



Taltree
arboretum & gardens®

Taltree Arboretum & Gardens Volunteer Handbook

The intention of this handbook is to acquaint each volunteer with Taltree Arboretum & Gardens and to offer information about our organization, its philosophy, history, and policies. Please read this handbook carefully and feel free to contact the Volunteer Coordinator with any questions or comments regarding its contents.

On behalf of Taltree Arboretum and Gardens, we would like to express our gratitude in advance. Your time, effort, and enthusiasm are a great asset to us, and a big contribution to our success. Without your help, we could not do any of it! We are proud of your efforts and hope that you recognize how valuable you truly are. Thank You!

Taltree Founders, Board of Directors, and Staff

Welcome New Volunteers

You as a volunteer are vital to Taltree Arboretum & Gardens. We depend on you to perform a variety of jobs that would otherwise go uncompleted or subject to many delays. Even tasks that seem less than glamorous are valuable to our overall success. We cherish our volunteers and have an incredible amount of respect and devotion to you. In turn, we expect you to be aware, committed and conscious of your roles. You can and should take pride in being a part of making Taltree Arboretum & Gardens a reality.

Taltree Arboretum & Gardens looks forward to having you with us, to learn about the arboretum's collections, receive informal training, make professional contacts, enrich your own life, provide valuable knowledge, and bring pleasure to the public. As you become part of the arboretum, you will bring your interests and experiences to us to share. In turn, your dedication and contributions will be appreciated as something meaningful and inspiring to all of us.

Taltree Arboretum & Gardens is involved in teaching and research. We serve as an outdoor laboratory for students, nursery professionals, and the public. Through its plant collections, programs, and special services, the arboretum integrates the spirit of discovery and the beauty of a public garden in providing a dynamic atmosphere for learning.

Volunteers receive updates and invitations to attend arboretum activities, lectures, and training sessions. We encourage you to meet and work with other volunteers and staff and help in the overall growth and development of the arboretum.

You may be asked to contact staff directly to arrange to work in the gardens. We are open to your ideas and comments at any time and look forward to your becoming a part of Taltree Arboretum & Gardens.

Volunteer Guidelines

The following Volunteer Guidelines are designed as a general guide to ensure individual safety, improve security, promote consistency and help streamline operations so we can maximize our efforts more efficiently.

1. All Volunteers must complete and have an approved Volunteer Identification Form on file before they can volunteer for any activities.
2. Background checks may be necessary to volunteer in some arboretum areas.
3. Volunteers should sign in when they arrive and sign out when they leave so the Arboretum can track all volunteer hours. The accounting of Volunteer Hours is very important to Arboretum for reporting purposes.
4. Designated "Handicapped" parking spaces are available in both parking lots. These spaces are reserved for people with legitimate handicap needs only and their cars must bear the appropriate registration tags.
5. Always drive slowly and carefully in designated areas and while entering and leaving the parking lots. There are children, students and elderly visitors that might be hard to see. Exercise caution at all times and be aware of nursery equipment and personnel. Never drive your vehicle on the Arboretum grounds.

6. Volunteers should always have a scheduled date for working, which agrees with a master schedule prepared by the Volunteer Coordinator. Unscheduled volunteer activities sometimes occur, and should be pre-approved by the Volunteer Coordinator. The scheduling of Volunteer activities is very important to ensure no conflicts exist with The Arboretum's master schedule.
7. The use of illegal drugs and alcohol while volunteering are strictly forbidden. This activity poses a danger to the person using these substances, as well poses a danger to other Volunteers and Staff members, plus Arboretum visitors. Please consider others and restrict smoking to permitted areas.
8. Any form of discrimination will not be tolerated by the Arboretum. This includes any acts by Volunteers or Staff. This includes, but is not limited to sexual, ethnic, age, gender, disability, religious or other. Volunteers must report any actions they deem discriminatory immediately to their Staff supervisors or Support Group leader and a report must be filed with the Director of the Arboretum.
9. Volunteers must report any personal injuries, accidents or medical problems immediately to their Staff supervisor or Support Group leader or another Staff member and a written report should be completed. This includes any injuries which may not be noticeable at the time of occurrence, but show up later.
10. Any inappropriate discussions, complaints or verbal altercations between the Taltree staff and volunteers will not be tolerated under any circumstances. If Volunteers have any problems they should immediately report them to the Volunteer Coordinator. Any policy issue or question will be forwarded to the Director of the Arboretum for resolution.
11. If a violation of Volunteer policy is considered grounds for dismissal by the Director of the Arboretum, Volunteers will not be able to return to the Arboretum as a Volunteer until or unless the situation is remedied and approved in writing by the Director.
12. Training and Orientation: New volunteers are expected to attend an Orientation Session to become familiar with the Arboretum. Experienced volunteers are welcome to participate as a refresher session. Sessions will include lecture and tours of the Arboretum grounds. Specialized training is needed to be placed in some areas. Training will be offered by staff/volunteer supervisors in their area. Successful completion of training will determine continued placement.
13. Scheduling Time: Volunteers are requested to schedule their time early in the month. Please keep in mind that the time you schedule to work in the Arboretum should be considered as a commitment since Taltree staff must coordinate the efforts with that of the volunteers. Unavoidable absences must be reported as soon as possible by calling the Volunteer Coordinator.
14. Recording Hours: Each volunteer is expected to record in the log book or email the Volunteer Coordinator the total number of hours spent in the Arboretum and related activities. Log books can be found in the Volunteers Coordinator's Office. These hours are very important to the Arboretum, for volunteer recognition and for Facilities Management statistics.
15. Safety Procedures: All accidents or injuries sustained by volunteers must be reported immediately to the Volunteer Coordinator. First aid kits are available to you and should be used for minor injuries. For more serious injuries, do not attempt first aid unless you have been properly trained. Contact Arboretum staff for assistance. Your safety is of utmost importance to us.

