedding.

vii. **Other house rules**: Let WWOOFers know if there are parts of the house (or particular items) that are "off limits". (Do not assume that WWOOFers will know or respect this instinctively.) Tell them whether or not they can use the phone or Internet and, if so, whether or not they are expected to pay for it. Spell out in detail any specifics about your house or your circumstances that WWOOFers may not have experienced before – such as how to deal with limited water supplies or solar electricity. Identify any restrictions, alcohol/smoking exclusions, etc.

viii. **An outline of your specific needs, particularly with regard to attitude and behaviour.**

ix. **Minimum required stay** and/or preferred time of stay – if you have one.

x. **What activities are there in your area for spending leisure time?**

xi. **Identify languages spoken.**

xii. **Provide details on how to get there.**

xiii. **Attach pictures to your profile** – unlimited, post as many as you can. Worth a thousand words :) WWOOFers are more likely to choose a host when they can see where they are going.

xiv. **Encourage your WWOOFers to leave comments on your Profile.** Other WWOOFers may pick hosts who have comments on their profile, over those that don’t – as comments provide additional information about a host, and provide opinions from fellow WWOOFers.

This may seem too formal or bureaucratic but "bad" experiences are usually the result of people's expectations not matching reality. Clarity in communication before a visit can make those expectations more realistic!
How your Profile Works

1. **Search options for Find a host List** allow WWOOFers to more easily find hosts that better match their needs and desires using the power of on-line search engine. They can search by region, by key words or phrases (like: “CSA”, “permaculture”, “cheese making”, “draft horses”, etc.), and other pertinent search criteria.

2. **Enhanced security and protection from Identity Theft**: WWOOFers must contact you using either the SEND MESSAGE form or REQUEST VISIT form on your profile page. Your email address, phone numbers, and physical address are hidden from WWOOFers. You would provide this information directly yourself, once you have successfully negotiated a WWOOF-stay. This provides security for you and your family ensuring your information is not given to anyone, other than as given by you.

3. **WWOOFers have profiles too that are shared with you** – and new pieces of information have just been recently added to the profile to provide enhanced information helping everyone sort out a best match. And if you prefer, you can now browse the WWOOFer Listings if you like and contact WWOOFers directly rather than wait for them to contact you.

4. **Automatic copy of WWOOFer profile provided with email message to you**: When a WWOOFer contacts you using the SEND MESSAGE form or the REQUEST VISIT form – automatically a copy of their profile is included as a link. This tells you that the WWOOFer is a legitimate subscribed member and allows you easy access to read their profile.

5. Other new features:
   - **Availability Calendar** – allows hosts to indicate their availability status on a calendar. Status include: Need help Urgently, Open Now, Open Next Season, and Closed. Your current status will show on the Find a host List preview meaning you won’t receive unnecessary inquiries that need to be addressed.
   - **Improve communications via CONTACT form**: The new REQUEST VISIT form has been added to the email inquiry sent to you from a WWOOFer – it includes: arrival date and departure date. You have the option of changing the dates as you negotiate a stay. Messages sent and received to be tracked on member profiles for easy management. Note: you will still manage your email messages and respond to WWOOFer inquiries as you always have.
   - **WWOOFer Profile mandatory** – A WWOOFer must create their profile before they will have full access to host Profiles and the ability to contact hosts.
   - **Find WWOOFers** – a feature similar to the Find a host List, but allowing hosts to look for WWOOFers.
   - **Switch to “Exclude me from the host Listings”** - This will allow hosts, at random, to take their profile off the list temporarily – if they are away on holiday, or just not wanting to receive inquiries at this time.
   - And numerous other changes coming for increasing the user friendliness of the site.

* New features partially implemented, currently in development, soon to be released.
Tips for Getting Noticed in the Find a host List

Please see below for some things to check regarding your host profile and which should be corrected if applicable, thereby increasing your visibility and suitability (in the eyes of WWOOFers perhaps as the lack of some of these suggestions could make a difference when a WWOOFer is deciding to choose 1 host over another.)

If you are having difficulty with any of these suggestions, or have any questions please contact us. We can review your profile, and discuss any issues you may be experiencing, and together we can try to find a resolution if you are not receiving WWOOFer inquiries.

Once you have all the elements in place there is little other that needs to be done, other than updating your Profile information and description as needed or wanted – which could be once a year, or more often as you like.

1. Do you have "ID Verified" on your profile card on the host Listing page? If not, then please contact us.

2. Is your Google Map marker correct on your profile? Fixing it might provide some improvement for those WWOOFers who are using the Google Map to find hosts.

3. Is your email address correct on your account. If WWOOFers use the SEND MESSAGE form or REQUEST VISIT form on your profile, it is the email address indicated on your account page that receives the message.

4. Check your JUNK/SPAM folder for email messages that may have been marked as SPAM. To help stop this please add "WWOOF Canada (admin@wwoof.ca)" to your CONTACTS folder, and/or whitelist, and/or Safe Senders List in your email program. That will help for those WWOOFers who use the SEND MESSAGE form or REQUEST VISIT form on your profile.

5. When members use the "REQUEST VISIT" (host request) feature/form, a message is automatically sent to both the host and WWOOFer 7 days after the departure date, asking them to submit a review. Having reviews/references increases a member’s chance of arranging a WWOOF-stay, as members may select those with reviews over those that don’t. Reviews are accumulated on the Reviews tab of the member’s profile as seen in the attachment. This provides an encouragement to hosts to ask their WWOOF inquiries to use the "REQUEST VISIT" (host Request) option to finalize arrangements, rather than a "Send Message" (Private Message).

6. Include as many photos on your profile as you would like - pictures of your property, of you and your family, your animals, your garden, previous WWOOFers, etc. “Pictures are worth a thousand words.”

7. You might like to compare your host Profile to other WWOOF hosts near you. Is there something you can do to improve your listing in comparison?

8. You may like to check out host Resources available on the website ->https://wwoof.ca/important-info/resources-wwoof-hosts including Sample WWOOFer FAQ’s, Sample House Customs, Sample WWOOFer Application - tools that may help you when interviewing WWOOFers.

9. Only the 1st 35 words are seen in the preview and this is what entices a WWOOFer to read your full profile. In those 1st 35 words try to include where you are, highlights of location, property, and learning & recreational opportunities. Please do not include any contact information – names, addresses, website, email, phone #’s, etc. – as the preview is provided for free to non-members.

