

What is the Arborversity Horticulture Training Program?

Arborversity is a training program created by The Morton Arboretum to help public gardens build skilled, confident horticulture teams. It combines a flexible curriculum, self-paced eLearning courses, and practical tools co-created with peers across the industry to make consistent staff training more accessible—strengthening the people who care for living collections and helping landscapes thrive.

Why did we create Arborversity?

Horticulture teams face shrinking numbers of experienced job candidates, limited training resources, and increasing retention challenges. Arborversity 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 Arborversity?

- 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 degree 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-the-field learning.
- Boosts engagement and retention by investing in professional 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.



Enroll in Arborversity today!

We're looking for individuals and teams to enroll in and provide feedback on Arborversity courses. Use the QR code here or visit mortonarb.org/arborversity to learn more and sign up for free access to Arborversity.

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 common horticulture concepts and skills and provide a shared foundation for working at public gardens and arboreta.

- **Applied Botany**
- **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**
- Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls
- **Safe and Effective Tool Use**
- Safe Lifting Techniques
- Severe Weather Safety

Electives

These courses help staff advance and develop their skills in more specialized areas of public horticulture.

- *Disaster Readiness*
- Living Collections Documentation
- *Pests and Diseases*
- Plant Health Monitoring and Diagnosis
- Plant Selection and Design
- **Soil Fundamentals**

Communication and Leadership

These courses reinforce important communication, collaboration, and people management skills that can help staff at all levels advance their careers.

- Change Management
- Effective Communication
- Cross Team Collaboration
- Giving and Receiving Feedback
- Managing Conflict
- Motivating and Developing Your Team
- Volunteer Management

bold = courses available in Arborversity as of June 2026

italics = courses to be developed in partnership with APGA