

TILTH ALLIANCE'S
**FARM & GARDEN
SUMMER
CAMP!**

URBAN FARMING ADVENTURES

2026

**Summer Camp
Family Handbook**

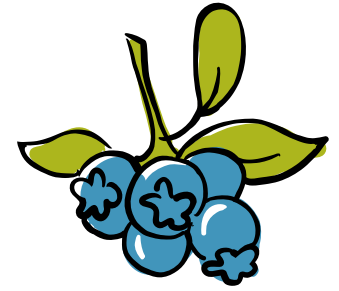
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ALLIANCE

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About Camp

At Tilth Alliance's summer camps, kids 1-15 years old spend summer days outdoors being urban farmers and gardeners - discovering where our food comes from and learning about the natural world. Summer camp is also a time to have fun adventures exploring our gardens and farm, engaging in science investigations, making art, singing songs and cooking up delicious dishes - all with urban farm flair!



Camp Contacts

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: youthprograms@tilthalliance.org

Phone: Nirvani Bissessar, Youth & Families Program Manager, (206) 633-0451 ext. 109

DAY OF COORDINATION

Contact your site manager concerning any day of coordination with drop off or pick up.

- **Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands:** Zabrina Bonilla Steichen, (206) 633-0451 ext. 303
- **Good Shepherd Center:** Benay O'Connell, (206) 633-0451 ext. 105

During the camp day, in case of an emergency, or for any additional concerns or questions:

- **Nirvani Bissessar**, Youth & Families Program Manager, (206) 633-0451 ext. 109
- **Sharon Siehl**, Youth & Families Program Director, (206) 633-0451 ext. 117
- **Rain Gilman**, Office Coordinator, (206) 633-0451 ext. 101

Health Policies

COVID-19 and Respiratory Viruses

Our youth programs are held in-person using health and safety precautions recommended by the Washington State Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. In line with current health guidelines, masks are optional during our classes and camps. We will communicate any updates or changes in response to current conditions. All staff of Tilth Alliance's Youth & Families programs have received a COVID-19 vaccine and have been encouraged to actively monitor their own health. Staff are first aid certified and have been notified of the common symptoms of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses. If a child displays symptoms, staff will notify the parent/guardian.

If symptoms do arise at home, please take a COVID-19 test. If the test is positive, please refer to CDC guidelines before returning to the program.

For all respiratory viruses, please keep your child home until both of the following are true for at least 24 hours:

- The child's symptoms are getting better overall, AND
- The child has not had a fever, and is not using fever-reducing medication

For more information, please see the CDC's ["Preventing Spread of Respiratory Viruses When You're Sick"](#) guide.

What to Wear

CLOTHING

Campers should wear clothes that are ready for a wide range of outdoor activities from soil digging to salsa making. Camps run daily, rain or shine, so please make sure campers are prepared with clothing for the weather. We recommend light layers for the morning, even on sunny days. On hot days, we recommend wearing a sun hat or visor, and loose-fitting, light-colored cotton or linen clothing. Labeling clothing is helpful.



FOOTWEAR

Campers should wear closed-toe, comfortable shoes that can handle time on the farm/gardens and time on the playground. **Please do not wear flip flops!**

CHANGE OF CLOTHES

Though not required, we always appreciate you sending a spare set of clothes in campers' backpacks in the case of accidents/spills.

SUNSCREEN AND INSECT REPELLENT

Please apply sunscreen prior to the camp day. Please pack additional sunscreen with your camper so it can be reapplied during the day. Insect repellent is optional and best applied after sunscreen in the morning. If possible, please use a natural insect repellent.

Food & Snacks

SNACKS/LUNCH

Please send campers with 2–3 filling snack items for morning and afternoon snack times, and a sack lunch. It is our policy that campers are not allowed to share snacks from home.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Please note any food allergies your child may have during registration.

Although we do not prohibit nuts from camp, due to the high prevalence of nut allergies/sensitivities, we ask that you please consider sending nut-free snacks and lunches with your child. On camp weeks in which participants have allergies, certain ingredients may be prohibited out of courtesy for all participants.

We can make accommodations for dietary restrictions and food allergies for our cooking camps with proper notice and preparation. Please be aware that our cooking facilities are shared, and therefore nuts/seeds and other allergens may be present.

WATER BOTTLES

Please pack a reusable water bottle that can be refilled. We will regularly remind campers to stay hydrated and will take designated hydration breaks throughout the day. We have water available for campers to refill their bottles.

