

DIG INTO ECOLOGICAL GARDENING

Discover how to design and nurture healthy ecosystems in human spaces.



THE ECOLOGICAL GARDENER TRAINING PROGRAM

at the **Horn Farm Center** teaches the skills for designing, building, and stewarding biodiverse native habitats that support the interconnected health of wildlife and humans.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW





From your own backyard to forest next door, the Ecological Gardener Training Program (EGTP) is your window into the world of **designing and nurturing native plant communities** that support wildlife, pollinators, and ecological resilience in human-managed and human-impacted spaces.

As an exploratory study, the EGTP **cultivates deep familiarity and connection with native plant communities** across a range of environments. Students develop essential knowledge of local ecology that can be applied in a variety of contexts, from lawn conversion to support native habitat at home or the workplace to pursuing a full-fledged career as an ecological landscape practitioner.



Who Takes the EGTP?



-  Homeowners exploring lawn conversion.
-  Employees and volunteers eager to bring nature to the workplace or community space.
-  Career beginners, pivoters, and gap year students looking to explore or enter the native landscaping workforce.
-  Parents, environmental educators, and non-traditional students seeking native plant knowledge to share with others.

*I've always been a home gardener happy to plant and explore natives, but all the information out there felt overwhelming. I applied for Horn Farm Center's Ecological Gardening Training Program looking for hands-experience and practical guidance. It gave me that practical piece, but more importantly, it gave me a **life altering education** in natural history, a sense of place in the ecosystem we share, and a community of people full of hope, love, and the willingness to work hard and get nerdy about nature.*



 Lauren, 2022 EGTP Trainee

PROGRAM COVERAGE

FIRST FOUR WEEKS:

Ecological Core Classroom Curriculum

Sundays, 2/11-3/3, 8am-4pm

Held in conjunction with the [Land Steward Training Program](#), this blended curriculum covers essential ecological foundations for regenerative land practices. Students are given the opportunity to explore new lenses for seeing and interacting with natural systems.

Topics:

- 🍃 Earth's natural history.
- 🍃 Basic ecology and natural cycles.
- 🍃 Historical land uses and misuses.
- 🍃 Frameworks for ecological stewardship.
- 🍃 Field and forest movement mechanics.



TWELVE WEEKS:

Hands-On Training

Tuesdays, 3/5-5/21, 8am-12pm w/ three field trips

Training sessions at the Horn Farm and other regional sites covering topics in ...

Field Observation:

- 🍃 Landscape Archetype Study
- 🍃 Native Plant Communities

Planning | Design:

- 🍃 Ecological Landscape Design
- 🍃 Site Preparation Techniques

Installing | Stewardship:

- 🍃 Plant Sourcing
- 🍃 Process/Tools for Habitat Garden Installation
- 🍃 Seasonal Stewarding Tips



ENGAGEMENT AND OUTCOMES

Through 80 hours of classroom and hands-on learning, EGTP trainees will ...

- 🍃 (Re)kindle a meaningful, action-based **connection** with the natural world.
- 🍃 Gain **knowledge** in ecological systems and plant identification.
- 🍃 Enhance **observation** skills for native plants communities and landscape archetypes.
- 🍃 Practice foundational **field skills** in gardening for ecology and wildlife.
- 🍃 Experience hands-on, professional **project design** and implementation in a collaborative setting.
- 🍃 Take home a **toolkit** outfitted for ecological observation and gardening, including a Hori Hori knife and loupe.

I:I2

Instructor : Student
ratio



The EGTP was fantastic, so organized and interesting, wonderful field trips, all hands-on designing, building, planting ... It truly was an incredible experience that I will always hold close to my heart.

🍃 Amanda , 2022 EGTP Trainee

Additional perks include ...

- 🍃 At least three **field trips** to regional ecological gardening destinations. Past visits have included:
 - Chestnut Grove Natural Area (Conestoga, PA)
 - Hungry Hook Native Plant Nursery (Bainbridge, PA)
 - Mt. Cuba Horticultural Center (Hockessin, DE)
- 🍃 Two **overlapping sessions** with the Land Steward Training Program.
- 🍃 **Natural movement** and wind-down sessions.
- 🍃 Optional **shared lunch** with LSTP trainees.



PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Sundays, 2/11 to 3/3, then Tuesdays, 3/5 to 5/21

WEEKS I-4

2/11, 2/18
2/25, 3/3

Ecological Core Curriculum

*Class location dependent on the [Horn Farm's farmhouse reconstruction](#) progress. Classes will either take place at the Horn Farm Center or a nearby location that will be communicated before the program begins.

8 hours each class (8am-4pm)

WEEKS 5-16

Hands-On Training

*Classes will be held at the Horn Farm Center and regional natural public spaces.

4 hours each class (8am-12pm)

*With option to linger for lunch with the LSTP, 12-12:30pm. Times variable for field trips

3/5

3/12

3/19

3/26

4/2

4/9

4/16

4/23

4/30

5/7

5/14

5/21

Field Observation & Site Analysis

- Two trips to observe landscape archetypes and plant communities in the field.

Research & Design

- One field trip focused on botany and plant science.
- One overlap session with the Land Steward Training Program.

Project Install & Stewarding

- One overlap session with the LSTP.



This was an outstanding experience! The core classes provided great context for ecological gardening practices and the course gave us plenty of experiences to practice planning, site prep, and planting. The field trips were exceptional and the camaraderie with other gardeners was a joy.

 Diane, 2022 EGTP Trainee

APPLICATION AND FEES

To Apply:

Head to <https://hornfarmcenter.org/ecological-gardening-training/> and submit an application. After applying, you will receive an email from the instructors to schedule an **informal get-to-know-you meeting** to discuss your interests, goals, and needs.

Program Cost: \$1200

\$75/week for 16 weeks covering instructor hours, field trip reservations, plants, and program supplies.

Experiential add-ons:

The Land Steward Training Program runs concurrently with the EGTP, taking place Tuesdays 3/5 to 5/21 from 8am to 4pm. **Get a taste of the LSTP by joining select afternoon sessions (1pm-4pm)** for an added cost. These workday-style windows cover hands-on, rigorous experience in bolstering natural landscapes by addressing soil stability, water retention, and other land-based factors that are critical companions to the wellbeing of native plants. **Dates and prices for LSTP add-on sessions will be announced at a later time!**

For more information on the Land Steward Training Program, visit: hornfarmcenter.org/land-steward-training/

Scholarships:

Limited financial assistance may be available to reduce program costs for eligible trainees. *See the program application for more information about scholarships and how to apply.*

Questions? Reach us at education@hornfarmcenter.org



Past EGTP cohorts at the Horn Farm!

Being a part of the EGTP has been life-changing. With this group, I was able to find like-minded people who truly appreciate Nature's beauty and have created achievable ways to design/impact our own spaces. Learning about native plants and ecological communities has changed the way I look at green spaces in our daily lives. Although it's easy to feel overwhelmed in the current state of things, I learned how little acts can bring about big changes. This ecological gardening experience at Horn Farm brings invaluable knowledge to anyone interested in helping restore natural habitats and create regenerative green spaces.

 SC, 2023 EGTP Trainee



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