

What to Bring to Tamarack Farm

To Know What To Bring It Helps To Know How Tamarack Farm Works...

For campers and staff at the Farm, most of the summer is spent in-camp on the farm, with work projects in the morning and general camp recreational activities in the afternoon. Every camper needs to be prepared to do physical, outdoor work such as rough carpentry, building with stone, working in the barn. Therefore each camper needs the basics; work boots, long or short pants, T-shirts, gloves and a hat to shade the sun.

The tricky part is that in the middle of the summer every Farmer goes on a 4-day trip. This midsummer trip can be a hike, a canoe trip, or a "service" trip to a farm or intentional community. The equipment requirements are quite different for each of these trips and there is no way to know for sure before camp, which trip a specific camper will go on. For the service trips and canoe trips especially, backpacks are not required. A duffle bag and the regular camp stuff will do.

We recognize that outfitting a camper for a hike can be very expensive. Some of our campers are avid hikers and already have the equipment. For others this isn't a priority. So here is how we have managed for all these years. Campers who have trip equipment should definitely bring it, even if they don't plan to hike. If it is easy to bring a second backpack, please do. If you don't have trip equipment and don't feel that you can afford it or borrow it and/or are not interested in owning it, we have always been able to make it work. Campers and staff are generous about lending and the camps have a small supply of equipment.

In planning the amount of clothing to bring, strike a balance between the amount needed for up to 9 days between laundry days (it's usually once a week) and the need for all clothes to fit in your child's "footlocker". Having too many clothes can cause a storage problem, and our experience is that Farmers with too much are more likely to lose things. On laundry day, all of the clothing from each cabin goes into 2 or 3 cabin laundry bags.

PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING AND LEAVE THE CHERISHED, VALUABLE, OR DELICATE CLOTHING AT HOME !!

Also, the Tamarack Farm "style" requires clothing that is useful (even if it is at the end of its useful life), rather than decorative. Don't worry about having new clothes, because chances are good that most days we will be having direct contact with the good clean earth and it makes sense to dress accordingly.

Tamarack Farm also has a tradition of encouraging campers to explore their own "inner fashion warrior," as a recent staff person described this phenomenon. A summer at the Farm is a great time to ignore the normal rules about dress codes. There is no pressure to conform, even to being a fashion nonconformist, and outrageous clothing combinations are joyously accepted, so dig deep into your dress-up boxes, if you wish.

We have tried to indicate in the list below, the purpose for the items and which are required versus which are optional.

Key :

ð - Required, check them off

© - Needed for trips only, hiking especially

§ - Optional

Clothing And Footwear

ð Work gloves:: These are an essential part of each Farm camper's wardrobe. There will definitely be times when everyone will be working with rough or messy material:

- a stack of old boards, building stones, shingles - or tools that are hard on hands not used to manual labor - shovels, hoes, fencing pliers. The gloves do NOT have to be fancy. The best solution is a pair of inexpensive leather gloves. The cheapest solution is cloth or cotton gloves.

The leather gloves tend to stand up better and last longer. They also provide much better protection. The cotton gloves will be good for use with most tools and the more "polite" materials.

ð Boots:: At minimum each camper needs one sturdy pair of boots. The best single pair is a lightweight pair of hiking boots. These can serve as work boots for almost all purposes and as hiking boots. A preferred solution is to bring a pair of heavier leather boots for work and a second pair of lightweight hiking boots.

ð Sneakers or Sandals:: For in-camp wear any combination of sneakers and sturdy sandals works well. These are also a good option for around the campfire on trips. Sandals can be worn into our outdoor showers.

§ Rain boots &/or barn boots:: For campers who are drawn to the barn, it is a plus to have a pair of barn boots; though we do provide some. These rubber boots can also serve as wet weather wear. The key here is to have boots that can be hosed down to remove manure and other "organic matter." Hiking boots are okay, but it is difficult to clean the intricate soles very well. Also it does rain in Vermont and some campers prefer to have a pair of lightweight rubber boots for the wet times. Everyone works in the barn at some point, but any closed toe footwear will do for occasional visits.

ð Socks, in-camp:: Almost anything will do for in-camp wear. A 9-day supply of cotton socks is fine.

© Socks, hiking:: Wearing two pairs of socks on the trail is recommended; 2-4 combinations for a trip. The inside, lightweight pair can be polypro (polypropylene.) The outer, heavier pair can be wool or polypro. Wool socks may be a wool/nylon blend but should be at least 80% wool. Allow for some shrinkage when they are washed and dried. On a dry trip, alternating socks works fine. For a wet trip, 2 dry pairs every day is heaven.