Medication

If you are bringing any medication to camp with your child (including rescue inhalers and EpiPens), we ask that you please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Please sign a **Medication Authorization Release form** which authorizes camp staff to administer medication to your child (required by state law). This form will be available online prior to camp and is linked below. Staff will verify medication with you and paper copies will be available on the first day of camp at sign in.
- Please give all medications to your child's camp instructor at check-in and advise whether the medication should be returned at the end of each day or stay on-site for the duration of camp.
- All medications must be in their original packaging and labeled with appropriate prescription, dosing and/or pharmaceutical information.

[Fill out a Medication Authorization Release Form online](#)

Directions & Parking

RAINIER BEACH URBAN FARM & WETLANDS

5513 S Cloverdale St,
Seattle, WA 98118

Bus: The farm is a 10-15 minute walk from stops on bus routes 7 and 9, or a 20 minute walk from the Rainier Beach light rail stop at MLK and Henderson.

Driving: Limited parking is available on the farm. Additional street parking can be found at Beer Sheva Park or the Atlantic City Boat Ramp lot south of the farm, with an approximately 0.3 mile walk through Be'er Sheva park to the farm.

Parking: We will often have multiple programs running concurrently on the farm, so we ask that drivers follow directional signs and park briefly in designated areas during drop-off. Parking is available on the northside of S. Cloverdale Street. Please do not park for extended periods of time on S. Cloverdale Street out of respect for the neighbors.

[Get Directions](#)

GOOD SHEPHERD CENTER

4649 Sunnyside Ave N,
Seattle, WA 98103

Bus: Take route #44 (east-west) or route #16 (north-south); get off at 45th and Meridian, walk three blocks north, Meridian Park and Good Shepherd Center are on the right.

Driving: From I-5, take Exit 169 for NE 50th St., head westbound one-half mile, turn left (southbound) on Sunnyside Ave. N., and use the second driveway on the right. When you enter the Good Shepherd Center roundabout, take a left into the first parking lot. There is a pathway between the Good Shepherd Center and the Meridian School gym that leads directly into the Children's Garden.

Parking: Please park in the first parking lot, on the lefthand side when you pull in to the roundabout.

[Get Directions](#)



Camp Culture & Philosophy

About Our Camps

Tilth Alliance has been offering children's garden education for more than three decades. We provide a positive, structured and educational outdoor learning environment where young people can explore & learn in the garden and farm.

Campers are invited to participate in a wide range of activities throughout the week. We've found that the structure and flow of camps supports success for a wide range of learning styles and abilities. Campers often make new friends and form strong bonds with camp staff and junior counselors.

Camp Values & Principles

- **Building relationships/community:** Nurture relationships between ourselves, fellow campers, and the soil, plants and animals with whom we are interdependent
- **Growing responsible leaders:** Facilitate experiences that enable youth to become stewards of the natural world and practice leadership skills
- **Learning by doing:** We use our senses to explore and connect with the natural world through hands-on experiential outdoor learning.
- **Exploring food sovereignty:** Learn where our food comes from, trace ingredients back to soil, learn about our own preferences while tasting new foods and flavors. We will explore the relationship between people and the land, and about those who produce food and those who eat it.
- **Creativity:** Use creativity to find solutions, connect with spirit, and to notice and manifest beauty in the world
- **Celebrate diversity:** Celebrating diversity in all domains: biodiversity, ideas, lived experiences, cultures, races, genders, and identities

Welcoming All & Culturally-Responsive Pedagogy

At Tilth Alliance, we work with children and families from diverse racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Camp staff work to keep the camp environment safe, welcoming and inclusive for all campers. This involves understanding how to engage effectively with youth from different backgrounds and abilities, getting to know campers as individuals, and facilitating activities that support the needs of the whole child – physical, social, and emotional. We aspire to the equitable principles of culturally responsive pedagogy. Our staff has training in culturally responsive practices and inclusion-based learning in the garden.



Camp Day Structure

Our camp schedule is posted at the beginning of the week, and our daily schedule stays consistent so campers can learn routines and are able to anticipate what's next.

The daily schedule at camp provides opportunities for structured activities such as focused science, cooking, garden care, or art activities, while also allowing for supervised unstructured time. Unstructured time includes free exploration, nature journaling, and time to play.

