



FAQs about Volunteer Training and Volunteering at the UC Davis Arboretum

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This sheet will answer many of the most common questions for prospective volunteers. If you have questions not answered here, please contact Roxanne Reynolds at (530) 752-4880 or rgloe@ucdavis.edu

Who volunteers at the UC Davis Arboretum?

The Arboretum has over 120 regular volunteers who participate in weekly teams in the areas of gardening, nursery propagation and care, education, curatorial record-keeping, facilities maintenance and more. These active volunteers range in age from college-age young adults to seniors. Volunteers include students, working professionals, stay-at-home parents, and retirees with diverse interests and experience.

Why does the Arboretum need volunteers?

Volunteers, working alongside the Arboretum's professional staff, help make the Arboretum an incredible resource available to the entire community. Volunteers play a critical role in developing, supporting and sustaining the world-renowned gardens, excellent education programs, and innovative activities that create a bridge between campus and community. Collectively, volunteers contribute thousands of hours of time each year, enabling the Arboretum to have a tremendous impact with its limited budget.

What time commitment is required to volunteer at the Arboretum?

Most of the regular volunteer teams meet weekly for approximately three hours per week. Due to the significant amount of time we invest in training and orienting new volunteers, we ask that new volunteers be prepared to commit to providing three hours per week of service for a minimum of one year. Most teams meet on a specific weekday morning each week as indicated on the Volunteer Team Description and Interest Sheet.

Usually I can commit to volunteering 3 hours per week but I may be away occasionally for vacations or medical appointments. Can I still volunteer? We expect that regular volunteers are committed to being able to attend most volunteer days. However, we understand that everyone has vacations or appointments that periodically conflict with regular volunteer days. These absences, if not excessive, can be arranged with your team leader. Also, most teams take a planned hiatus for several weeks over the winter holidays.

Do I need to have any special skills or prior knowledge to become a regular volunteer?

We don't require any special skills other than an interest in learning. You will receive both the general orientation and specialized training needed to be successful in your specific team. However, we encourage you to think about your work style and interests in indicating your team preference. For example, if you prefer indoor work, have a keen sense of attention to detail, and are not intimidated about learning a new computer software program (with training), then the Curatorial team would be an excellent fit. Or if



you love being outside any time of year and can't wait to get your hands dirty working with plants, then the Gardener teams are a good match.

I've heard you have other teams but I don't see them listed on your team information sheet. Are those available to new volunteers?

The teams listed on our volunteer training publicity materials (Gardeners, Nursery Propagators, Nursery Caretakers, and Curatorial Volunteers) are the only teams currently recruiting for new volunteers. We do have other active volunteer teams not listed but those teams are full and don't have space for additional volunteers at this time. In some cases we have wait lists and give priority for filling any open slots to experienced volunteers already active at the Arboretum.

When would I need to select a specific team?

We ask you to indicate your initial team preference on the Volunteer Team Interest Sheet you submit with your Volunteer Application. Many people know right away which team would be the best fit for them based on their interests and availability. If you are unsure, please rank your preliminary interests and you will have the opportunity to make a final selection during the volunteer training class.

Is the day I volunteer flexible or does it need to be the same day each week?

Generally each team meets on a specific day of the week throughout the year and you will work with the same group on the same day each week. The one exception to this is the Docents who volunteer mainly on the weekends leading public tours. Docents can select the date(s) they will lead tours when the schedule is arranged about 2-5 months in advance.

What if I have special skills, experience or knowledge I could offer?

We welcome people with special knowledge, experience and skills in all areas (e.g., GIS background, photography/videography, master gardeners, retired faculty) to contact us about volunteering or indicate special skills on their volunteer application. Although most of our volunteers work on regular weekly teams, sometimes we are able to arrange special projects or assignments for volunteers with unique talents. We still encourage all new volunteers to complete the introductory training so they can become familiar with the Arboretum's mission, collections and programs.

Do I need to be a member of the Friends of the UC Davis Arboretum to volunteer?

No, we don't require volunteers to be members of the Friends support group. However, most volunteers choose to join because of the excellent benefits, which include discounts at plant sales, discounts at local nurseries, free admission to other botanical gardens, a quarterly newsletter and more. If you are not already a member of the Friends, you will be given the opportunity to join during the training class.

What are some of the benefits of volunteering at the Arboretum?

People volunteer at the Arboretum for many different reasons and find many rewarding aspects to their service, such as learning new skills, making new friends, supporting



environmental education and giving back to the community. Through your service you will have the chance to work with outstanding people who enjoy working with plants and people in a positive, friendly environment. Volunteers are respected and appreciated for all they do in the Arboretum and we make it a priority to recognize and thank our excellent volunteer teams throughout the year.