10. Check # of Profile Reads. On your View My Profile page, at the bottom left side you will see “Profile Views ##” where ## is a number representing how many times your profile has been read. Monitor this number regularly to identify how many times your profile is being read. If no-one is reading your profile, or not enough, you need to try some of these others tips to get you noticed. If you are getting lots of reads on your profile then you need to question the content.
11. **Completing your host Profile:** What is most important, and what will attract WWOOFers most, is the content of your profile. Give as much information in your profile “Description” as possible. Read other listings for ideas. See “What to include in your host Description” above for ideas.

12. **Keep your Profile updated and ensure all information is completed:**

The “Find a host” list results are based on the following:

1) filtered by any search criteria selected – terms entered, or More Filters
2) “Need Help Urgently” status is at the top
3) by the date profiles were last updated - most recent first

If no Search Criteria is selected, then the sort is based strictly on the last two items above.

The “Find a host” search criteria and Filter options allows a WWOOFer to filter the list based on where they want to visit, and based on their interests.

For example, if a WWOOFer chose the Location = “British Columbia” to begin their search, and added Animals = “Bee-keeping” plus Types of Help = “Animal Care” and you matched this criteria then your profile would be in the list results.

**If your profile was updated more recently than others, your host Profile would be at the top of the list.**

Ensuring your profile information is complete helps ensure you are found when WWOOFers are filtering the list by their interests.

**This gives every host the opportunity to be occasionally at the top of the list.**

It is perfectly OK to set your profile status to “Need Help Urgently” if you are not hearing from WWOOFers. Do this only temporarily, and once you have all the WWOOF-stays arranged that you need right now, then please set your status back to “Open Now” giving other hosts equal opportunity.
13. **Using Key words and phrases in your Description:** WWOOFers typically filter the Find a host List by using the SEARCH functions including choosing a particular Region and/or by searching for key words or phrases (e.g. "horses", "cheese making", "bee keeping", etc.) Be sure your profile is in the correct region, and that you have included key words in your profile Description that are applicable and that you think WWOOFers might be interested in, and search for. The Search Results may show only a few pages increasing your chances of being noticed.

### How to Renew Your Membership

a) Go to the WWOOF website -> [www.wwoof.ca](http://www.wwoof.ca) and click on the Name, Picture or icon found in the upper right side of the web page. Log in with your **Email Address** and **Password**. If you have forgotten your Password choose "Request new password" below the Login information. Then enter your e-mail address that you registered with WWOOF Canada. A one-time login link and further instructions will be sent to your e-mail address.

b) Once successfully logged in, from the **User Menu** (dropdown list) select “Membership and Renewal”

c) Click on the green “Renew/Subscribe” tab located in the middle of the page. Next click on the “Continue” tab. Follow the prompts for payment.
Receiving Contacts from WWOOFers

"What should I ask them and what should I tell them?"

Since we introduced our web-based messaging system, volunteers must use email as the initial form of contact. For more information on the messaging system please refer to the following FAQ's, How Does the "Visit Request" Feature Work, How do I Accept or Decline a Visit Request from a WWOOFer, How do Reviews Work? A few hosts prefer not to use email. We suggest that you share your phone number or alternate form of contact (Skype, What’sApp, etc.) with the WWOOFer once you have established communications. There is no longer a printed list of hosts. We ask WWOOFers to be selective in whom they contact, to study the descriptions, and consider how they might contribute to life on your farm. We also tell WWOOFers that they should contact hosts well in advance but some will be seeking to contact hosts at short notice. Inevitably, despite our best efforts some of the emails you receive will not be as thoughtful or informative as you would wish or may suggest that your description has not been studied! Sometimes this will be because of language limitations.

Remember that you have made a commitment to write back to all enquiries, even if it’s just to say ‘no’.

The first contact is just an initial enquiry. At this stage, the WWOOFer is just asking if you have space at the time they want to visit.

• Don’t take this first contact as a firm commitment to come.

To help be clear for both hosts and WWOOFers, we recommend to hosts that when replying to an inquiry that you state specific dates of arrival, departure, pick-up location and times, and request a confirmation by a certain date, advising that you will NOT reserve the space for them until you have had confirmation. Then don’t assume anything until you have had a direct reply and confirmation of dates and times. Then if you do not receive a confirmation then you can assume they are not coming. That way there is less likely to be confusion.

People who are writing in a foreign language can seem demanding.

• Make allowances for people who may be struggling to communicate in your language.

Not everyone who contacts you will be right for you.

• You are not obliged to say ‘yes’ to everyone!

The key to making sure things go well is having clear communication before the WWOOFer arrives!

Additional Services provided by Distributors

WWOOF Canada collaborates with a few distributors who provide additional services which may also include arranging farm-stays (or WWOOF-stays) directly for their clients. Each Distributor provides a package of services which includes a WWOOF Canada membership for each of their clients. Some WWOOFers, including their parents, are grateful to have these extra services available, especially for young and inexperienced travelers.

The types of services these companies provide may include, and are not limited to:

- Assistance with visa application
- Arrange placement with WWOOF host
- Pick up at the airport
- Pre-arranged accommodations at local hotel
- Orientation upon arrival in Canada
- Courses in Basic English
- Provide travelling to the host placement and introductions
- Available help by phone or email in their own language to deal with any problems or questions that arise during their stay in Canada.

You may receive contact from a Distributor agent looking to arrange a placement for a WWOOFer. It is completely your choice if you wish to make arrangements with these agents, or if instead you prefer the more traditional way of waiting for a WWOOFer to contact you directly.
Lookup WWOOFer Profile to verify Membership

Hosts can rely on the website message system to automatically provide a link to the WWOOFer Profile and current membership information with the initial contact from the WWOOFer sent by email from your host Profile.

In addition to following the link from the initial message received from a WWOOFer inquiry you can also lookup a WWOOFer anytime as follows:

Look-up a WWOOFer ID# on the website using the following steps:

You should verify the WWOOFers legitimacy plus take the opportunity to read the WWOOFer’s profile. Instructions for doing so are as follows:

Log-in to your host account at www.wwoof.ca. Find your Name, Picture or icon found in the upper right section of the webpage. Enter your Email Address and Password and click the Log in button. If you have forgotten your Password choose “Forgot your Password?” found below the information on the login page. Then enter your e-mail address you registered with WWOOF Canada. A one-time login link and further instructions will be sent to your e-mail address.

1) Ask your WWOOFer for their membership number (5-6 digit number with no spaces or special characters – e.g. 29457). If they don’t have it you can also search for their name or portion of their name, or email address. Go to the “Find a WWOOFer” page. Enter in the criteria in the search window and click on Enter. If using more then one word please put quotation marks (“”) around the words as seen in the example in the search bar.