Camp Expectations

Campers and staff alike are required to follow camp rules at all times to ensure everyone stays safe and enjoys their time at camp. We will go over the camp rules with campers on the first day of camp and gentle reminders are given throughout the week. All camps create a community agreement together on the first day of camp. We encourage you to review these expectations with your child prior to camp.

- 1. Be Safe** – Safety is our highest priority. In order to keep campers safe, we ask everyone to stay with the group at all times, walk in the garden, follow tool safety, and refrain from fighting (even play fighting).
- 2. Be Kind** – Kindness includes listening and showing respect. If we listen to the staff, each other and the living beings on the farm and in the garden, we can learn many exciting and wonderful things! We also work on being kind to each other and respecting each other's space and what everyone has to say. This also includes respecting the plants and animals in the garden and on the farm. We can do this by waiting to be invited before picking plants and tasting food, We use supportive and gentle touch with plants and insects. When we listen to others and respect what they say, they are more likely to listen to us when it is our turn.
- 3. Try New Things!** – We encourage campers to try a new activity or taste a new food while at camp. We understand that this can be scary, but we ask campers to keep open and positive minds. Being willing to try new things will lead to new experiences and lots of fun!

Positive Youth Engagement

Summer camps provide an environment, role models, and activities that promote positive character development. **One of the most respectful ways to work with children and youth is to honor them as people, to cherish the gifts that they bring, and to assume positive intent.** We focus on using positive reinforcement and encouragement to support campers in making positive decisions and addressing

their own behavior. This supports them in developing decision-making skills and a sense of personal agency.

At the beginning of each camp session, we cover the basic camp rules and invite campers to contribute to the list of expectations. This becomes an agreement that campers and staff have ownership over and can refer to throughout the week.

Rituals & Traditions

- **Opening/Closing Circle** – We begin each camp day with an opening circle that consists of an introductory question or icebreaker game and a brief overview of the day’s events. We end each camp day with a closing circle, where we reflect on the events of the day as well as talk about what we are looking forward to later in the week.
- **Tea Making** – At every camp, we harvest herbs and flowers to make tea. Through the sensory experience of gathering leaves and flowers for tea, campers develop their relationship with the plants of the garden and farm. They learn about plant parts, life cycles, habitat, and medicinal/cultural uses of plants.
- **Garden Exploration** – Each day, campers are given time and encouraged to explore the garden through garden care, scavenger hunts, and more.
- **Lunch and Play** – Every day of camp, we go to the nearby park to play and let loose after lunch at our nearby playground and green space.
- **Friday Field Day** – On Fridays, we celebrate the finishing of the camp week by bringing field games and water games to play. This is a fun way to acknowledge the ways we’ve connected with people, places, and more-than-humans at camp.



Camp Staff

Our camp staff is comprised of full-time and seasonal staff. Our staff have backgrounds in environmental education, gardening, farming, and/or teaching fields. They each bring a variety of teaching styles and have a deep love for garden, farm, or environmental education, and sharing that with youth. All our full time and seasonal staff are first aid and CPR certified and have a WA State Food Handler’s card. All staff receive and must pass both National and Washington State Patrol-WATCH background checks. In addition to our teaching staff, Tilth Alliance summer camp hosts two part time summer camp interns from Teens In Public Service (TIPS).

Junior Counselors

Junior Counselors are middle school and high school students who are at least 12 years old, and are interested in leadership and outdoor education. Junior Counselors are never solely responsible for children during camp. They provide extra support to summer camp staff and act as role models for campers. Junior counselors participate in most learning engagements, support set up/clean up, and help facilitate daily activities such as garden care and tea making.

Friends & Siblings

We often have siblings and friends attend camp together. We do our best to meet grouping requests but are unable to guarantee all requests. At Rainier Beach, we split campers into age groups. Generally, siblings and friends may be put in different groups at Rainier Beach depending on age. Throughout the week, campers spend time in large groups for circle time, snack, lunch, field games, tea, and free exploration. They also work in smaller groups on projects and activities.

Safety & Behavioral Policies

Bathrooms

Counselors are never with children alone in the bathroom. We schedule time throughout the days to visit the bathroom in small groups. If a child needs to use the restroom facilities outside of these times, a camp staff member will take a minimum of two children and accompany them to the restroom. Staff remain outside and ask other staff or members of the public to wait until all campers have left the restroom.

Potty Training

Tilth Alliance requires that **all children in drop-off programs must be potty trained** and comfortable using the bathroom independently away from home.

