Get Involved! Volunteer at Matthaei-Nichols

Our volunteer program offers diverse opportunities to learn, connect, and give back. As a volunteer, you’ll develop new skills while supporting our mission of education and stewardship through hands-on service. We welcome new volunteers to join us in every season at the Arb & Gardens. Preregistration required for all trainings. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator for more information: 734.647.8528; yorabhi@umich.edu.

Visitor Services – Ambassador Trainings (preregistration required)

Michigan Solar House Ambassador Training
Sat., March 28, 9 am–noon, Matthaei
The Michigan Solar House (MiSo) is a solar-powered home collaboratively designed and built by a team of students and faculty from U-M Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning for the 2005 Solar Decathlon in Washington DC. Now located at the Botanical Gardens, MiSo fosters public awareness in solar technology and serves as a laboratory for ongoing research. Volunteers are trained to greet and guide visitors to points of interest in the house on weekends, May–October.

Garden Ambassador Training
Two options: Sat., April 11 or Wed., April 15 (both at Matthaei), 9 am–4 pm
Our garden ambassadors enjoy the beauty of Matthaei’s display gardens while inviting visitors to take a closer look. Training provides an introduction to the Visitor Services Dept., best practices for working with the public, and an overview of the most popular points of interest in the display gardens, Gaffield Children’s Garden and beyond. We seek volunteers with a love of learning and interest in working with a diverse population of visitors, including children and families. Monthly garden tours/talks are led by our horticulturists throughout the season. Shifts are available daily, May–October.

Peony Ambassador Training
Tues., April 28, 6–7:30 pm, Arb/Reader Center
Join Arb & Gardens Curator David Michener to learn more about the largest public collection of heirloom herbaceous peony cultivars in North America. Ambassadors greet and guide visitors to points of interest in the peony garden during peak bloom time. The training session includes an overview of the peony collection history, horticultural basics and tips for working with the public. Ideal volunteers will have a genuine interest in the collection and an ability to work independently with a diverse array of visitors. Evening and weekend shifts available late May/early June.

Fall 2014 Volunteer Appreciation Gathering
A huge thank you to our volunteers and staff in celebration of another abundant year of volunteer contributions at the Arb and Gardens! On a mild October day volunteers got into the harvest spirit with donuts, cider, cookies, and chili.

Wow! Our volunteers work an impressive number of hours each year. Take a look:

- 388 regular volunteers logged 10,565 hours of service.
- 817 volunteers helped with one-time only group workdays (a total of 3,117 hours!)
- 342 volunteers logged 1,237 hours with our student programs Cultivating Community and Campus Farm

Grand Total: 1,547 Volunteers, 14,918 Hours!

Counterclockwise from top left:
Volunteer coordinator Yousef Rabhi warms up the crowd; volunteer Tom Gaffield gave a spirited pep talk; staff members showed off their creative flair with artfully arranged displays of fall flowers; quite a crowd!

Visit our website for more information: mbgna.umich.edu