

## **ECHO's STUDY PROGRAM:** A Chance to Learn about Plants & Techniques for the Tropical Subsistence Farm

**The Organization:** ECHO is a non-profit, Christian organization that serves missionaries and development workers affiliated with hundreds of organizations in as many as 180 countries around the world. We provide them with a networking technical bulletin (ECHO Development Notes), answer their specific agricultural questions, link them with other resource people and organizations, provide learning opportunities, and give them access to a wide variety of germplasm for plants which have proven useful under tropical growing conditions.

In southwest Florida, ECHO operates a Global Farm as a living demonstration of plants, small animals, and appropriate technologies that are important to small-scale farmers and gardeners in developing countries. The Global Farm serves as a learning tool for interns, a demonstration farm for missionaries and students, an educational tool for public tours, and a production farm for seeds and nursery plants.

At ECHO, we practice both organic and inorganic methods of gardening and pest control. We encourage our interns to be familiar with on-farm sources of nutrients and organic pest control practices and to use them as much as possible. However, because of labor and time constraints and low soil fertility in southern Florida, ECHO staff and interns do make limited use of synthetic fertilizers and herbicides.

**The Opportunity:** The Guided Self-Study Program combines access to ECHO's broad range of resources related to tropical agriculture with a chance to do hands-on work on the Global Farm. Though we are not a formal training center, ECHO provides an environment that fosters learning.

**Who:** The Study Program is designed to serve both active overseas development practitioners and residents of North America, often college students or recent graduates, who are interested in overseas service and who want an introduction to tropical agriculture. We are interested only in mature participants with a serious desire to learn, a capacity for self-directed study, and an expressed interest in development work. High moral standards and a lifestyle consistent with the Christian faith are required. Mid-career and senior missionaries should also ask about our Missionary-in-Residence program.

**What:** Participants choose between full- and half-time study options. The half-time study option is an equal split of a 40-hour work week between study and work on our Global Farm. Those with prior agricultural experience overseas often choose full-time study to maximize their time at ECHO. Those with less first-hand experience in tropical agriculture often want to benefit from the hands-on work it takes to maintain the Global Farm.

Shortly after arrival, participants meet with the Study Program Coordinator to discuss learning goals and areas of interest. Participants receive an explanation of how to use our library and other resources, a listing of topics and key books, and some limited assistance in refining their study program. Resources at ECHO include books, videos, appropriate technologies, bookstore, farm, arboretum, and tropical plant nursery. Participants are also able to take part in weekly training activities, special seminars and presentations for interns and staff.

Students who choose both work and study spend half of each week working with ECHO interns, who are responsible for maintaining the Global Farm. Daily tasks depend on the season and needs at the time. We encourage students to value this time of work because it is a time of learning in a hands-on setting. Work on the farm involves some combination of four main activities: assisting with the establishment or maintenance of our plantings, weeding and other general farm tasks, helping to feed and care for our animals, and working with appropriate technologies. In each case, emphasis is on plant and animal species that are appropriate for the tropics or subtropics.

**When:** ECHO accepts Study Program participants throughout the year. Participants spend a few days to a few months at ECHO, depending on their personal goals and situation. Apply early and plan to be flexible, as the number of applicants we can accept depends largely on availability of housing.

