



# Inspiring the Next Generation to Pursue Careers in Horticulture: Strategies for Public Gardens

American Public Gardens Association Conference  
June 2018

A man and a young boy are working together in a garden. The man, wearing a blue polo shirt, is smiling and looking down at the boy. The boy, wearing a light blue t-shirt and white shorts, is crouching and picking vegetables. They are surrounded by various plants, including leafy greens and carrots. A woven basket filled with harvested vegetables, including a large fennel bulb and leafy greens, sits on the ground. The background shows a lush garden with trees and a body of water in the distance.

**EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS AND  
VALUES THE IMPORTANCE PLANTS**


...





**... AND  
THE PEOPLE WHO WORK IN THE  
ART, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY  
AND BUSINESS OF  
HORTICULTURE.**



A photograph of four young children standing behind a wooden fence, looking at a miniature garden display. The garden features a red train engine, white flowers, and a small building with a tiled roof. The text "WHERE PARENTS AND EDUCATORS ENCOURAGE HORTICULTURE AS A CAREER AND NOT SHY AWAY FROM IT." is overlaid in white capital letters.


**WHERE PARENTS AND  
EDUCATORS ENCOURAGE  
HORTICULTURE AS A CAREER  
AND NOT SHY AWAY FROM IT.**





WHERE HORTICULTURE  
IS VIEWED AS A VITAL,  
VIABLE, AND DIVERSE  
CAREER PATH.





**WHERE WE BUILD  
A STRONGER PIPELINE OF  
TALENT TO BOLSTER OUR  
INDISPENSABLE INDUSTRY.**



# Seed Your Future

Our Mission:

Promote horticulture and inspire people to pursue careers working with plants.





# Who Is Seed Your Future?





# Foundation of Research

- Phase 1 – Internal to the industry
  - Industry challenges
  - What they tell people
- Phase 2 – General Public (adults)
  - Awareness of horticulture
  - Attitudes about horticulture careers
- Phase 3 – Middle schoolers, their parents, their teachers, their school guidance counselors
  - Survey
  - Focus Groups





# Phase 1- Recap

- 🌱 Biggest challenges in the industry:
  - Skilled labor shortage
  - Shrinking university programs; consolidation of degree programs
  - Lack of funding
  - Lack of awareness and understanding

Also collected great messages and ideas about the language to use to describe the diversity of careers in horticulture and the rich rewards they afford.





# Phase 2 Research

- 🌱 Phase 2 – General Public (adults)
  - Awareness of horticulture
  - Attitudes about horticulture careers





# Phase 2 Data Recap

- The general public:
  - Small majority is generally aware of horticulture (except for young adults).
  - Is either unaware or has a negative perception about horticultural careers.
- The view of horticulture is highly positive once people are aware of what it means.





# Phase 3

## Part A - Quantitative

- 🌱 Surveys
- 🌱 Obtain a baseline measure of awareness and perceptions of horticulture and identify key influencers in the decision-making process.
  - 🌱 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> graders
  - 🌱 Parents
  - 🌱 Teachers
  - 🌱 Guidance Counselors





# Phase 3 – Part B Qualitative

## Focus Groups

- 🌱 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders
- 🌱 Parents
- 🌱 Teachers
- 🌱 School Counselors
- 🌱 Testing
  - 🌱 Words
  - 🌱 Phrases
  - 🌱 Imagery
  - 🌱 Etc.





# Career Attributes

## Focus Groups

- Do something they are passionate about or really enjoy
- Be creative and see the impact of their work
- Do something that makes a positive impact on the world





# Vernacular

Use words that resonate with youth.

When asked to pick their favorite alternatives for the word “horticulture” and “horticulturist,” audiences said they like titles with the word “plant,” as it clearly communicates what horticulture is all about.

Participants also like titles that sound or seem sophisticated, impressive, important or professional.





MARKETING

# Horticulture is Weird — Plantology is Cool!

#ILoveMyPlantJob  
#SeedYourFuture  
#FutureGreenCollar  
#AmoMiTrabajoDePlantas  
#ILoveMyPlantJob







What Do You  
Want To  
Call Yourself?



# Students - Recap

- 🌱 Students want a career that offers more than a paycheck.
- 🌱 They want to be creative.
- 🌱 They want to impact the world.

*Goal: We need to create a favorable perception of horticulture and careers working with plants by increasing public awareness of the positive attributes, benefits and diversity of the profession, especially among youth and youth influencers.*



# Parents - Recap

- Those who are familiar with horticulture have a narrow view of the field. None understand the variety of jobs one could have in the industry.
- Parents cast a wider net when looking for information on behalf of their child, conducting online searches, their child's teacher, people in the profession and local colleges or programs.

*Goal: Provide a robust digital presence that serves as a clearing house for information with videos, testimonials, and college and career information.*







# Horticulture in Schools

While teachers and counselors say their students likely aren't familiar with horticulture, they were able to name a few ways in which horticulture is integrated into their schools.

- Horticulture or agriculture classes
- School gardens or gardening clubs and classes
- Biology/plant sciences class





# Horticulture in Schools

After hearing more about horticulture, teachers and counselors can think of a number of ways of integrating horticulture into their schools.

Teachers' recommendations include:

- Science experiments
- Math class (measurements related to growing plants)
- School garden
- Impact of plants and horticulturists in the community







# Teachers - Recap

- While teachers and counselors have heard of “horticulture” not one has encountered a student who is interested in the field.
- However, after learning a little more about the industry, some teachers and counselors think the field could be appealing to the right students, particularly those interested in:
  - Nature and the outdoors
  - Food and cooking
  - Health and nutrition
  - Science and experimentation
  - Environmentalism
- Teachers want lesson plans and activities to help integrate appreciation for plants into their curriculum.

