

# Volunteers

*Our Most Valuable Resource*



## A Guide for Volunteers at the State Arboretum of Virginia

Foundation of the State Arboretum  
*At the University of Virginia's Historic*  
BLANDY EXPERIMENTAL FARM  
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## Introduction

Welcome to the State Arboretum of Virginia. Volunteer support at the State Arboretum is one of our most valuable resources. Each year, over 100 volunteers contribute more than 4,000 hours of their valuable time and talents to our gardens, giftshop, trails, programs and committees. Without your skills, enthusiasm and dedication, the State Arboretum of Virginia would not be the thriving place it is today.

It is our sincere hope that you find volunteering here satisfying, the people friendly and that you enjoy yourself whenever you are here. Thank you for giving your time and talents to the State Arboretum and Blandy Experimental Farm.

The volunteer program is organized by the Foundation of the State Arboretum (FOSA).



Photo by Joe Alderman



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## History

Once a pre-Civil War plantation, Blandy Experimental Farm is not a farm in the traditional sense, but it offers fertile ground for environmental education and research. Instead of crops or livestock, Blandy comprises a 712-acre biological field station and the State Arboretum of Virginia.

The land occupied by Blandy in Clarke County, Virginia was once part of the adjoining Tuleyries estate built by Joseph Tuley, Jr., whose father purchased the property in 1806. The property had previously belonged to the Carter family, the landowners since 1730. Blandy's history is evident in the Quarters, which was built in the 1830s and served as slave quarters for the adjoining plantation. The Quarters is listed on the state and national registers of



Graham Blandy

historic places and now provides dormitory space for researchers working on the site, as well as offices, a library, kitchen, dining room, and more.

After the Civil War, the property was sold to Colonel Upton Boyce, for whom the town of Boyce is named and who helped establish the Shenandoah Valley Railroad. Graham F. Blandy, a wealthy New Yorker who made his fortune in the stock market, bought The Tuleyries in 1903 and made it his summer home. Upon his death in 1926, Blandy bequeathed 712 acres of his 910-acre estate to the University of Virginia for the express purpose of educating students about various farming and agricultural practices.

In 1927, Orland E. White, curator of plant breeding and economic plants at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, was hired as the first director of Blandy. During his 28-year tenure, Dr. White shaped Blandy into the place it is today, establishing the original 135-acre Arboretum as a tool for research and education. After his retirement in 1955, the University's Board of Visitors named the Arboretum in his honor. In 1986 the Virginia General Assembly designated the Orland E. White Arboretum as the "State Arboretum of Virginia."

## **Blandy Experimental Farm**

Blandy Experimental Farm is a University of Virginia ecological research station managed through the University's Department of Environmental Sciences. Within its 712 acres are habitats typical of the northern Shenandoah Valley such as farm fields, early successional fields, hedgerows, woodlots, and wetlands. At the center of the property is the 175-acre Orland E. White Arboretum, the State Arboretum of Virginia. Programs at Blandy include university research, K-12 school programs, and diverse programs for the general public.

## **Mission Statement**

Blandy Experimental Farm exists to increase understanding of the natural world through education and research. Blandy provides research and learning opportunities to professional scientists, graduate students, undergraduates, K-12 students, and the general public. This mission guides both the development and the use of all of Blandy's physical resources, including the Arboretum.

## **State Arboretum of Virginia**

The State Arboretum of Virginia, also known as the Orland E. White Arboretum, exists to support the education, research and outreach missions of Blandy Experimental Farm and the University of Virginia.

## **Foundation of the State Arboretum**

The Foundation of the State Arboretum of Virginia (FOSA) is the official fundraising, gift receiving and member organization created to support the mission of the State Arboretum of Virginia and Blandy Experimental Farm. FOSA is a 501(c)(3) university-related foundation.

## Arboretum Collections

The Arboretum was established to provide a collection of trees and shrubs for education and research. Today the Arboretum encompasses 175 acres, with more than 5500 recorded specimens representing more than 600 species in 180 genera. The Arboretum's conifer collection is one of the most extensive in the country and the oak, maple and Viburnum collections are also exceptional. The Arboretum features several specialty collections. These include: the Nancy Larrick Crosby Native Plant Trail, the Herb Garden, the Boxwood Memorial Garden, the Gingko Grove, the Iris collection, the Daylily Garden, the Rain Garden, the Pollination Garden, and several other annual and perennial display gardens.

## Facilities

The east wing of the **Quarters** was built circa 1830, and the University added the center and west wings in 1942. Staff and FOSA offices, Our Shop, the library, dining room, kitchen, public restrooms, laboratories, computer room, volunteer room and dorm rooms are all located here.

**Parkfield Learning Center**, a former apple packing shed renovated in 1996, provides indoor classroom space for thousands of local school children who visit Blandy via field trips each year.

**Peetwood Pavilion** provides outdoor classroom space and is available to the public when not in use for education programs.