16. Dress appropriately for your volunteer project. Volunteers are representing the Arboretum while on the grounds and are expected to dress in appropriate apparel.
17. Volunteers from a wide age-range are welcome at the Arboretum; however, volunteers under the age of 15, must be accompanied by an adult.

Code of Business Conduct

Basic human values and high standards of ethical conduct are integral to the development of Taltree Arboretum & Gardens. The Arboretum has adopted the following basic principles as our Code of Business Conduct.

- Conduct all business with honesty, integrity, and in full compliance with all legal requirements.
- Treat others fairly and with respect.
- Maintain a safe workplace.
- Establish and maintain a high standard of individual and team performance.
- Provide opportunities for volunteer development.
- Encourage teamwork and open communication.
- Strive for excellence in all Arboretum activities.
- Respect all forms of environmental excellence.

Rules of Conduct

The rules currently in effect are outlined below. The rules are fair and made for the protection of every individual. New or revised rules will become effective upon publication.

The following activities and conduct are prohibited:

- Rude, immoral, threatening, abusive, or obscene conduct or language.
- Habitual tardiness or failure to begin work at proper starting time.
- Coming to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Divulging confidential research projects.
- Divulging information about donors and volunteers that might be acquired while volunteering at Taltree.
- Abusing phone and other electronic device privileges.
- Sexual or other forms of improper or inappropriate harassment. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission defines sexual harassment as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." (Note: the Sexual Harassment Policy of Taltree is posted in Taltree offices).
- Violation of association policies or rules.
- Discrimination against any persons because of color, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation.

What do we Look for in our Volunteers?

- Self-motivation
- Flexibility
- Dependability
- Willingness to take direction
- Ability to work independently

Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer, you have the right to:

- Be given worthwhile and rewarding volunteer jobs.
- Be trusted to do your job the best way you know how.
- Be trained and supervised in a supportive and positive environment.
- Give feedback in the appropriate way using the proper methods.
- Be given recognition.
- End your volunteer experience, with notification if possible, optionally providing a reason
- Work in a safe environment
- Appropriate tools and information for the job assignment

As a result, you have the following responsibilities:

- To accept only assignments within your ability.
- To familiarize yourself with all materials in this handbook.
- To respect confidences and the confidential information of the organization and its staff, board, committees and volunteers.
- To maintain a professional attitude and use professional methods.
- To support the Vision, Mission and Goals of Taltree Arboretum and Gardens
- To inform Taltree of your concerns including but not limited to physical limitations and allergies due to insect bite and stings, to poison ivy or oak and certain types of pesticides, sprays or chemicals for the elimination of insects or invasive plants and grasses. In addition, to have any appropriate medicine on hand for those allergies.
- To provide appropriate clothing except for specialized safety equipment.

Taltree has the right to:

- Rely on the age of all volunteers to be that of 15 years or older unless accompanied by a parent/guardian or within a supervised group.
- Dismiss unproductive or dissatisfied volunteers. Please be aware that every reasonable effort will be made to address issues and solve problems with all due respect to the volunteer.
- Know the limitations and expectations of volunteers.
- Decline any prospective volunteer, at its discretion.
- Expect notification from volunteers when unable to fulfill an assignment.
- Rely on the volunteers having their own insurance to cover them while operating Taltree vehicles or their own equipment while performing volunteer services.

Taltree recognizes having the following responsibilities:

- To use volunteers to accomplish goals within a timeline and budget.
- To define jobs, expectations and to provide training when needed.
- To create a positive, challenging, safe, and rewarding work environment.
- To prepare staff to work with volunteers.
- To keep the private information of each volunteer confidential and use it only as appropriate to the volunteer program.

Incentives

As a volunteer, you bring a wealth of expertise and experience to the program. You are encouraged to make suggestions for improvements and to utilize your talents fully. You play an essential role in the mission and vision of Taltree Arboretum & Gardens. You contribute to the education and conservation programs which enable Taltree to further its dedication to creating a sustainable and natural environment.