If you have the number, and it is legitimate, the search will be successful. Searching by name, or other text, may not be as successful due to misspellings, or perhaps the WWOOFer did not register their account in that name or email, but a nickname instead.

   a) Assuming you have located the correct WWOOFer, click on the “view” tab located in the bottom right corner of the WWOOFers “card” to view the complete profile.

      i) On the profile page you can see their WWOOFing duration located to the left of their profile.

2) Also, check the reviews made on the WWOOFer profile. Hosts can only leave a review if they have “Accepted” the Requested Visit.
Now that you have read a little about the WWOOFer from their profile you should conduct a thorough interview with the WWOOFer to ensure a clear understanding of expectations for both host and WWOOFer. Reports of problems or concerns are mostly a result of unknown expectations and resulting disappointment or disagreement. It is a good idea to discuss the types of labour conditions, accommodation & food, days off, etc. upon initial inquiry, so there is no misunderstanding after the WWOOFer arrives.

Follow up the first contact by sending them your information sheet(s) [see discussion below] and asking the WWOOFer some more about themselves. Try to build up an idea of what the WWOOFer is able to do, what they're interested in, and what they expect from you.

A number of resources are available for you to help in the interview process. These resources can be found on the website by clicking on your Dashboard from the drop down list and under “Important Info” seen in the middle of the web page. Choose “Resources for WWOOF Hosts” seen in the list of options. You can also visit this page by clicking this shortcut — www.wwoof.ca/host/resources. This shortcut is referred to several times in the following discussion.

a. Health & Travel insurance is the responsibility of the volunteer. Discuss this with them and ensure they intend to purchase insurance to cover them while travelling and WWOOFing.

b. Consider developing a list of WWOOFer FAQ (frequently asked questions) regarding your home and property and your family’s approach to WWOOF. A sample is available on the website at www.wwoof.ca/host/resources — “Sample WWOOF FAQ.doc”.

c. Consider developing a list of House Customs. A sample is available on the website at www.wwoof.ca/host/resources — “Sample House Customs.doc”

d. Consider having your WWOOFers complete an application form so you have a record of your WWOOFer in case of emergency as well as for proof of expenses for bookkeeping purposes. A sample is available on the website at www.wwoof.ca/host/resources — “Sample WWOOFer Application.doc”

e. Keep in regular contact with WWOOFers leading up to their expected arrival to ensure their plans haven’t changed and leaving you enough time to make alternate plans if necessary.

(Thanks to EcoReality, a WWOOF host who has graciously authorized use of their documents as samples.)

What to ask:

- Why has the WWOOFer chosen your place? Exactly what interests them about you in particular? Are they interested in learning about something you’re doing? Or have they chosen you because of where you live?!
- What are the WWOOFer’s general interests?
- What skills and qualities does the WWOOFer have?
- Ask if they have insurance if this is a concern for you. WWOOFers sign a commitment to make sure they’re properly insured. If you don’t have an insurance that covers volunteers, check that the WWOOFer is covered.
- Why exactly have you chosen to go WWOOFing? Why not just backpacking, or couchsurfing?
- What did you enjoy most on previous farms? What did you dislike the most?
- What farming/homesteading practices are you most enthusiastic about, and why?
- WWOOFing reference (where you WWOOFed before, if applicable).
- Please describe your farming/gardening experience.
- Any other applicable skills?
- Tasks you cannot or will not perform for whatever reason. Please list and explain.
- Any special things you want to learn or do?
- Anything else you would like us to know about you?
**Trial period:**

Some hosts and WWOOFers agree on a trial period – usually a week or two – with an option to extend the stay if things are going well.

**Length of stay:**

**Short stays** of just a week are sometimes unsatisfactory for the host – you may spend a lot of time ‘training’ the WWOOFer and then, just when they’ve got the hang of it, they leave!

**Medium stays** of a few weeks are often the most satisfying – the WWOOFer gets to learn in more depth and the host gains a useful pair of hands.

**Long stays** of several months need to be carefully negotiated.

If your WWOOFer is a foreigner without a Work visa/Permit then they can volunteer a maximum of 4 weeks with each host.

**Resource Guides for WWOOF hosts**

WWOOF Canada is a free-flowing and dynamic community of like-minded individuals finding one another. It is our foremost objective to retain the integrity and spirit of the WWOOF program, free of regulation. We are also listening to the members in our community, and with their help are striving to find ways to assist members to get the most out of their WWOOFing experiences. The host and WWOOFer Guidelines provided below provide information, and tips to help guide members in their WWOOF adventures.

Each WWOOF experience has a different texture and flavour, and it’s up to the individuals involved to create it together. Sometimes, even with the best intentions on both sides, things just don’t work out. If it’s not working out, neither you nor the WWOOFer are expected to continue with it. Most disappointments or disagreements develop due to unknown expectations.

The sample “WWOOF FAQ” and “House Customs” documents are provided as examples to assist you if you wish to develop your own guides to share with prospective WWOOFers. You may find it a time-saver in arranging WWOOF-stays and for identifying expectations.

As discussed previously, a number of resources are available for you to help in the interview process. These resources can be found on the website by clicking on your Dashboard from the drop down list and under “Important Info” seen in the middle of the web page. Choose “Resources for WWOOF Hosts” seen in the list of options. You can also visit this page by clicking this shortcut – [www.wwoof.ca/host/resources](http://www.wwoof.ca/host/resources).

Please feel free to contact us at any time and we would be pleased to assist you – [Contact Information](mailto:contact@wwoof.ca)

We wish you many great adventures with your WWOOFers and sincerely thank you for your support of living, learning, and sharing organic lifestyles!

The sample documents found on the website are provided in both PDF (read only), and document format – which can be edited by you.

- host Guidelines
- Sample WWOOF FAQ
- Sample House Customs
- Sample WWOOFer Application
- WWOOFer Guidelines for your perusal
- 2010 Fall Newsletter
- Letter to Canada Border Services Agency or Canadian Embassy for WWOOFer

Sample Letter of Invitation from host for WWOOFer
**INSURANCE**

**Hosts:** Depending on the type of operation you run on your property, some hosts may wish to consider Liability Insurance. Also keep in mind that WWOOF Canada allows WWOOFers aged 19 and up. The age of majority, or recognized adult, in Canada varies across the country from 18 to 19. WWOOFers under this age are minors and therefore hosts may be legally responsible for the underage WWOOFer. As a host you should research your requirements & responsibilities. Consider that farm/property liability insurance would likely require written parental consent for minors to perform labour tasks on the farm/property. WWOOF Canada cannot be held responsible and each host accepts a Waiver of Liability for WWOOF Canada when signing up as a host.

