

# Frequently Asked Questions about Becoming a Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Volunteer

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## 1. Who can volunteer at the Arboretum?

Anyone 18 or older can become a volunteer! We are typically looking for volunteers who are willing to make a longer-term commitment to maximize the benefit to both the volunteer and the Arboretum.

## 2. What types of skills and talents do good Arboretum Volunteers possess?

The Arboretum utilizes volunteers in every department and therefore our volunteer corps has a wide range of skills and talents! Most importantly all volunteers should have a passion for the Arboretum and its mission, and a desire to help us educate our visitors and the public about the importance of plants in our lives.

## 3. What kinds of volunteer opportunities are there at the Arboretum?

The main areas in which ongoing volunteer opportunities exist are listed below. [Click here](#) to see what opportunities are currently available and get an idea of where your skills and interests might fit. These opportunities change monthly and seasonally, so what you see now is only what is currently available to registered volunteers.

- Education
- Gardening
- Events
- Clerical
- Special Assignments

We encourage volunteers to join any of the following organizations. All directly support the Arboretum and help make our gardens what they are today.

- [Auxiliary](#)
- [Photographers Society](#)

- [Friends of the Library](#)
- [MN Herb Society](#)
- [MN Rose Society](#)
- ...and others!

#### 4. Do I need training or a background check?

Training is an essential part of being a volunteer at the Arboretum. **ALL** volunteers are required to attend a mandatory, one-time New Volunteer Orientation. At this free training, you will: complete your volunteer agreement and release form (a completed & signed form is required to be added to the volunteer database), learn about the Arboretum’s volunteer program, and figure out how you can get involved. Once you have attended the New Volunteer Orientation, additional trainings may be required depending on which opportunities you decide to apply for. Please keep in mind that attending a New Volunteer Orientation **does not** guarantee you a volunteer position at the Arboretum, instead it grants you access to apply for any of our current volunteer opportunities.

Screening our staff and volunteers is an important way to ensure a safe environment for all. The Arboretum follows the policies set forth by the University of Minnesota. All new volunteers are required to successfully complete a mandatory background check and view safety of minors training. Once completed, a name tag is shipped directly to your home. The cost associated with becoming a new volunteer \$40. All active volunteers will be required to repeat a background check every 3 years.

#### 5. How much of a commitment does the Arboretum expect from me?

To remain an “active” volunteer in our database, you must log at least one hour per year. Different departments and opportunities will outline varying levels of commitment – it all depends on which areas you decide to get involved with. Ultimately it is up to the volunteers to choose an opportunity that will work within their schedule.

#### Are there any benefits for volunteering at the Arboretum?

6. Absolutely! Volunteers get valuable benefits in exchange for the donation of their time and skills. These benefits are given to volunteers on a yearly basis and are based on hours served. Benefits include:

- Vouchers redeemable for rewards that may vary from year to year. Some examples
  - Discount on membership
  - Free gate passes to the Arboretum
  - Discounts on Arboretum educational classes
- Invites to volunteer appreciation events
- Monthly Volunteer News emails
- The opportunity to learn alongside a dedicated staff and corps of other volunteers

#### 7. Are there any age restrictions for volunteering at the Arboretum?

Our policy is that volunteers must be at least **18 years of age or older** to become an Arboretum Volunteer. The Arboretum is not able to supervise and ensure the safety of minors; therefore

we do not have any opportunities for volunteers under age 18 without supervision. A minor aged 16 or older may volunteer alongside a parent or guardian with an additional waiver.

#### **8. Can groups volunteer at the Arboretum?**

Yes, we welcome inquiries from groups interested in volunteering at the Arboretum. Keep in mind that group projects are weather dependent and limited. We typically need several weeks (or months) to make proper arrangements for groups, so please no last minute requests. Check the [Group Volunteering Page](#) for more info.

#### **9. How do I sign up to become a Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Volunteer?**

If the Arboretum sounds like a good fit for you, please sign up for an upcoming orientation to learn more. Please return to the [“How to Become a Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Volunteer”](#) page of the website and click on **STEP 2** for a link to register for an upcoming orientation. If you have questions about the process for becoming an Arboretum Volunteer, please contact the Volunteer Center at 612- 301-1203 or [arbyvol@umn.edu](mailto:arbyvol@umn.edu)

#### **Do I need to be a member of the Arboretum in order to volunteer?**

Yes, all of our volunteers either are or must become [members](#), therefore we offer discounts on membership to volunteers via earned vouchers. We strive to make volunteering accessible to all. *Cost should never be a deterrent to volunteering. Subsidies for partial or full payment of these fees are available when requested and require a commitment of 25 volunteer hours per year.*