ð Pants & Shorts:: In general, 3-4 pair of long pants, 4-5 pairs of shorts; the specifics are mostly personal preference. Shorts are fine on most days, some folks never wear long pants. On the other hand, some work projects beg for long pants, and most people never go haying in shorts. Looser pants rather than jeans are generally preferred. Jeans take forever to dry. "Work" pants like Dickies or Carhartts are rugged and dry quickly. Second-hand stores are a good source. It is important to have one or two pairs of pants that can get pretty grubby during the course of the summer work projects. Nicer, casual pants can be used during the rest of the day. For hiking trips [©] at least one pair of shorts should be athletic style, i.e. loose fitting and not below the knee.

ð T-shirts:: A basic staple of most campers' wardrobe. The older the better.

§ Wool or flannel shirts:: Nothing fancy, old shirts are best. In addition to the jackets and sweaters a few other casual warm tops are appreciated.

§ Underwear:: Suggest a 9-day supply, but this is all personal preference.

© Long Underwear:: 1 pair of polypropylene; top and bottom. For trail trips, especially high mountain or canoe trips a single set of polypropylene, top and bottom, are almost a necessity and definitely a treat.

ð Raincoat or Poncho:: No fancy requirements here for in camp, a lightweight poncho or rain coat. We sometimes work in rain so a sturdy raincoat and optional rain pants can be useful. Ponchos work fine also. On hikes [©] the poncho or rain gear needs to fit over the pack also. There are many options here.

ð Sweater or Jacket:: Every camper needs at least one warm wool sweater or fleece jacket. Most of the summer is warm, but especially at night the temperatures can drop to the 40's. Every summer seems to have its cold and wet spells. For these times and for hikes, it is essential that the warm top be wool or fleece, so that it will keep the inhabitant warm even when it is wet. It is perfectly fine and almost a status symbol to have this warm top be an old wool sweater, complete with darned spots. We teach darning.

ð Wool hat:: It is imperative for every camper to bring at least one wool or fleece head covering. That old wool knit winter hat, or toque, or ski hat, that can be stuffed in a back pocket is perfect. The most important part of staying warm and healthy on mountain hikes is keeping the head warm, during the day and in the sleeping bag at night. This can also be a huge comfort in camp after a cold swim or evening sauna or on those occasional frosty mornings. We have a small supply of these at camp for trips, but it is a good time to open the winter clothes box and find your ugliest hat.

ð Brimmed hat:: A "ball cap" or other hat that provides sun protection is essential.

§ "Bathing suit":: Anything to swim in is fine, it doesn't have to be a suit. These "cover-ups" do not have to be an actual bathing suit, but certainly can be. This definitely is a personal choice. Shorts for bottoms and sports bras or T-shirts for tops are fine.

ð Bandanas or AP's:: Half dozen cotton bandanas or handkerchiefs. There is an old tradition at F&W of not providing napkins at meals. (Though, we have tried providing them recently.) This probably was a natural evolution from all of the time spent eating around a campfire. The traditional use of AP's ("all purpose" handkerchiefs) as hot pads, napkins, headgear, neckwear, bug dope dispensers, and anything else imaginable, became part of the culture. Therefore it is great if each camper can bring a half dozen of these cotton AP's. Old handkerchiefs are fine.

ð Towels:: One trusty towel, even with holes, will do fine. More can be better, depending on the weather.

§ Safety goggles. The Farm has a supply of these for work projects, but if a camper expects to do a lot of shop work or carpentry projects or may use these outside of camp, it can be helpful to have a personal pair.

§ Pajamas-anything from sweats to boxers and T-shirts to Dr. Denton's is fine.

§ Dress-ups (costumes) for skits

Equipment And Miscellany

ð Trunk or duffle:: A "footlocker" for storing clothes, etc. that must fit under the bunk so no taller than 19 inches. Campers sleep in bunk beds, so two trunks will need to fit side-by-side under the bottom bunk. The trunk serves as storage and as a dresser and often as a bench. Almost anything will do here, but it will survive best if it can be sat upon. Recently inexpensive plastic models have been used and do pretty well. Also this may need to be shipped to and from camp, so it needs to be able to survive that.

