

What is the Arboriversity Horticulture Training Program?

Arboriversity is a collaborative training platform created by The Morton Arboretum to help public gardens build skilled, confident horticulture teams. It combines flexible curricula, eLearning courses, and peer-tested tools to make consistent, scalable staff training more accessible—strengthening the people who care for our valuable living collections.

Why did we create Arboriversity?

Horticulture teams face shrinking numbers of experienced job candidates, limited training resources, and increasing retention challenges. Arboriversity responds by making it easier for gardens to build consistent, relevant, and scalable training—so staff can grow their skills, meet evolving job demands, and thrive in a changing workforce landscape.

What are the benefits of Arboriversity?

- Strengthens the horticulture workforce by helping gardens recruit, train, and retain skilled staff who can confidently care for living collections.
- Broadens and diversifies the talent pipeline by supporting entry-level hires and providing accessible, inclusive pathways into horticulture careers.
- Fills a gap in formal education as two- and four-year horticulture programs decline nationwide.
- Provides consistent, practical training that builds core knowledge, sets clear expectations, and supports accountability.
- Saves managers time by offloading foundational training online, freeing them to focus on high-value, in-field learning.
- Boosts engagement and retention by investing in development—one of today's top drivers of satisfaction, safety, and performance.
- Delivers flexible, garden-specific learning through a scalable platform that adapts to your team's needs, pace, and culture.



Interested in getting involved?

In the coming months, we'll be looking for individuals and organizations to help us review materials, create learning materials, and enroll in courses. **Scan the QR code** to access the Arboriversity Horticulture Training Program website, sign up for our email list, read project updates, and learn about opportunities to participate.

Arborversity Horticulture Training Program Curriculum

The Arborversity Horticulture Training Program curriculum was developed based on surveys and workshops conducted with hundreds of horticulture professionals from across the country. We asked them what skills were important for their teams' success and what types of training might support them in their work. The resulting framework includes a number of basic horticulture topics as well as subjects like safety and communication that can help develop staff personally and professionally.

Horticulture Fundamentals

These courses are intended to introduce some common horticulture concepts and skills and provide a shared foundation for working at public gardens and arboreta.

- Introduction to Botany and Botanical Concepts
- Mulching
- Plant Identification
- Planting Techniques
- Pruning
- Watering
- Weed Identification and Control

Safety Basics

These courses help staff learn and apply safe working practices for themselves, their colleagues, and the public.

- Identifying and Communicating about Workplace Hazards
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Safe Lifting Techniques
- Using Tools Safely
- Slips, Trips, and Falls
- Severe Weather Safety

Electives

These courses help staff advance and develop their skills in more specialized topics.

- Disaster Preparedness
- Pests and Diseases
- Plant Collections Documentation
- Plant Health Monitoring and Diagnosis
- Plant Selection and Design
- Soils

Leadership and Communication

These courses reinforce important collaboration and management skills that will help all employees advance their careers.

- Change Management
- Communicating in Context
- Effective Collaboration
- Giving and Receiving Feedback
- Managing Conflict
- Motivating and Developing Your Team
- Volunteer Management