**Information Pavilion** at the parking lot offers information about the Arboretum and its programs.

**Margaret B. Stimpson Amphitheater**, west of the Quarters, is used for concerts, weddings and events.

**Picnic Grove** east of the visitors' parking lot is open to the public and offers picnic tables and a water fountain.

**Greenhouses, laboratories and residences** are not open to the public

# Ready To Dig In?

## *Volunteer Opportunities*

### Gardeners

**(Last week of March through last week of October)**

The State Arboretum of Virginia at Blandy Experimental Farm has many established perennial gardens, an herb garden, and a Native Plant Trail. Each area is maintained on a seasonal basis by an assistant curator and supporting volunteers.

Tasks include planting, dividing, transplanting, fertilizing, weeding, mulching and more. New volunteers are welcome to join at any time during the year. Please bring gloves, hat, water, and sunscreen; tools and training will be provided.



The Herb Garden

***Volunteers and staff meet in the main parking lot as follows:***

**Herb Garden** – Every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Contact Carrie Whitacre at 540-837-1758 Ext. 289 or via email at [carriewhitacre@virginia.edu](mailto:carriewhitacre@virginia.edu)

**Native Plant Trail** – Every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Contact Jack Monsted at 540-837-1758 Ext. 234 or via email at [jm9ks@virginia.edu](mailto:jm9ks@virginia.edu)

**Perennial Gardens** – Every Thursday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Contact Carrie Whitacre at 540-837-1758 Ext. 289 or via email at [carriewhitacre@virginia.edu](mailto:carriewhitacre@virginia.edu)

**Community Garden** – Volunteer days and times are flexible.

## **Woody Collections Maintenance**

(Year Round)

Persons interested in assisting with the maintenance of the woody collections (shrubs, vines, small trees) are asked to email Koy Mislowsky at [km5mm@virginia.edu](mailto:km5mm@virginia.edu). These work sessions are scheduled on a regular basis in the winter months and at other times as necessary. Maintenance activities include removal of invasive plant species, pruning and mulching of specimens, and labeling. Please bring gloves; tools and training will be provided.



## **Greenhouse Assistant**

General greenhouse help includes watering, propagating and plant care. Qualifications for this position include an interest in plants and the physical ability to do the work. Bending and lifting (up to 50 lbs) are required. Hours will be scheduled to suit the volunteer, however, 2 to 4 hours one or two days per week would be helpful. Benefits: Able to take cuttings and seedlings with permission.



## **Library Aide**

Assist with a variety of Library duties to include

- Shelving
- Filing library materials.
- Keeping records on items of circulation.
- Helping to inventory and catalog special collections such as slides and photographs.
- Organizing newsletter files.

Qualifications: interest in periodicals, books and horticulture and the ability to maneuver and climb movable stairs. Time commitment will require 2 to 4 hours each week or two, to average at least 4 hours every 2 weeks. Time will be scheduled around events, programs and meetings held in the library.

## **Program Assistant**

The State Arboretum of Virginia offers a wide array of public programs throughout the year. For most programs one or more volunteers are needed to assist with the many tasks associated with these programs. Program assistant responsibilities vary depending on the type of program. Benefits: Can attend programs at no charge. The program assistant may be asked to:

- Arrive early to help set up.
- Make coffee or prepare refreshments.
- Check with program presenter to determine whether he/she needs assistance before, during or after program.
- Use registration list to check in participants and collect registration fees if applicable.
- Hand out literature, information packets or other materials.
- Assist with cleanup and other tasks after program.



## Youth Education Assistant

### (Only during the School Year)

The Arboretum offers a wide variety of educational programs to students in grades pre-K through high school. Volunteers will work with a program presenter, helping to prepare and assist in leading activities. There are indoor and outdoor activities. Time commitment usually involves 3 to 4 hours at a time, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. A willingness to work with children is required. A background and/or education in Virginia's natural environment is beneficial.



## Special Events

Special Events Volunteers help with pre-event planning, set up, event day activities and cleanup.

The State Arboretum relies greatly on its volunteers, especially during the larger, annual events (Garden Fair and ArborFest). As a special events volunteer, you will be called upon to work at least a 3-hour shift for both of these events in one of the following areas: set up, vendor



check-in, gatekeepers, wagon control, membership, children's activities, volunteer meals, plant sales and Our Shop. If you are interested in the actual planning of events, please talk to the Volunteer Coordinator.



## Arboretum Docents

Volunteer Docents give tours and programs, greet visitors and assist with related activities. Contact Koy Mislowsky at 540-837-1758 Ext. 246 or via email at [km5mm@virginia.edu](mailto:km5mm@virginia.edu)



## **Bridle Trail**

Volunteers clear new trails, install signage and maintain trails as needed. They may serve as trail guides for FOSA sponsored rides. Members also prepare mailings for other horse related activities and then act as host/hostess and registrar for these events.



## **Holiday Workshops**

Wreath making and flower arranging workshops are held on several Saturdays in December. Volunteers help with greens collections, publicity, setup and cleanup. They are also needed to assist the instructor during workshops.



## **“First Class” Mailers**

The members of the mailing group usually meet once or twice a month, for 1 to 3 hours, to prepare mailings for the Foundation and for Blandy Experimental Farm. They collate, fold, stuff, label and stamp invitations, brochures and membership information. It is a good way to meet people and catch up with old friends. Can't stay until the mailing is complete? No problem. Come and stay as long as you can.



