



## BERKSHIRE BOTANICAL GARDEN

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### Horticulture Certificate Program Opens New Career Doors Berkshire Botanical Garden Offers --Encore Job Training

The Berkshire Botanical Garden in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, an educational non-profit dedicated to teaching people how to garden, offers Horticulture Certificate Program. With so many individuals re-entering the job market, the program offers an encore job opportunity and a career path for new graduates.

The horticulture program is a non-credit, lifelong learning and workforce development program for adults designed to benefit the gardening professional, as well as the aspiring gardening professional and the home gardener. Those interested can enroll in a single course of interest, or work toward a Level 1, 2 or 3 certificate, which can be completed in one year. Courses which run from Sept through March begin at \$135 and the entire certification per level costs \$1030.

According to the National Gardening Association, there are 90 million households in the US with a yard and garden. Approximately 35 million are conventional gardeners, while 5 million are organic gardeners. The remaining are a mix of hybrid and other types of gardeners.

The lawn and landscape industry established itself as an important component of the service sector of the economy in the late 1990s. By the early 2000s, retail sales of lawn and garden products and services, including professional landscape, lawn care, and tree care services and related supplies, had reached \$22 billion. Nearly one quarter of U.S. households utilized professional lawn care services. Industry sales were estimated to reach \$25 billion by 2007, according to the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

“This is the ultimate job training program,” says Director of Education at the Berkshire Botanical Garden, Elisabeth Cary. “We offer classroom and hands-on gardening techniques for those in the field and train people looking for new careers.”

This is the only course of its kind in the region available to gardeners at many different levels wishing to gain extensive skills and knowledge both in the classroom and out in the field. Classes range from topics like Mixed Border Design, Orchards and Small Fruit Gardens, Designing the Edible Landscape, taking gardeners to a higher level learning with cutting edge horticulture skills.

“If you want the knowledge on how to grow plants well, take care of the soil, and learn environmentally sensitive gardening techniques, then this is the place to be,” says Cary. The course is economical and times are flexible to accommodate busy lives and work schedules. Classes are held in the evenings with field work taking place on the grounds of the Berkshire Botanical Garden throughout the weekend.

It’s important to note that the focus of the program is practical work. Horticulture Certificate instructors are professionals working in the field bringing their extensive knowledge, as well as their work experience. This, and the fact that this course takes place in a botanical garden is what sets it apart from other basic plant courses or garden instruction.

For information call Elisabeth Cary at the Berkshire Botanical Garden at 413-298-3926 ext. 15. To register, call Berkshire Community College’s Life Long Learning administrator, Linda Pierce at 413 236 2122 where registrations are taken. For further information about the Garden and listings for the rest of our year-round education program classes and workshops visit [www.berkshirebotanical.org](http://www.berkshirebotanical.org)