Many benefits of volunteering at Taltree are intangible:

- Receiving help in reaching personal goals.
- Increasing leadership, organizational, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.
- Participating in training and learning opportunities.
- Having the satisfaction of helping others.
- Receiving encouragement and recognition.
- Developing and increasing self-confidence.
- Developing lasting friendships.
- Acquiring information usable in other situations.
- Sharing interests with others.
- Increasing public relations skills.

Volunteer Recognition Awards

Volunteers earn one token for each hour they volunteer at Taltree between Sept. 1, 2009 and Aug. 30, 2010. Tokens can be used to attend a class, choose embroidered Taltree logo items, or pay for memberships. Hours must either be recorded in the book in the office, e-mailed to sheyer@taltree.org or snail-mailed, as they must be in writing.

Call the office if you are unsure how many hours you have. Your hours will be sent to you. Here are just a few of the incentives that can be ordered by those who qualify:

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| ☼ Embroidered full-zip hooded sweatshirt | ☼ Embroidered short-sleeved polo shirt |
| ☼ Embroidered long-sleeved denim shirt | ☼ Taltree Class |
| ☼ Embroidered cap | ☼ New membership or renewal |

*Tokens may not be used for additional class materials or for Taltree events.
Tokens are not transferrable.*

Descriptions of Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer position descriptions are available for each opportunity at Taltree. Take time to read those that pertain to your area of interest. Specific training will be offered for each opportunity. Volunteers may choose to change or add an additional position at any time, and are encouraged to view the opportunities and discuss changes in positions as needed.

Taltree Gardens

Gardening: Do you love working with plants? Then get your hands dirty while assisting in Taltree's gardening projects including; planting, mulching, weeding, pruning, construction of new gardens, seed collection, watering, transplanting and moving plants

Grounds Maintenance

Grounds/Facilities: If you get satisfaction from carpentry, painting, irrigation and garden hardscaping, or just general maintenance, we could use your assistance. There are a variety of projects on the grounds at Taltree that will provide volunteer opportunities for you, whether you like to work alone or with a group. Although skills in these areas are desirable, training will be available if you just want to provide an extra pair of hands.

Habitat Restoration: Although this work can be physically challenging, restoration volunteers will come away with a feeling of accomplishment in providing a better environment for native plants and wild animals. Along with removing invasive plants, you will prepare areas for and participate in prescribed burns. Work clothes with long sleeves and pants, sturdy shoes or boots and work gloves are required.

Education Volunteers in the education arena are involved with a wide range of programs, whether it is teaching the adult or adolescent public, presenting pre-established training programs, or providing orientation to fellow volunteers.

Docent-led children's hikes: Children's hike docents should love working with kids and enjoy imparting information about the outdoors to them in one- to two-hour increments. Each year Taltree provides training and hands-on opportunities for those who wish to share their interest in nature. We understand that each Taltree docent has a different level and area of expertise, and encourage them to bring their knowledge and enthusiasm to Taltree's docent program. The hikes usually last from one to one and a half hours and average a mile or so, depending on the age of the participants. Groups of school children are presented with a game at the end of their hike that helps to reinforce what they learned on the trail.

Docent-led adult hikes: Taltree's docents for adult groups have specialized knowledge of the woodland, wetland and/or prairie ecosystems here at the arboretum. We understand that each Taltree docent has a different level and area of expertise, and encourage them to bring their knowledge and enthusiasm to Taltree's docent program. Each year Taltree provides training and hands-on opportunities for those who wish to share their interest in nature.

Library coordination: Taltree's library consists of nearly 1,000 volumes on topics in which students, researchers, staff and members of Taltree might have an interest. Volunteers catalog, inventory and maintain the collection.

Events

Music in Nature Concert Series: Taltree presents a series of outdoor concerts throughout the summer and volunteers welcome and collect admission fees from concert goers, and assist with setup and take down of equipment.

Other events: Taltree hosts a variety of events each season. From lending a hand during the event to planning and coordination, Taltree needs a broad mix of talented volunteers. If you like to plan, decorate, organize, welcome or serve, Taltree invites you to join in the festivities.

Outreach

Offsite awareness opportunities: With energy and enthusiasm, the Outreach Team presents the mission, vision, and goals of Taltree Arboretum and Gardens to community groups and other interested parties. Volunteers promote, educate and inform the public about Taltree Arboretum & Gardens at events throughout the community.

Administration

Office: If your preference is to work indoors, office volunteers welcome office visitors, answer the phone, file, process mail and track visitors.

Railway Garden

Railway Garden volunteers are needed to perform a wide variety of tasks, from assembling building and structure kits to installing track, bridges and electronic controls. Once components of the displays are completed and installed, help will be needed for planting. Most of this work will be done through the summer of 2010, with maintenance and second phase opportunities to follow.