**WWOOFers:** WWOOFers are advised to obtain their own travel/medical/accident insurance. It is recommended that hosts verify that WWOOFers have this coverage before accepting them for a wwoof-stay. WWOOF Canada cannot be held responsible and each WWOOFer accepts a Waiver of Liability for WWOOF Canada when signing up as a WWOOFer.

**What Insurance coverage is recommended?**

WWOOFers sign an agreement to say that they will take out adequate insurance cover for health, accident, travel and liability. WWOOF has no way of ensuring that this commitment is fulfilled.

-- If you have concerns about insurance, make it clear to WWOOFers that you will only accept them if they have adequate insurance. Ask to see proof of this insurance when they arrive. If they have no insurance, they can get proper cover in less than 24 hours. Refer them to this page on the WWOOF website for full details on Travel Insurance

-- Alternatively, take out an insurance policy yourself that covers volunteers helping on your property. You may find that your existing insurance is already enough. Talk to your insurer. If you are a commercial operation talk to your local branch of the Workman’s Compensation Board (or WorkSafe). Find further discussion regarding Workers Compensation under host Resources -> www.wwoof.ca/host/resources.

Even if you or the WWOOFer has adequate insurance, use common sense in what you ask a WWOOFer to do:

- Never ask a WWOOFer to perform dangerous tasks, such as operating certain types of machinery.
- Make sure tools are in good functioning order.
- Always spend time ‘training’ the WWOOFer in the task.
- Always make sure the WWOOFer is competent to do the task you have set them.
- Always give the WWOOFer the freedom to say 'no' if they don't feel comfortable with a particular task.
- Always operate alongside the WWOOFer, at least to begin with, so that you can be sure they are preforming the tasks safely.

**Volunteer VISA REQUIREMENTS**

Volunteers do **not** need a Work visa/Permit to WWOOF/volunteer. Many WWOOFers do come to Canada with a Work Permit as they plan to also work during their visit here. But many others come with only a Visitor’s visa, or Passport if a visa is not required.

When WWOOFing without a Work visa it is a must that the main reason for entering Canada is as a “**tourist**”. Therefore I would caution WWOOFers not to even mention WWOOF unless asked directly. They would not be withholding information. It is just not relevant. **If your WWOOFer is a foreigner without a Work visa/Permit then they can volunteer a maximum of 4 weeks with each host.**

The better prepared they are, and be very polite, the less time they take up of the Border Agents – who are typically very busy and have a high-stress job. The agents are only trying to do their job and protect Canadians.

They needn’t provide any more information than exactly what the Border Agent asks for. If they don’t need to talk about WWOOFing, then don’t. But have the paperwork mentioned on this page on the WWOOF website (www.wwoof.ca/visa/Requirements) available if the subject is discussed.

The criteria to be aware of then, is the need to have enough funds available to sustain themselves while in Canada. And to be very polite and honestly answer all questions.
Average cost in Canada: Staying at a campsite, cooking your own food and getting around on foot/hitchhiking will run you less than $25/day. Stay at a hostel, cook in the kitchen and get around on a bus for US$40-60/day.

WWOOFing without a Working visa is not illegal, it's just that some border agents are not aware of the legislation regarding volunteering on farms. Hence the need for WWOOFers to print the legislation and bring it with them to the border.

WWOOF Canada has been in communication with the government Minister responsible for Border Customs, trying to resolve this issue – as difficulties do arise occasionally when WWOOFers are trying to enter Canada. This has been an issue that has been discussed with our Government numerous times over the 26 year history of WWOOF in Canada. And we have received confirmation of the legal issue and they have sent memorandums to Border Agents to advise them. But we must revisit the issue every few years and ask them once again to remind their agents.

And we do try to prepare our WWOOFers as best we can with missives regarding how to be best prepared when entering Canada. This message is included on a page on our website (www.wwoof.cavisa/Requirements), repeated in the Welcome email they first received after subscribing a membership, and in the WWOOFer Guidelines also given in the Welcome email. Unfortunately, this documentation is either not read (especially if English is not well understood), or forgotten, or it's just young folks out in the world for the first time and therefore inexperienced and not always fully prepared.

You can click on the link in the next paragraph to read the legislation directly from the CIC website, or read it below.

The Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) "Foreign Worker Manual FW 1, Item 5.1..." states:

"There may be other types of unpaid short-term work where the work is really INCIDENTAL to the main reason that a person is visiting Canada and is not a competitive activity, even though nonmonetary valuable consideration is received. For instance, if a tourist wishes to stay on a family farm and work part time just for room and board for a SHORT PERIOD (i.e., 1-4 weeks), this person would NOT BE CONSIDERED A WORKER."

It is very unfortunate that some WWOOFers have been turned away at our borders. We ask you, as hosts, to talk to your WWOOFers about this subject when negotiating a WWOOF-stay with foreigners. And please refer them to the page on the WWOOF website (www.wwoof.ca/visa/Requirements) in order to help WWOOFers be prepared for the border crossing with the best hope of success and the least amount of stress or worry.

Considering WWOOF Canada has roughly 4000 WWOOFers visiting from foreign countries each year, there are very, very few who are turned away at our border. We hear of less than a handful each year.

From The Government of Canada: Minister P. Van Loan " a memorandum was sent by Operations Branch of the CBSA (Canada Border Services Agency) to all its officers on May 5, 2009, reminding them that foreign nationals volunteering on farms in exchange for room and board for up to 4 weeks per farm, do NOT require work permits"

A work permit is not required if the WWOOFer is volunteering for a maximum of 4 weeks with any 1 host. Unfortunately, some border agents are NOT aware that VOLUNTEERING for foreigners is legal. WWOOF Canada recommends that WWOOFers print out the above quotes and show them at Customs, in case they make it difficult for WWOOFers (It has happened to others.)

If your WWOOFer is from another country and will be staying with you over the volunteer limit of 4 weeks then the WWOOFer would need a Work visa/permit.

Requirements for WWOOFers to Enter Canada

The following information was extracted from Going to Canada website. WWOOFers can visit this website to check requirements for their own unique situation.

Requirements vary based on which country they are from. This example assumes they are from a country that does not require a visa to visit Canada, and that you are visiting for less than six months.