©ð Sleeping Bag:: An inexpensive bag is required for every camper, at the very least for the midsummer trip. In-camp many Farmers prefer sheets and blankets, while others find sleeping bags more convenient. A sleeping bag should be synthetic (polarguard, quallofill, hollofil, etc) with a nylon shell. Avoid cotton or down for the trail since these will not insulate if wet. Include a waterproof stuff sack and straps for attaching bag to pack. Two sleeping bag liners (or sheets) should be provided if the bag will be used in camp. If the purchase of a sleeping bag is prohibitive, please contact us before camp. We have a limited supply to loan and some folks will loan them for trip week. For sheets and blankets, it is ideal to have 2 fitted and 2 flat cot-size

sheets with 2 blankets (or 1 blanket and a sleeping bag that can be opened up to be used as a blanket.), but really any sheets will do fine. Any excess can easily be wrapped around the lightweight mattresses.

© Foam pad for trail sleeping:: A camping pad will be required at some point in the summer for every camper. At minimum this needs to extend from head to mid-thigh. Some more expensive models also serve as a camp chair or "Crazy Creek." Since we spend a lot of time on the ground or at least not in traditional furniture, these pads or chairs come in very handy around camp as well. Avoid plastic air mattresses, they are heavy and cold.

© Frame backpack (internal or external) with padded hip belt and padded shoulder straps. Most campers do NOT require a backpack. If you do purchase one, you will probably need to do some research. There are internal and external frames and many other choices. Make sure new backpacks are properly fitted before you purchase them. Have the sales person fill the pack with weight, adjust all straps to fit you, and then walk around the store for a while to make sure it is going to be comfortable. Day packs and book packs are not adequate substitutes for hikes. (but see above)

© Eating ware for trail use:: We do not go on trips often enough to warrant ANY expense here. Include: a sturdy plastic cup (plastic mugs with lids from convenience stores work well); an 8" plate or shallow bowl of aluminum, stainless steel, or enamel ware; a stainless steel spoon and fork; and something to put them in.

ð Water bottles:: One or two metal or synthetic water bottles...one quart capacity each. These items are in pretty constant use at camp and on the trail. Fancy choices are available but everyone can get by with almost anything.

ð Flashlight:: A small one with extra batteries. Cabins do not have electricity, but a lantern is supplied for the cabin. For reading in bed and getting around after dark, a small \$10 mag-lite does nicely.

ð Toiletry articles:: No fancy bag is required, a plastic Zip-loc bag is fine. Try to pack enough for the whole summer, it is difficult to replenish these at camp. Shampoos should be biodegradable and in plastic bottles. In camp we have outdoor toothbrush stations so whatever bag is used may be exposed to the weather.

§ Daypack for day hikes (very useful).

§ Musical Instrument We have communal storage space, in public, but out of the weather.

§ Small pillow & 2 pillow cases.

§ Pocket knife. No large sheath knives.

§ A couple of good books or the whole summer required reading list.

§ Sketch pad.

§ Sewing kit.

§ Knitting needles. Knitting is typically a craze with plenty of teachers and a shortage of needles.

§ Laundry Bag. We have cabin bags, but some prefer their own, especially in the cabin.

§ Stationery with stamps already on envelopes; stamps have a way of getting damp.

§ Pens and pencils.

§ Extra pair of glasses & glasses prescription if appropriate.

§ Cotton scrap material for quilting. The quilt is for Tamarack Farm's annual contribution to the Fair.

§ Insect repellent -No Aerosols Please.

Items That Must Be Left At Home

Tapes and CDs, radios and tape players, hair dryers, curling irons, hatchets (we use only axes), large or many-bladed knives, candles, electronic games and keyboards, breakable bottles, candy and junk food, and all aerosol sprays.

Please leave any valuables or irreplaceable items at home.

Helpful Hints

Before you purchase equipment or clothing check with family, friends, second hand stores and classified ads for used equipment. This is a rustic camp and second hand items are adequate. Should items be lost or damaged, it is much less of a financial hardship. Break in new boots before you come to camp. Make sure boots fit well with wool socks and a liner sock (avoid cotton socks as a liner) with no pinching across the top of the foot where the toes bend, no toes touching the front of the boot, and no slippage in the heel.

MARK IT with the camper's name! This applies to all belongings that come to camp.

Because of our communal cabin laundry system, even sorting socks can be difficult without labels. Because stick on labels come off, use sew-on labels or indelible markers on clothing, poncho, musical instruments, camera, fishing pole, etc.

A list of belongings pasted inside the camper's trunk lid will help check belongings at the end of summer.

A trunk or duffle that is being shipped should have the name and address pasted inside also. Follow the guidelines of the shipper. Please contact the camp office during the summer to indicate if a trunk needs to be shipped home at the end of camp.