

Course Description

Living collections are at the heart of every public garden, and documenting living collections accurately is essential for their care, management, and long-term stewardship. The course explores the key information that is important to record about plants, how that information is communicated and used, and the role of horticulture staff in keeping records accurate and up to date. You'll also become familiar with common tools and terms used in plant documentation and how to work effectively with the plant records team to support your garden's mission.

Learning Objectives

After taking this course, you will be able to:

1. Explain what a living collection is, why it matters, and how accurate plant recordkeeping supports your garden's mission and daily work.
2. Describe your role in maintaining accurate plant records and how your work connects with the garden's plant records staff.
3. Understand the basic elements of scientific plant name terminology (such as genus, species, and cultivar) and use them to communicate clearly about plants.
4. Interpret the information on plant labels and in living collections databases to understand what information is recorded and why it is used.
5. Determine which plant observations you are responsible for reporting and document them according to your garden's procedures.
6. Follow your organization's process for documenting living collections, including who to contact, what information to provide, and when to escalate questions or discrepancies.
7. Use plant documentation tools (labels, maps, and databases) appropriately to locate plants and support accurate recordkeeping.