Step 1. Gather the necessary documents—a valid passport or travel document that guarantees re-entry to the country that issued it.

Note: Other documents may be required. Contact a Canadian embassy, high commission or consulate for information on what you will need before coming to Canada.

Step 2. Make sure that you have proof of funds available to support yourself and your family members during your stay and to enable you to leave Canada, such as a bank statement, pay stubs, proof of employment or proof of travellers' cheques. When entering Canada, you will also need to convince an immigration officer that you will leave Canada at the end of your visit.
Step 3 In addition to the above documents WWOOF Canada recommends you print and present a copy of your WWOOF Profile as proof of membership. Go to your profile page and choose "Printer-friendly version" to print your profile.

Legal Disclaimer : This information is intended for general guidance and reference only.

It is the WWOOFer’s responsibility to determine their VISA requirements. The above information is available on the via this link -> www.wwoof.ca/visa/Requirements . WWOOFer’s may ask you for confirmation of their planned stay with you. Find sample letters that you can edit for this use: “Letter to Canada Border Service Agency or Canadian Embassy for WWOOFer.doc” and “Sample Letter of Invitation from host for WWOOFer” at www.wwoof.ca/host/resources

Am I obligated to provide a “Letter of Invitation” for foreign visitors?

Some visitors to Canada may require a “Letter of Invitation”. WARNING: This letter requires sharing of personal information. We highly caution you in providing this information. WWOOFers (volunteers) with this requirement would have to ask a prospective WWOOF host(s) if they are willing to provide this letter on their behalf. WWOOF hosts are not obligated to do so, and must make their decision based on the interview they conduct with the inquiring volunteer. The "Letter of Invitation" requirements can be found via this link on the Citizenship & Immigration website "Letter of Invitation for countries whose citizens require a temporary resident visa to enter Canada”

You will soon meet a broad spectrum of people. They, just as you and I, carry a broad spectrum of qualities. Find out their attributes, become a good host. Being a good host - is communicated magically throughout the whole WWOOFing scene. Acknowledge that it is a huge step for them to enter your home. (As it is for you to share your home) WWOOFing has become a cultural exchange, not just a straight helping exchange. Enjoy your experience as a WWOOF host.
**WWOOFers Who Don’t Arrive**

Sadly, some WWOOFers make arrangements and then just don’t turn up. This is unacceptable but can happen where hosts believe they have a committed WWOOFer scheduled for a particular date and have made arrangements accordingly. Then, the WWOOFer does not show and does not advise the host and is unresponsive to emails sent.

Some WWOOFers contact a lot of hosts: that’s why it’s important to check that they have particularly chosen you. Devise questions that check commitment of the WWOOFer to visiting your farm. Talk with them on the phone. Fix a time for them to phone you if you doubt them.

- Bear in mind that lots of WWOOFers are young and like to travel with no agenda. Their plans change quickly. It’s important not to leave yourself dependent on WWOOFers.
- Get the WWOOFer to call you the morning of arrival, or perhaps from the nearest town, to avoid wasting your time meeting them from the bus only to find they aren’t there.
- Only shop for them and make their bed when they arrive!
- Get WWOOFers’ membership numbers early on in your contacts. If they leave you in the lurch, you can report them to our office. Continual offenders will have their membership removed.

WWOOF Canada recommends that hosts put up a review on the WWOOFer’s profile on the website. This can only be done if you, the host has “Accepted” the requested visit via the online messaging system. This will trigger an automatic email that is sent to the host as well as the WWOOFer asking you to leave a review. There will be an option that you can choose indicating if the WWOOFer was a “No Show” or “Did this member cancel without adequate notice?” Then other hosts will see the reviews when verifying the WWOOFer on-line. Perhaps these reviews will make the WWOOFers think more about courtesy.

If you ever have a serious concern over a no-show WWOOFer please contact WWOOF Canada. We can take advantage of our technology to quickly contact every WWOOF member, both host and WWOOFer, which has proven to have great effect. One example includes an occurrence where a missing WWOOFer was prompted to report in after receiving numerous messages from the WWOOF community. Another example was when a rogue website started up with stolen host information. The worldwide WWOOF community managed to shut them down within 3 days. Impressive!

*Please remember that you are also making a commitment to them. Make sure you know how to contact them and give them plenty of warning if you can’t keep to an arrangement that has been made.*

**WWOOFer Arrives**

Get your WWOOFer to sign in when they arrive. Ask them to note their full name, their membership number and a contact address in case of emergency. This is important in case the WWOOFer becomes ill – or in case they disappear with the family silver!

WWOOFers expect warm, dry accommodation and adequate food. They expect friendly hospitality. It’s hoped that the relationship will be like ‘a friend of the family’. The WWOOFer, remember, is not an employee.

1. **When a WWOOFer arrives at your place you should request proof of ID. PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DO SEE THEIR IDENTIFICATION.** If their ID does not match their profile on the website, you have the right to refuse them access to your property, or you can assist them to join WWOOF (see #3 below). Also verify that the WWOOFer has appropriate accident and health insurance coverage. Also note which type of visa if they are from overseas (See #13 below and “Problems or Concerns” Policy).

"We have met such charming young people since we have been with WWOOF – honest, hard-working, well-educated and generally fun to have around and to have in our home.”
- Ruth (WWOOF host)
2. You are entering into a venture where you are accepting total strangers into your home. To safeguard both hosts and WWOOFers, we request that hosts keep a Guestbook. Any scrapbook will do. Get them to enter their name, membership ID number and address in it. WWOOFers have written poems, drawn pictures, and written comments. This is an event (them making their entry in the book) best done a day or so before they leave your place. This guest book can then also become an introductory step into your home for your next WWOOFer. Similarly ask them to repeat their comments from your guestbook by creating a comment on your host Profile on the WWOOF website. Future WWOOFers reading your profile feel more secure about you as a host when they can read comments left by other WWOOFers.

2. When WWOOFers do not have membership ID #, please identify the reason. WWOOFers can register on-line at www.wwoof.ca/user/register/WWOOFer. Prices are $50.00 single, or $75.00 for a joint account whereby a couple/ or 2 friends/ or parent(s) with child/children are WWOOFing together.

3. Make any house rules clear to the WWOOFer when they arrive. You may have already stated them in your information sheet but it's worth repeating them now. Tell your WWOOFer about the rhythm of your day. Make it especially clear what time you'd like them to start helping you in the morning.

