

DIG INTO ECOLOGICAL GARDENING

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



**WAXWING
ECOWORKS CO.**
GROWING ECOLOGICAL GARDENS

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 in human-impacted spaces.

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?



- ☛ *Landscape practitioners & aspiring stewards looking to bolster their ecological practices and professional toolkits.*
- ☛ *Employees & volunteers eager to build healthy natural spaces at their workplace or in the community.*
- ☛ *Landowners exploring lawn conversion and restoration.*
- ☛ *Career-pivoters, parents, & non-traditional students seeking knowledge and skill for creating a biodiverse future.*

The EGTP was the asset I was seeking to gain employment in the ecological landscaping industry. In less than a year's time I went from having a goal, to being educated, to interviewing with confidence, and now I'm employed!

☛ **Deanna, 2025**



PROGRAM COVERAGE

FIRST FOUR WEEKS:

Ecological Core Classroom Curriculum

Tuesdays, 2/9-3/2, 9am-1pm

Explore new lenses for seeing natural systems. While covering the fundamentals of ecological science, the Eco Core engages students in deepening our “sense of place” in and with the landscape, integrating creative introspection, mindful movement, history, and a re-weaving of nature and culture.

Topics:

- Ecology, natural cycles, and Earth history.
- Impacts & challenges on the local landscape.
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).
- Fostering relationships with flora & fauna.
- Ecological design foundations.



TWELVE WEEKS:

Hands-On Training

Tuesdays, 3/9-5/25, 8am-12pm

Sessions at the Horn Farm and regional reference landscapes. *Major topics:*

OBSERVE | RELATE

- Studying Reference Landscapes and Native Plant Communities.

PLAN | DESIGN

- Mapping a Habitat Garden.
- Preparing a Planting Site.

INSTALL | TEND

- Sourcing and Planting.
- Stewarding Through the Season.
- Completing Independent Project.



ENGAGEMENT AND OUTCOMES

Through 64 hours of classroom and hands-on learning, EGTP trainees will ...

- 🍃 (Re)kindle an embodied, action-based **connection** with nature in the Lower Susquehanna bioregion.
- 🍃 Gain **knowledge** in local ecology, plant identification, and designing spaces for environmental resilience.
- 🍃 Enhance **observation** skills for native plants communities, reference landscapes, and ecological health.
- 🍃 Practice foundational **field skills** in gardening for ecology and wildlife.
- 🍃 Experience hands-on, professionally-guided **project design and implementation** in a collaborative setting.

I:I2

Instructor : Student
ratio



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)
- 🍃 **Mindful movement** and body mechanics training to support stamina for continued stewardship.
- 🍃 **Built-in consultation** on personal gardening or research projects.
- 🍃 Take-home **native plant plugs** (supplies allowing)



PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Tuesdays, February 9th to May 25th, 2026

WEEKS I-4

2/9, 2/16
2/23, 3/2

Ecological Core Curriculum

4 hours each class (9am-1pm)

WEEKS 5-16

Hands-On Training

4 hours each class (8am-12pm)

**Note one Sunday class (4/25) for full-day field trip to Mt. Cuba Horticultural Center.*

3/9

3/16

3/23

3/30

4/6

4/13

4/20

4/25*

5/4

5/11

5/18

5/25

Field Observation



Two field trips to observe reference landscapes and plant communities.

Plan | Design



One field trip focused on botany and plant science.



Prepping and designing planting site at the Horn Farm.

Install | Steward



One trip, final planting, and project presentations.



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

Transportation for all classes, including off-site field trips, is the responsibility of the student.

APPLICATION AND COST

To Apply:

Head to hornfarmcenter.org/ecological-gardening-training/ and submit an interest form.

After doing so, you will receive an email from the instructor to schedule an **informal get-to-know-you meeting** to discuss your goals, needs, and questions.

Program Cost: \$1280

\$80/week for 16 weeks covering instructor hours, guest instructor fees, field trip reservations, plant purchases, and program supplies.

Completing Payment:

After submitting a nonrefundable **\$200 deposit** to enroll, custom installment plans are available to break down payments over the course of the program.

Scholarship funding not guaranteed at this time. See webpage for details and updates.

Questions? Reach us at education@hornfarmcenter.org



Class of 2023



Class of 2024



Class of 2025

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



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