CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

Aquaponics Three-Day Intensive Course Sample Agenda

Day One

- Meet and greet: Introductions and goals.
- Aquaponics overview and history. (Discussion and Q&A)
- Farm on Ogden aquaponics tour.
- Aquaponics system design and construction; A review of common aquaponic designs, typical hardware and sub-systems with an emphasis on the systems and methods utilized at Farm on Ogden. (Discussion, hands-on lab time, Q&A)

Day Two

- The biology and chemistry of aquaponics growing systems: A view of all aspects of the living system that powers an aquaponics system.
- Discussion will emphasize the problem areas of running an aquaponics farm, including water testing, nutrient deficiencies, supplement management and assessment of general system health.
- Detailed look at Integrated Pest Management (IPM). (Discussion and Q&A)
- Comparison and critique of aquaponics vs. hydroponics vs. traditional soil-based growing methods. (Discussion and Q&A)
- All things fish: Selection, nursery, feeding, health, harvesting and marketing. (Discussion and Q&A)
- Commercial aquaponics production: Commercial feasibility, design considerations, business models, production system management, crop management, selection and planning, seed propagation, day-to-day growing procedures, harvest processing, work flows, and GAP/USDA/FDA rule compliance. (Discussion and Q&A)

Day Three

- Running the system: A day in the life of Windy City Harvest aquaponics–We begin with a typical start-of-day system walk through, water testing and take any necessary actions. The fish are fed and daily system maintenance gets completed, including cycle system filters, sequester system, green produce harvest, and processing.
- Daily nursery maintenance and regular processes: The group moves seedlings to production system and starts to production. They seed new starts, move starts to nursery, and manage nursery data logs.
- Fish harvest and processing.
- Discussion of operational procedures & methods. (Q&A)
- Final seminar discussion and recap. (Q&A)

Copies of all class materials, logs, spreadsheets, etc. are provided.