
The Farmcraft

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Current Mastercrafter: Masterfarmer Veyar

Mastercrafthall Location: Cibola Hold



badge art by Holly Hutchison

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Farmcrafthall is located in Cibola territory. This craft is also a "hold" craft, namely one that is practiced by virtually every holder and coholder on the planet. However, the Craft is the place where new farming techniques are developed and new hybrids of seed are created. The Farmcraft is always experimenting with cross-pollination, new crops and new uses for existing crops, methods to improve soil structure and disrupt pest life cycles, and ever new and better forms of fertilizer to balance mineral content of the soil with its capacity to hold nutrients.

Very few holders or coholders have craft training. They probably farm the same crops that have been farmed on that plot of land for generations and that's pretty much all they know how to do. Masterfarmer Veyar is working hard with journeyman Farmcrafters to change this philosophy, and has had some success especially among those coholders whose sole income is reliant upon long-term economic viability and sustainability of their farming practices.

A trained Farmcrafter knows farming inside out and knows the science behind it. If a holder gets a disease in his crop or discovers a weed he has never seen before, it is to the Hall he will turn for information. Veyar has commissioned copies of descriptions, hand-drawings and geographic ranges of weeds, insects and diseases for the various crops grown on the Southern Continent. A copy is

made for each journeyman farmer upon earning his first posting, and from that point, he is obliged to collect information on any new pests as they arise and provide that information to the Hold's journeyman harper for the Farmcrafthall's archives. Veyar works closely with the Harpercrafter to ensure that timely information is kept and distributed to Farmcrafters. Lord Holders will hire Journeymen Farmers to travel through their lands and determine how his acreage can be made to produce greater yield. While this might seem to contradict the Masterfarmer's training on sustainability in the short term, Veyar's experiments show that long-term profitability and sustainability are mutually inclusive.

The Farmcrafthall consists of a sprawling complex of fields, trees, paths and buildings. It is located in a naturally wet region of Cibola, so irrigation is not a problem. The Farmcraft pioneered a system of sewage composting that is now in use at several holds, and when this was in development the Farmcrafthall often smelled rather badly. It still has that reputation, despite the fact that the system has long been perfected and is virtually odor-free.



SUBCRAFTS

One subcraft of the Farmcraft is the Herbcrafter. Individuals that specialize in this subcraft are experts in growing all manner of medicinal and otherwise useful herbs, breeding them for increased potency, and harvesting and preserving them in the correct manner to minimize loss of medicinal value. This subcraft works very closely with the Healercafter.

Another subcraft is the Treecraft, which deals with trees for lumber production. These crafters work closely with the woodcraft section of the Smithcraft to breed and grow trees that are best suited for the types of wood needed. They also determine how much of a given plantation or forest may be harvested in any one Turn, to prevent depletion. At one time, this subcraft also oversaw fruit and nut tree production, but the field has developed to the point where it requires its own subcraft.

A third subcraft is the Horticulturecraft. This subcraft is focussed on the development of the production of fruit (tree fruit and berries), nuts, and vegetables. Most of the research in this subcraft involves breeding (primarily for disease and insect resistance), quality control (training systems, time of planting, spacing) and yield.



TRAINING AND RANKS WITHIN THE CRAFT

Young men are apprenticed to the craft between the ages of nine and twelve. A typical apprenticeship lasts between five and seven Turns, depending on the ability of the apprentice and the field in which the individual decides to specialize. There are no females in this craft.

During the Junior Apprentice training, a number of basic courses must be completed. These courses are: Crop Biology and Management, Genetics, Principles of Soil Science, Pest Identification and Management, Principles of Soil Conservation, Weather Patterns of Pern, Mathematics, and Reading and Writing. If a student fails to complete these course requirements in three Turns, he is returned to his Hold. Much of each course will be taught outdoors on the grounds of the Farmcraft Complex.

Senior Apprentices (those that have completed the basic course requirements above) may declare a particular specialization in a group of crops (subcraft) grown in a certain area of the Southern Hemisphere, in which they show exemplary aptitude and interest. Most Senior Apprentices, however, will continue to study the production of field crops, which are the mainstay crops on Pern. Three additional elective courses must be chosen from the following during their Senior Apprenticeship: Arid Climate Production, Irrigated Crop Production, Plant Breeding, Herbology, Silviculture, and Horticulture (Tree Fruit, Nuts and Vegetables). Those who elect to enter a subcraft will be automatically enrolled in the courses appropriate to their specialization. The elective courses must be completed in one Turn. Senior Apprentices will study for two Turns under the supervision of a Craftsman at the Farmcraft Hall, during which time they will be expected to assist the Craftsman with research and training Junior Apprentices. After the two-Turn study period, an additional two Turns of service at a minor Hold will give the Senior Apprentices hands-on training in their craft. The Senior Apprentices are supervised by the Journeyman Farmer posted to the Hold, and will learn the specifics of the climate, soil types and crops grown in the area. Typically, when Senior Apprentices “walk the tables” to earn Journeyman status, they will be posted to the same minor Hold or another Hold in the relative vicinity.

Those few Journeymen that excel in their particular field, and have provided additional benefit to the Hold they are posted to, will be considered for Craftmaster status. Most Journeymen, however, will serve a particular Hold for several years – often their entire career – unless specifically requested by a Lord Holder or the MasterFarmer himself. Journeymen Farmers are the “bread-and-butter” of the FarmerCraft. Journeymen are hired by Holders to ensure that the productivity and quality of crops produced are maintained. They are also responsible for determining where and how “marginal” land can be utilized to grow new crops, and assisting Craftmasters in the development of hybrids that are suited to the climatic and soil conditions found within their posting.



IMPORTANT PEOPLE

MasterFarmer Veyar -- Veyar looks his craft. Big, strong, bulky, though not fat. He looks neither old nor young, but appears as ageless as the trees. His face is

weathered from many Turns spent out in the open, plying his craft. He has white hair and pale blue eyes, his complexion is a dark tan. He’s gruff, abrupt, honest. And he reveres the earth. It’s like his child, his wife, and his mother, all in one. You DON’T do anything to damage the ‘innocent ones’ without a damn good reason. He doesn’t even like the clearing of greenery as a precaution to any stray Thread, but he acknowledges the need for it. (persona of Darren Robinson.)