First Aid

Camp staff carry a first aid kit with them and are certified and prepared to administer basic first aid. Campers sometimes get minor scrapes and bruises while playing and exploring outdoors. While more severe injuries are extremely rare, we will always keep parent contact and medical release information close at hand and will call if needed. All incidents will be documented by camp staff in an Incident Report form, and a copy will be provided to the parent/guardian of the camper.



Behavior Policy

Camp staff at Tilth Alliance will foster an environment where everyone is welcomed and treated respectfully. At the beginning of each camp, Tilth Alliance staff review the expectations with campers and junior counselors. Staff will remind campers and junior counselors of these expectations throughout the camp week. We believe in positive reinforcement of positive behavior. Campers are expected to be kind and respectful of their fellow campers.

Our expectations at camp are:

- Be safe
- Be kind
- Try new things

Behavior that is unsafe and will be addressed:

- Camper running away from camp
- Language – cursing, name calling, inappropriate conversations
- Hitting / harmful or inappropriate physical contact to staff and other campers, including siblings
- Bullying and teasing
- Other disruptive or dangerous behaviors to self or others

In the instance that a camper is not following the camp expectations and exhibits repeated signs of disrespect toward fellow campers or staff, the Camp Director will meet with parents/guardians to address the issue and create a plan to support behavior change. Every incident is unique, and we will do our very best to support all campers involved in an incident.

If an incident arises requiring the mediation of a staff member, it will be documented in an Incident Report form and brought to the attention of the parents/guardians. In instances of continued behavior issues that are violent, unsafe or harmful, after a meeting with parent/guardian, Tilth Alliance reserves the right to dismiss a child from camp.

Toys

We ask that campers and junior counselors leave toys, trading cards, and valuables (including cash) at home. These can be distracting from our planned camp activities. If a child brings a toy or other item not related to camp, we will ask them to put it away in their backpack if it is becoming a regular distraction or causing conflict. In certain instances, we may hold the toy or item in a secure place and return it at the end of the camp day.



Technology

We recognize that cell phones and other devices are important communication tools for campers and junior counselors. However, in our experiences over the years, we have found cell phones and other devices to be highly distracting for the camper and others around them. These distractions take away from the opportunities to connect with one another, connection to nature, and the camp activities.

Our technology policy is that all cell phones and devices must remain in the camper or junior counselor backpack from when they arrive at camp until the end of the camp day. If technology is being used inappropriately and is causing distractions, camp staff may need to keep the camper's device, store it securely, and return it at the end of the camp day.

Tilth Alliance staff are also asked to only use their cell phones when needed for camp communication, timekeeping, or other work-related purposes.

In rare instances in which technology would augment the educational experience, camp instructors may permit the use of devices for a specific activity.

Extended Day Program & Policies



Extended Day Program

Extended day care is available for all weeklong, full-day camps from 8:30-9 a.m. and 3:30-5 p.m. for an additional fee. Before-care only is available for half-day preschool camps. **Please select one of the Extended Day ticket options when registering.** Rates are for the full week and we cannot prorate days for extended care.

Late Arrivals

If you are arriving late for any camp, and you are unable to find the summer camp group, please proceed to the Tilth Alliance office at the location of your camp. At the Good Shepherd Center, the office is located on the ground floor of the building in room 100. At Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands, the office is in the black building at the top of the slope. You will be directed to camp staff.

Early Pick-Up

Please note that prior notification of any early check-outs will help to ensure a safe and organized process. Families who would like to pick up their children prior to regular check-out should coordinate with camp staff on the morning of the early pickup to find a meet-up location.

Late Fees

If you know in advance that you will be late to pick up your child, please let us know by calling camp staff. If lateness is an issue, then after-care will be recommended and added to your camp registration.

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Inclement Weather Policies

Given that we are an outdoor-based education program, Tilth Alliance Youth and Family Programs staff closely monitor weather and air quality conditions on a regular basis. In situations where weather may be a health and safety risk, we will cancel or shorten program hours as necessary. Details of a refund for cancelled or shortened hours will be communicated immediately to participating families. Families will also have the option to decline a refund so that funds can support Youth & Families programming.

We will refer to [King County Health and Safety Guidelines](#) to determine when a cancellation or shortening of program hours is necessary.