## **Event Site Prep**

Volunteers set up tents, tables and chairs, post signage and lay out vendor exhibitor booths for special events, public programs, outdoor lectures, etc. Volunteers also help with takedown after the events.

## Volunteer Expectations

- Read and understand the volunteer handbook and follow the procedures therein.
- Safety is a primary concern for all Blandy and Foundation volunteers. All volunteers shall act in a safe and responsible manner not only for personal safety, but also to protect others.
- The Foundation of the State Arboretum may request a volunteer to submit to drug and/or alcohol testing if there is reasonable cause.
- Record your volunteer hours on the computer in the volunteer room. Volunteers are asked to record the total number of hours worked to the closest quarter hour. It is best to record your hours right after you have finished volunteering for the day. These records are very important to us for volunteer recognition, grant writing and funding requests.

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- Volunteers who are ill or for any reason cannot work as expected should call/email the appropriate staff member or the Volunteer Coordinator before their expected arrival.
- Please report any change of address, phone number or email address to the Volunteer Coordinator. This will ensure you receive all pertinent communications.
- If, as a volunteer, you are conducting Arboretum business off site, please inform the appropriate staff member or Volunteer Coordinator of your plans prior to conducting that business.

## Safety Procedures

The safety of our volunteers is of the utmost importance to us. Following good safety procedures is the best method for preventing accidents and injury. If you observe a condition which you feel is unsafe, please notify a staff member or the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

- For serious injuries or incidents or when you are unsure, **call 911.**
- All accidents and injuries must be reported to your staff supervisor, **regardless of how small or insignificant** they may seem.
- First Aid Kits are located in the **main office**, behind the door in the **kitchen**, in the **learning center**, the **greenhouse**, the **lab**, the **grounds truck** and on all four **gators**.

### Staff Volunteer Supervisors

**540-837-1758**

- Carrie Whitacre - Ext. 289      [carriewhitacre@virginia.edu](mailto:carriewhitacre@virginia.edu)
- Jack Monsted – Ext. 23      [jm9ks@virginia.edu](mailto:jm9ks@virginia.edu)
  
- Koy Mislowsky – Ext. 246      [fosaevents@virginia.edu](mailto:fosaevents@virginia.edu)
- Emily Ford – Ext. 290      [emilyford@virginia.edu](mailto:emilyford@virginia.edu)

## Volunteer Benefits

- Receive 20 percent off annual/life membership to the Foundation of the State Arboretum with at least 40 volunteer hours logged each year.
- Receive 10 percent off purchases made at “Our Shop”
- Volunteer at Garden Fair and/or ArborFest and get in free of charge
- Annual Awards and Appreciation Dinner
- As a result of volunteer work at the State Arboretum, many volunteers experience personal benefits that include:

A new sense of community  
 Learning new skills and sharing talents  
 Meeting people and making friends  
 Giving back to the community

## Affiliated Organizations

Blandy Experimental Farm is pleased to be community partners with organizations whose passion, purpose and activities reflect our mission and goals. The organizations affiliated with Blandy are:

**American Boxwood Society**  
**Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon Society**  
**Virginia Native Plant Society**  
**Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardeners**  
**Virginia Master Naturalists, Shenandoah Chapter**  
**Piedmont/Blue Ridge Horticultural Society**  
**Virginia Department of Forestry**  
**Blandy/University of Virginia Alumni Club**

## Reflections From Our Volunteers...

“My wife and I have volunteered at Blandy for the past 16 years. Looking back over that time, we think the camaraderie with other volunteers and staff is the main reason we have stayed so long. However, we must say, the physical beauty of the grounds continues to bring us back, in addition to the knowledge we have learned and the job training we have received which has kept us interested.”

“I always feel appreciated! The staff at Blandy always expresses their appreciation for what we do as volunteers.”

“My time at Blandy, as one of the many garden volunteers, has been a real pleasure! Not only do you see the beauty of the gardens, but you also learn from the other volunteers.”

“Once my children were in school, I finally had time to get out of the house and do something for myself. I have always liked gardening and being outdoors, so one day, after walking at Blandy, I stopped by the office and asked about volunteering. I spoke with the Volunteer Coordinator and began volunteering in the perennial garden the next week! I come when I can and the staff is always happy to see me. My volunteer time at Blandy is a great “getaway!”



## **Annual Events And Programs**

### **Garden Fair**

A Gardening Extravaganza! Mother's Day Weekend

### **ArborFest**

An Autumn Sale of Plants and Garden Supplies!  
The Second Weekend in October

### **Holiday Workshops**

The Arboretum's Longest Running Public Program  
December



### **Lectures and Workshops**

Check our website!

### **Summer Nature Camp**

1<sup>st</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> Grades

### **Young Naturalist Program**

January - March

### **Summer Concerts**

Join us in the Amphitheater!

For more information, visit our website at  
[www.blandy.virginia.edu](http://www.blandy.virginia.edu) or call us at 540-837-1758 Ext. 0



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