4. The most important experience for WWOOFers will be the chance to ask about your methods of organic growing and other self-sustaining practices - please be patient and available to talking along with you whenever possible. It is advisable to show them how equipment operates to avoid breakages and injuries. Please be aware that WWOOFers MUST NOT use manmade chemicals/fertilizers. Approved organic alternatives are acceptable.

5. WWOOFers should expect to do whatever needs doing. Whenever possible, give them a variety of tasks - even if they are very basic and the opportunities to learn something of the skills and techniques used. Be patient and don't give too much responsibility too early. To some people the tasks may be a totally new experience. Please try to include WWOOFers in the whole routine of your enterprise - do not isolate them. Hoeing out weeds can be boring and tedious if performing the tasks alone.

With the tasks / chores and projects you need help with, be clear in your explanations and expectations and be supportive in your requests. Steer them into simpler jobs at the beginning, so that they have a sense of success. Assess their capabilities as time goes on and direct them to equivalent assignments. **Communication is the key to a successful WWOOF experience.** And expressing appreciation to your WWOOFer is vital. It gives them a sense of contributing to your vision at your place. Remember, some volunteers were attracted to your place because you grow herbs, or have horses, or an orchard, or are involved in something that caught their attention in your write-up. (See also: **Be a host** on the website - https://wwoof.ca/how-it-works/be-host )

6. **How long can I expect a WWOOFer to help us?** WWOOFers appreciate being told what the anticipated assignment schedules will be so they can organize their free time. The international standard has become 4-6 hours per day, 5 - 5 1/2 days per week. (Depending on factors like season, task load, quality of your input and their output, quality of their accommodation, etc.). If you require a fuller - longer helping day, please ask your volunteer! Most, you will find, will not object, if the manner in which you ask, is supportive of their involvement. If the hay needs bringing in before nightfall, then it's clear all hands are needed. If produce needs to be harvested for tomorrow's farmers market, then the job needs to be done. Some WWOOFers will stay a week or 2, some longer - discuss this with them a few days after they have arrived and after you have had a chance to experience their contribution. **(It is a good idea to discuss the types of assignment/chore conditions, days off, etc. upon initial inquiry, so there is no misunderstanding after the WWOOFer arrives.)**

7. **Accommodation:** In return for their help, you are to provide them with accommodation and three meals (and snacks) a day. Accommodations? Most hosts provide a spare bedroom, some a separate cabin, some their RV or a trailer/camper, some can only offer tenting sites. Please make it clear in your entry and at booking which it is. Please try your best to provide them with clean, comfortable accommodations. Meals? - WWOOFers typically eat with the family and take a share in the chores. Don't be shy in asking for their help in meal preparations (washing the lettuce, setting the table, washing the dishes). And please try to provide wholesome nutritious (organic when possible) meals. Encourage your volunteer to also prepare a meal. When feeling a sense of support often WWOOFers will want to introduce you to their cuisine. Wonderful!

If, for a valid reason, you are not willing to provide all meals, or certain foods are to be provided by the WWOOFer themselves, then these details need to be clearly stated in your entry. It is a good idea to ask the WWOOFer about any special diets on initial inquiry. If you do not cater for special diets, then by clearing this up initially, you will be avoiding problems later.

"WWOOF hosts welcome strangers into their private lives. WWOOFers often travelling long distances at their own expense, enter a strange and unique experience. All this happens on the basis of trust." - Becky, Coordinator

"I felt sorry for one WWOOFer who had had a really hard time and so I didn't make my 'house and garden rules' clear when he arrived, only to end up with a lazy WWOOFer who did very little work and almost ate us out of house and home. It is best to get the 'business' out of the way first. Then you can get on with enjoying their help and company." - Juliette (WWOOF host)
Accommodation should be hygienic, as should food preparation areas. Bedding should be adequate, especially if dealing with travelers from warmer areas than yours. Inadequate and dirty accommodation, bedding and food are WWOOFer's main complaints.

Remember that some WWOOFers will not be used to the climate in our country. Where necessary, give the WWOOFer some indoor chores if the heat, cold or rain seems too much for them. Don’t expect them to be able to toil alongside you if they haven’t acclimatized.

Some people will arrive very tired and may get ill after arriving – a result of travel exhaustion. Don’t expect too much of them in the first days. Remember that the culture of the WWOOFer’s home country may be entirely different from your own.

In many cases, hosts need to operate for longer hours than they ask of their WWOOFers. It can be difficult for a WWOOFer to stop when they can see that you need to carry on. Reassure them that they don’t need to feel guilty and that they should enjoy their free time.

Although you should be organic, in conversion or using ecologically sound methods of cultivation, we recognize that hosts may use some 'non-organic' techniques. WWOOFers should not be asked or expected to be involved in these practices.

Ambassadors of Canada

Hosts are in effect Ambassadors for Canada. Therefore, it is important in the spirit of cultural exchange, to treat all your WWOOFers as one of the family and needless to say, assist them to receive suitable medical treatment if necessary.

Many WWOOFers are using public transport. Hosts who want to get the most out of the program need to be prepared to pick up WWOOFers from the closest terminal at a mutually arranged time.

Abusive language, inappropriate behaviour and sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated! If we receive complaints of this nature, your entry will be removed from the on-line listing (see PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS POLICY and PROCEDURES).

WWOOF Canada reserves the right to refuse to list a host or to remove a host from the listings as we see fit.

We also reserve the right to edit entries should that be necessary. As long as your entry gives clear and accurate information you should have no problems. Good communication is the key!

WWOOF is strictly voluntary. Be fully aware of visa restrictions. Ensure international WWOOFers hold appropriate visas.

Hosts will not involve WWOOFers in any project involving the use of chemicals, i.e. herbicide/weedicides etc.

Canadian Emergency Phone No. is 911 (Police, Fire or Ambulance) or 911 from mobile.
"What if it’s not working?"

Sometimes, even with the best intentions on both sides, things just don’t work out. If it’s not working out, neither you nor the host are expected to continue with it.

The golden rules here are:

✓ Don’t let your disappointment make you unreasonable - keep calm.
✓ Communicate with your WWOOFer.
✓ Try to work things out between you
✓ If it can’t be resolved, at least part on good terms.

"The important thing to me is to realize that both parties to this exchange are in a position of choice and therefore can initiate change if anything is not working as the parties would wish.” – Aspen (WWOOF host)

"I had to regularly remind my hosts that WWOOFing is not simply an exchange of accommodation and food for work. There is some training or knowledge that the host must take the time to pass on to his / her WWOOFer.” - Marie, France (WWOOFer)

"If a WWOOFer doesn’t do a job properly I think it is necessary to ask oneself why. Was the task explained in a way that was understood? Was it clear why the job had to be done in a certain way?”
- Sarah (WWOOF host)

The first thing to do is analyze why you’re unsatisfied. Most often it’s simply that the WWOOFer doesn’t match your expectations. Keep your curiosity alive and give your WWOOFers a chance. You may end up having an enriching experience, even if it’s not the experience you had in mind!

