

**PERSONAL STORY BY**  
**MARIA LIVET**

My year at Nordgård Aukrust  
as a BINGN apprentice

*by Maria Livet*

Hello, my name is Maria Livet from Norway!  
I have been on a farm in the mountains of south Norway called Aukrust since April last year. As I grew up at the coast I'm not used to mountains and sunny weather week after week as I have experienced on Aukrust!

When I first came to this valley in Lom municipality it was warm and green already. The snow had melted on the farm and the waterfalls roared in the mountain walls! I first thought it was a motor way! The cows were out, except the bulls that needed to wait a bit longer.

Aukrust is a herb farm, that is their main focus. I have been packing herbs in bags, filling vinegar in bottles, developing new products like herb salt and much more! Almost everything was brand new! The selling of the herbs, teas, flowers, cured sausages, vinegar and vegetables happens through the net shop and e-mails, markets and through a local producer cooperative; Gudbrandsdalsmat. It was interesting to learn how to produce, import products and how to sell them in different ways! Especially how a region can work together and form a network has created hope in me of the possibilities of future food production.

We sowed herbs, flowers, tomatoes, cucumbers and vegetables until mid May in the greenhouse before we planted and sowed outside. I feel so lucky to have experienced this much different plants that grows here!

We learned to build a dry stone wall which I for years have wanted to learn. A drainage on one of the fields where the cultures grow I'am also happy to learn about! Both useful for an own future place!

I took the responsibility for the recycling of waste at the farm and made a sign system in the garage where the waste goes, then frequently



taking it to the recycling station in Lom. I like to take care of waste a lot and the year with this really enriched me (funnily enough)!

I also took the responsibility for keeping the vegetable cellar free from rotten vegetables. That has been really important to see how long the vegetables can keep over the winter and how much vegetables are needed! Also to see that mice like carrots a lot! :)

In the BINGN education we have a lot of tasks and one of them is our personal project throughout the year. My project was to observe one Calendula plant and one cornflower plant every day and to see the metamorphosis of the leaves which I created a herbarium of. I realized how the plants are aiming to make the seeds and that the first leaves will fade as the new leaves are coming - like harvesting the leaves from kale. Very good learning!

The experience of harvesting flower heads all day in a big flower field together with people from all over the world in a valley in Norway, was amazing! That is something I will never forget!

With this and more I will leave Aukrust in April to the next apprentice place which is in Finland! It is a catering and accommodation place called Labby Catering Kaarnaranta that rents a field on Labby farm for restaurant gardening. There I will learn about gardening, wild foraging, processing and catering. I will write about my experience there in a later Newsletter!

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