**Where:** ECHO's Global Farm is located at 17391 Durrance Road, North Fort Myers, FL 33917.

### The Costs

Tuition based on Length of Visit	Study Only	Study + 20 hrs/week hands-on experience on the farm
1-2 Days	\$30 /day if staying on campus. No charge if staying off campus.	This option not available.
3-4 Days	\$50 /day/person staying on campus \$70 /day/couple staying on campus \$25 /day staying off campus	This option not available.
5 or more Days	\$50 /day/person staying on campus \$70 /day/couple staying on campus \$25 /day staying off campus	\$30 /day/person staying on campus \$50 /day/couple staying on campus \$25 /day staying off campus
<b>Housing</b>	Provided free for accepted visitors and students	
<b>Transportation while at ECHO</b>	ECHO is located beyond the reach of public transportation and a mile from the nearest convenience store, so we highly recommend that students have their own car available. If this is not possible students can take the initiative to arrange to accompany interns and other students to the store, church, etc. and help pay for gas. <b>ECHO will not provide students with a vehicle.</b>	
<b>Transportation to or from Fort Myers airport or bus station</b>	Arranged with help of ECHO volunteers if within the hours 2 pm – 8 pm Sunday or 8 am – 8 pm Monday—Saturday. Otherwise, please plan to take a taxi.	
<b>Meals</b>	<b>ECHO does not provide meals.</b> There is a noon meal on Monday and Wednesday that students are welcome to eat with the interns. The cost of this meal is \$2/meal. All other meals are the responsibility of the student. Students can also volunteer to help prepare meals during their stay. Housing units at ECHO include cooking facilities shared by house residents. Grocery stores are within 15 minutes of campus by vehicle. We recommend that you plan at least \$50/week for food expenses.	
<b>Emergency health insurance</b>	<b>Proof of insurance is required for all participants.</b> Non-US citizens can purchase emergency health insurance through ECHO for \$3.50/day.	
<b>Children</b>	<b>Contact ECHO for specific details and availability. No childcare available; no free access of children to farm.</b>	
<b>Tuition scholarship</b>	Some donations are designated for this purpose; inquire if you need assistance.	

### More Questions?

If you have questions about the study program, we are easily reached by phone: (239) 543-3246; e-mail:

[echo@echonet.org](mailto:echo@echonet.org) or website -- <http://www.echonet.org>

For structured training programs, consider SIFAT [www.sifat.org](http://www.sifat.org) , HEART [www.heartvillage.org](http://www.heartvillage.org) [www.warner.edu/heart](http://www.warner.edu/heart) , Equip Ministries [www.equipministries.org/index.html](http://www.equipministries.org/index.html) , or World Hunger Relief [www.worldhungerrelief.org](http://www.worldhungerrelief.org) .

# APPLICATION FOR ECHO STUDY PROGRAM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ (Needed for housing)

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Don't use after: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Current Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Is this a Cell phone? Y / N

E Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address and Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact while at ECHO:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Currently I am: \_\_\_\_\_ a missionary or development worker  
\*list the name of the organization for which you work and a provide a brief description of the work  
\_\_\_\_\_ interested in pursuing an overseas assignment  
\*list the school you attended, major, graduation date; also please send a transcript from your  
\_\_\_\_\_ a college student  
\*list the school you are attending, major, and anticipated graduation date; also send a transcript of courses completed. Also indicate if you are interested in arranging to receive credit from your home institution.  
\_\_\_\_\_ other  
\*describe yourself briefly

\*Additional information:

## Study Program Options

I am applying for the \_\_\_\_\_ Study Only option  
\_\_\_\_\_ Study + 20 hrs/week work on the farm (for those staying a week or more)

Preferred length of stay \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred dates (or range) \_\_\_\_\_

Second choice of dates \_\_\_\_\_

**Housing**

ECHO has limited housing available. Please provide the following information so we can plan appropriately.

I would like to stay in ECHO housing for (check one):

single individuals \_\_\_\_\_ married couples \_\_\_\_\_ make my own arrangements \_\_\_\_\_

I **do/do not** (circle one) smoke. I **do/do not** (circle one) have special dietary restrictions.  
Describe-

I **am/am not** (circle one) willing to live in a “family” setting and live by the rules of the house.

My moral standards and lifestyle **are/are not** (circle one) consistent with the Christian faith.

**Why I am Applying** Attach additional pages and please number your answers

1. What specific topics do you want to study / learn more about while at ECHO?
2. What are your career goals (students) or service plans (missionaries and development workers)?
3. How will your participation in the study program at ECHO contribute to those plans?
4. What will be the next steps you take after finishing your studies at ECHO?
5. How does your faith, religion, or philosophy motivate your decision to study at ECHO?

**List of references**

We may write or call each of the people you list below and request that they fill out a reference form.

	Name, Phone number, and Address (street, city, state, zipcode)
Employer	
Pastor or Colleague	
Professor or Academic Advisor (For college students and those recently out of college only)	

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**Mail the completed application, a copy of your resume, and college transcript** (if required above) **to:** ECHO, Attn: Study Program, 17391 Durrance Road, North Fort Myers, FL 33917 or [echo@echonet.org](mailto:echo@echonet.org)