Talk to your WWOOFer - if it’s not working for you, for whatever reason, then it’s quite possibly not working for them, either! Keep calm and remember that listening to what the other person has to say is the best way of ensuring that they’ll listen to you.

Tell your WWOOFer why you’re unhappy. Do they seem uninterested in their tasks? Are they not doing the hours that were agreed? Listen to the WWOOFer when they explain their point of view. Renegotiate the terms of their stay.
If you can’t agree, then perhaps you will ask them to leave.

- Agree a departure date with your WWOOFer - at least have them stay an extra few days. This may allow you to try and find another WWOOFer, as well as allowing the WWOOFer to make last-minute contact with other hosts.

- Please make sure the WWOOFer leaves at a reasonable time of day, when they can travel safely, especially if you live in an isolated area.

Remember that this cuts both ways – it may be your WWOOFer who feels things are not working out and who decides to have a chat with you.

Also remember that in the very rare cases when there is something seriously wrong, you are free to ask them to leave at any moment.
1) I / we confirm that I / we support and practice the aims of WWOOF as follows:

- To give WWOOFers/Volunteers firsthand experience of organic or other ecologically-sound growing methods and sustainable living whether it be on a farm, homestead, rural, residential or urban property.

- There is no hierarchy between host and volunteer, no productivity expectations, no financial transactions, and as such WWOOFing encourages a partnership based on mutual trust and respect.

- WWOOFers can provide help with many different activities such as gardening and making compost, animal care, chopping wood, farm infrastructure maintenance and repair, helping with eco-construction projects, etc.

- WWOOFer's help with tasks must provide opportunities for education in regards to organic agriculture, sustainable living and related pursuits, and this be the main focus and reason for inviting participants from the program. In the case of small family run operations (i.e. Home farms & gardens, B&Bs, wood farming and wood lots, etc.), there may be occasions where the WWOOFER will be required to assist the family with other tasks in order to ensure there is adequate time to operate together for the purpose of the education in the areas outlined above but these tasks must not become the primary focus.

- In their time spent with you as a family WWOOFers are expected to offer their assistance with daily living as any other family member.

- To help the organic movement which is labour intensive and does not rely on artificial fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides. I / we use no chemicals.

- To give people a chance to meet, talk, learn and exchange views with others in the organic movement.

- To provide WWOOFers/Volunteers with an opportunity to learn about life in Canada by living and functioning together.

2) I / we agree to provide our WWOOFers with decent clean accommodation, with 3 healthy (organic, if possible) meals and snacks and an integrated family experience.

3) I / we agree to offer opportunities for learning expecting no more than 4-6 hours of help per day from our WWOOFers, 5 - 5 1/2 days per week (20-33 hours per week).

4) I / we will be clear as to WWOOFer's time-off days. If more helping time is needed, then I / we will communicate this request in timely fashion and with appropriate explanations.

5) I / we will respect the volunteers' privacy, gender, and personal and human rights and freedoms at all times.

6) I / we acknowledge that if I / we wish to report about a host or WWOOFer for actions I / we deem as inappropriate or of a criminal nature, such concerns must be made through our “Problems or Concerns to tell the Administrator” links found throughout the WWOOF Canada website and not included in a comment on a member’s profile or in the Forum. Please see the WWOOFer Guidelines provided in your Welcome email for full disclosure of WWOOF Canada’s complaint policy and procedures.

7) I / we acknowledge that it is recommended that hosts hold insurance to cover any WWOOFer related incident, and to verify with visiting WWOOFers that they have travel insurance to cover illness, injury or liability.

8) I / we acknowledge that WWOOF Canada will edit member profiles as is necessary. As long as my / our entry gives clear and accurate information I / we should have no problems. See more at: http://www.wwoof.ca/sites/default/files/hostfiles/host%20Guidelines.pdf
9) I/we agree to indemnify and hold harmless WWOOF Canada and its officers and employees from any claim or demand, including reasonable lawyers’ fees, made by any third party arising out of or related to your violation of these Terms and Conditions of use, or your violation of any law, regulation or third-party right. WWOOF Canada is a network which allows members to contact each other. WWOOF Canada is not responsible for any actions of either WWOOFers or hosts.

10) I/we acknowledge that WWOOF Canada reserves the right at their discretion and with or without a refund, with or without cause (such cause may include my / our breach of the WWOOF Canada Terms and Conditions), with or without prior notice: (1) Cancel or suspend my / our access to their services, (2) Block or remove my / our membership and profile and all related information and files.

11) I/we acknowledge that I/we have read and understood these Terms & Conditions of membership and that this constitutes an agreement having the same force and effect as a signed agreement.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding this Agreement or the website, please contact us via the information provided on the Contact Us page.

FEEDBACK & REPORTS of PROBLEMS or CONCERNS

We love to get your feedback about your WWOOF hosting! In fact, your feedback is essential to us in the running of the organization. It helps us in regulating our membership and understanding how WWOOF is actually functioning for its members. We cannot stress enough how much your feedback helps other hosts and WWOOFers!

General Feedback

We’re always interested in hearing from you. (We even get the occasional postcard!) We’re also looking for comments that help us improve the service we offer. We’re not asking you for a detailed report – just a quick e-mail or letter is enough. Any feedback on improving this guide will also be welcome!

Articles, Reports & Debates

Our members’ newsletter and on-line blog always wants to hear of your experiences, both good and bad. This could be just an e-mail; it could be a full-blown article, or an ongoing diary. Contact the editors directly at: admin@wwoof.ca.

Problems or Concerns Policy & Procedures

The WWOOF system is based on trust. It is impossible for us to verify every new person that joins the organization. In certain cases, things do go wrong. It is important that we are alerted when this happens. WWOOF has a clear complaints procedure. A group of people – both men and women – deal with complaints in strict confidence. Anonymous complaints cannot be considered. If you wish to make a complaint about a WWOOFer (or about WWOOF itself), it will be taken seriously.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are formulated for your benefit and protection, as well as the benefit and protection of WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) Canada.
WWOOF Canada believes that if a member wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. It is our policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments by members are taken seriously.