Heat

Throughout the summer camp season, we will be taking a number of precautions to minimize the effects of heat such as providing ice water refilling stations, using spray bottles and cold cloths to cool

down, taking regular water breaks, and utilizing shaded areas on hotter days. When the heat index (combination of temperature and humidity) exceeds 85 degrees, we recommend the following attire:

- Light-colored cotton or linen clothing
- Clothing that is loose-fitting and allows air circulation is preferred. Clothing that covers all areas of exposed skin will help prevent sunburn and is optional.
- Sun hat or visor
- Clothing made of synthetic materials is not recommended.

[\(source\)](#)

On days where the heat index exceeds 90 degrees, we will closely monitor the weather and will maximize our safety precautions listed above. All staff are trained in CPR/First Aid and are knowledgeable of how to respond in situations where an individual is exhibiting signs of heat stress.

On days where the heat index is approaching or exceeding 100 degrees, we may cancel the program or shorten program hours. We will contact parents/guardians to pick their children up early.

Air Quality

We will monitor air quality conditions using airnow.gov. If air quality is listed as Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, we will cancel the program if we cannot move to an indoor location. If air quality is approaching Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (AQI 101 and above), we will assess the situation and may modify or shorten program hours accordingly. If air quality becomes Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups during program hours, we will move participants to an indoor setting and contact parents/guardians to pick their children up early.



Wind

Program may be cancelled or altered (moved indoors) when winds become a “Moderate Threat,” and/or there is a wind condition consistent with a wind advisory.

Other Weather Events

In instances of other severe weather, such as thunderstorms, extreme cold/ice/sleet/snow, etc., we will move the program indoors or cancel the program.

Registration Information

Please note that we close online camp registration on the Thursday night before the camp week. This ensures that our staff has planning time to accommodate campers' needs.



Member Discount

Tilth Alliance members and donors receive a 10% discount on weeklong summer camps. If you'd like to become a member, you can make your gift online today. Once you've made your gift, you'll receive an e-mail with a discount code that you can use for summer camps.

[Become a Member](#)

Scholarships

Tilth Alliance strives to educate all children and adults regardless of their financial means. All summer camps include reduced price tickets, which can be selected at checkout. If you would like to apply for additional scholarship for summer camp, please apply for a scholarship.

[Apply for a Scholarship](#)

Cancellations & Refund Policy

If you are unable to attend summer camp, changes and cancellations are available by emailing youthprograms@tilthalliance.org. Please review the cancellation policy outlined on the next page prior to contacting the registration office.

REFUND POLICIES:

- Full refunds are available up to three weeks prior to your camp or class start date, minus a \$50 admin fee. Transfers to other camps are based on availability, prior to three weeks in advance.
- Unfortunately, we are unable to offer any refunds or credits for changes or cancellation requests received less than three weeks prior to the start of your camp week.
- There are no refunds of registration fees if your child misses camp days due to vacation, calendar conflicts or personal choice. Camp tuition is based on enrollment not attendance.
- Within three weeks of camp, no refunds are made unless the camper in question finds themselves in one of these circumstances. The family will receive a (50%) refund if:
 - » there is a death or serious illness in their immediate family requiring their attendance.
 - » the camper becomes ill and unable to attend camp. Last minute cancellations due to chronic conditions may not meet the criteria of becoming ill.
- Cancellations due to other extenuating circumstances are on a case-by-case basis.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

Inclement Weather, Climate and Other Events

Given that Tilth Alliance's summer camps are held 100% outdoors, there may be weather & climate events where camp may need to end early or be cancelled for one or more days. These conditions pose health and safety concerns for the campers and staff at agriculture, outdoor recreation, and environmental organizations. In most cases, we will move programs to a safe location before we cancel camp. More details are provided in the Inclement Weather section.

In the event of single (1) day cancellation due to COVID, wildfire smoke, poor air quality, or inclement weather, no partial refunds will be issued.

In the event of two (2) or more days of cancellation, refunds will be given at a pro-rated amount. (example: if three (3) days of camp are cancelled due to poor air quality, the refund will be for two (2) days, at a pro-rated amount of the total paid at registration).

We understand that cancellations are disruptive for everyone involved and do our best to minimize them while prioritizing the health and safety of campers and staff. If a day(s) of camp is cancelled, our staff receive payment for a full day's work. Additionally, planning and purchasing happen long before the first day of camp. Our refund policy as a non-profit is a balance between refunding families for missed programming due to events out of our control, while continuing to fairly compensate our staff.

Tilth Alliance reserves the right to cancel a course and refund the participants in full.



**We can't
wait to
see you at
summer
camp!**

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