

Course Description

Planting is a foundational skill for any horticulturist. This course introduces key techniques that help ensure healthy, successful plant establishment in a wide range of public garden settings. You'll learn how to prepare planting sites, handle different types of plant material, and follow consistent steps that support plant health, safety, and sustainability.

Whether working with trees, shrubs, perennials, or annuals, this course will help you build confidence in assessing site conditions, selecting the right tools, and planting with care. Designed to reflect widely accepted best practices, it supports clear communication and shared standards across teams, volunteers, and contractors.

Learning Objectives

After taking this course, you will be able to:

1. Prepare a planting site with the appropriate tools, materials, while adhering to safety and sanitation protocols to prevent the spread of pathogens.
2. Identify common types of plant material (e.g., balled-and-burlapped, containerized, bare root) and describe key differences in handling and planting.
3. Evaluate a plant's health and readiness for planting by inspecting root systems and identifying issues such as circling or girdling roots, and determine when to proceed, adapt, or escalate concerns to a supervisor.
4. Recognize and communicate site-specific challenges, such as soil compaction, drainage, or unexpected plant conditions.
5. Ensure correct planting depth by locating and exposing the root flare or crown of the plant while accounting for site-specific soil conditions (e.g. drainage or compaction).
6. Follow a logical sequence of planting steps to promote healthy establishment, including soil contact, water wells, staking (if needed), legacy site constraints, and cleanup.
7. Support sustainable planting practices that promote long-term plant health, including matching plant needs to site conditions and minimizing waste.
8. Identify common planting myths and avoid practices that may harm plants.
9. Collaborate effectively with team members, volunteers, or contractors to maintain consistent standards and ensure planting success.