The policy is not designed to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to provide compensation. This is NOT part of our disciplinary policy.

WWOOF Canada believes that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will possibly lead to an aggravation of problems, and/or member dissatisfaction. WWOOF Canada supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted out between just the complainant and WWOOF Canada, and WWOOF Canada and the person(s) complained against.

To protect the complainant from retribution and to allow members to feel safe in coming forward, complainant information is considered confidential and will not be released to the person who is being investigated.

All Problems or Concerns may be reported to the Administrator on the website at Problems or Concerns to tell the Administrator. Note: You must be logged in before you will see this option (Problems or concerns to tell the administrator) listed under “Important Info” found on your “Dashboard” in the middle of the page.

By making a posting to this site, your purpose must be to communicate to the administrators and to other WWOOF members any problems and concerns you may have had with a WWOOF experience, whether as a host or a WWOOFer/volunteer, in order to help avoid future problems or concerns of that nature.

If that is not your purpose, please do not make a posting.

Your goal in making a posting must not be to get back at any person who caused problems.

If that is your goal, please do not make a posting.

Any posting you make must first state the facts as you honestly believe them and in a full and fair manner. The facts as you state them must be substantially true. Express the facts clearly and simply. Avoid anything which could imply more than you mean to say.

Any comments you then make or conclusions you present about your WWOOF experience or your WWOOFer/volunteer or host must be based on the stated facts and must be moderate in language and tone.

If you simply feel like venting, please do not make a posting.

Procedure

1. Reporting of Problems or Concerns need to be backed up with names, membership numbers, and dates if they are to be treated seriously.
2. The complainant must be willing to stand by their complaint. WWOOF Canada will not engage with a member about a complaint unless the complainant is willing to stand by their claim.
3. If a WWOOFer or host confides in you of a bad experience involving another WWOOFer or host, please have them contact us directly so that we can deal with the problem.
4. You must provide the name and membership # of the WWOOFer or host for whom you are lodging a concern against. That person will be contacted so they may present their side of your concern.
5. For all concerns reported we will request the contact details of other WWOOFers or hosts who can provide information regarding their experience in relation to the specific problem.
6. All members involved in the problem or concern will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.

Click here to report -> Problems or Concerns to tell the Administrator
Reports of Concerns &/or Problems Policy

Reports of Concerns &/or Problems need to be backed up with names, membership numbers, and dates if they are to be treated seriously. For this reason it is essential that you ask for the WWOOF ID # and some form of identification on WWOOFers arrival.

If one of your WWOOFers confides in you of a bad experience involving another host, please have them contact us so that we can deal with the problem.

We occasionally get reports from WWOOFers regarding unsuitable and dirty accommodation, poor or inadequate food, or being unreasonably overtasked. For reports about unsuitable accommodation, food, the host profile not being accurate, unreasonably long operating hours etc.:

First complaint, we shall inform you of the complaint. We will request a reply in writing asking you to explain the situation from your point of view. We hope you will read the concerns and take the criticisms as constructive and as an opportunity to improve future WWOOFer relations. We realize not all WWOOF-stays are a good match and that varied personalities, experiences, perceptions, and special circumstances play a part in disappointments. The key we believe is very clear communication, before and during the WWOOF-stay.

Where appropriate we will suggest you change your host entry to better reflect conditions on your property. We will also offer suggestions and resources available to you to help you ensure a “best match” when arranging your WWOOF-stays.

Second complaint, we shall inform you again, and warn you a third complaint will result in your entry being removed from the list.

Third complaint, we will remove the host from the list.

For all reports we will request the contact details of other WWOOFers who have stayed with you recently. We will contact them and ask them about their experiences when they visited you.

Reports Regarding Contravention of Immigration Regulations

Hosts MUST ensure that international WWOOFers hold an appropriate visa that allows them to work if the WWOOFers will be volunteering beyond the maximum 4 weeks allowed.

If there is a report of concern or problem in this regard, we will ask the person making the report to contact the Immigration Dept with their concerns. If the Dept finds a host to be using WWOOFers in contravention of Immigration Regulations, we will remove the host from the list. (hosts who are in breach of immigration laws may jeopardize the entire WWOOF program.)

Reports Regarding Health & Safety or Sexual Harassment

If we receive a report about health and safety or inappropriate behaviour including sexual harassment we have adopted the following procedure:

WWOOF Canada reserves the right to cancel/suspend a member’s registration immediately if we believe the member’s actions may bring the name of the WWOOF program into disrepute or could pose a risk to the health and safety of other Members.

If deemed appropriate for the situation, the host may be required to provide us with written statements regarding the initial report, and references from WWOOFers and from other hosts or from neighbours in the area.
What is WWOOF?

WWOOF is an exchange - volunteer help in exchange for food, accommodation and learning opportunities in organic agriculture.

WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) links volunteers with organic farmers, smallholders and gardeners.

WWOOF organizations compile a list of farmers and gardeners that welcome volunteer help at certain times. Volunteer helpers ("WWOOFers") can then contact these farmers and gardeners ("WWOOF hosts") to arrange a stay.

The aims of WWOOF are to:

✓ enable people to learn first-hand about organic growing techniques
✓ enable people to experience life in the countryside
✓ help the organic movement, which is labour intensive
✓ give people in the organic movement a chance to meet, talk, exchange and learn
✓ provide an opportunity to learn about rural life in other countries by living and functioning together

**WWOOF hosts** are families on farms and small-holdings mainly pursuing a simple, sustainable lifestyle. Some farms are commercial producers; others practice farming as a hobby. Some hosts are large properties, others are smaller; some have been inherited or bought and others have been conquered through hard labour and sweat.

**WWOOFers** give help that is wide and variable, but includes: sowing seed, making compost, gardening, planting, cutting wood, weeding, making mud bricks, harvesting, fencing, building, packing, milking, feeding...

There are 50 national WWOOF organizations, listing thousands of hosts worldwide. Hosts in countries with no national organization are listed by WWOOF Independents, which currently lists 370 hosts in almost 50 countries. So in total, nearly 100 countries where you can WWOOF!

WWOOF organizations list hosts that are keeping with the general ethic of respect for the environment and the idea of an exchange of knowledge and expertise, food and accommodation in exchange for voluntary help.

For a full list of all WWOOF organizations: [www.wwoof.net](http://www.wwoof.net)

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Thank you for being a WWOOF host!

Thousands around the world have benefited greatly in more ways than one.

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Bibliography

The WWOOF Independents pocket guide to WWOOF Hosting – excerpts have been included in this guide.