*Goal: Provide curricula, lesson plans, and activities to schools and youth programs.*

# Campaign Imperatives

- 🌱 Use words that resonate
- 🌱 Use messages that describe how horticulture can impact or affect change
- 🌱 Stress diversity of jobs
- 🌱 Highlight job availability
- 🌱 Tell the story with the right imagery and spokespeople
- 🌱 Give tools to teachers and youth program leaders to help them incorporate into existing curriculum.








# Educator Resources

[www.Scholastic.com/BLOOM](http://www.Scholastic.com/BLOOM)



**SCHOLASTIC** ALLV What are you looking for?   

Sponsored Educational Materials

**BLOOM!**  
Powered by **Seed Your Future**

**Lessons and Activities  
About Horticulture**

**Science & ELA Standards-Aligned  
Grades 6–8**

**Teachers**

- Teachers Home
- Lessons and Ideas
- Books and Authors
- Top Teaching Blog
- Teacher's Tool Kit
- Student Activities

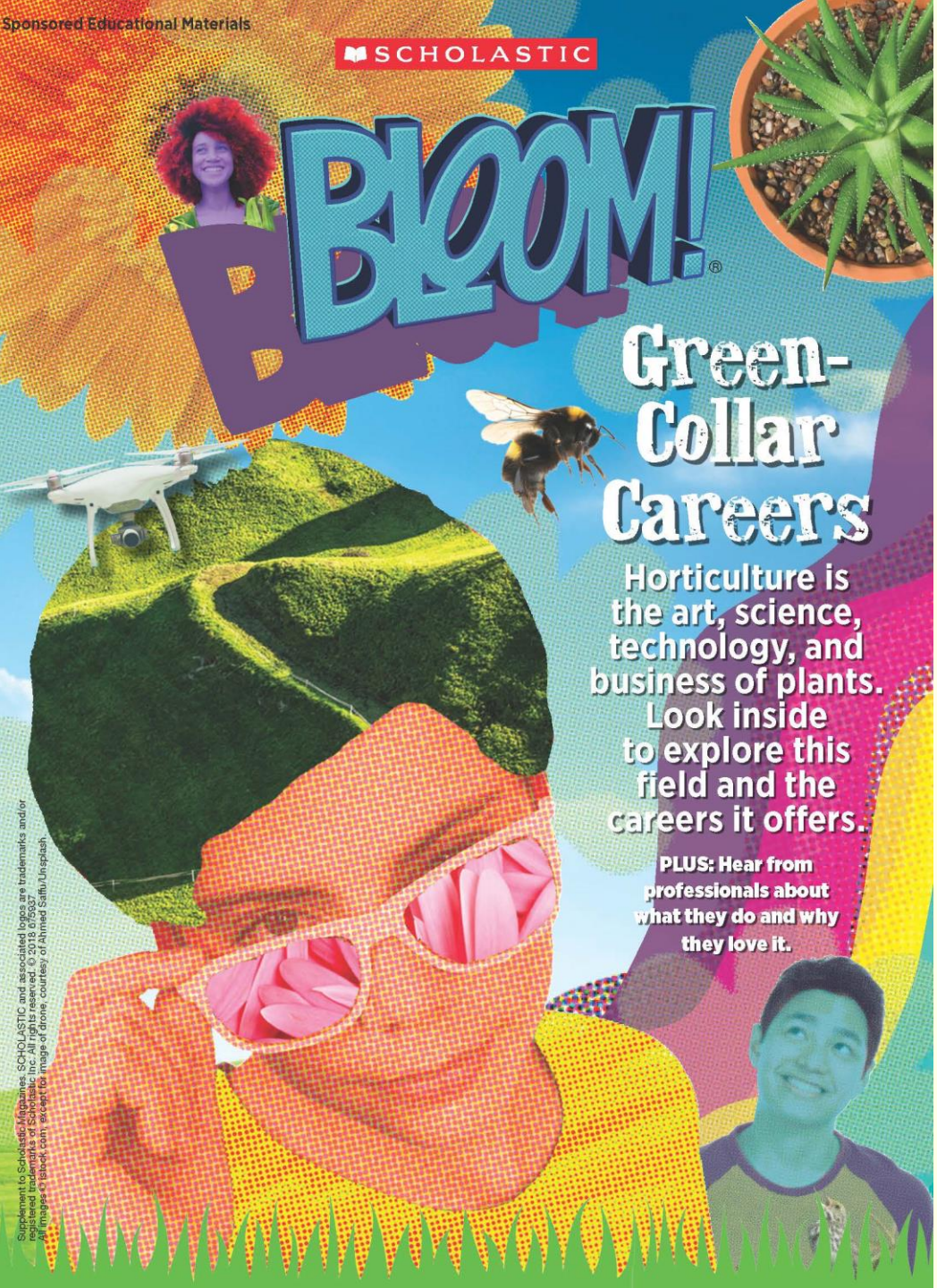
**The Teacher Store**

- Books Clubs
- Book Fairs
- Scholastic Education
- Classroom Magazines

**About Us**

**CLASSROOM MATERIALS** **DIGITAL LEARNING MODULE** **STUDENT CONTEST & SWEEPSTAKES**





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# Digital Student Magazine



# BLOOM!

Horticulture offers countless careers. Check out these real-life professionals who spend their days working with plants and keeping the world green.

## Landscape Architect

Designing outdoor spaces for homes, cities, and businesses is the work of a landscape architect. These licensed pros are trained in horticulture, architectural practices, and urban planning.



## Florist

Bringing beauty and delight to people is the work of florists. These pros know their flowers and spend their days designing and constructing arrangements for countless occasions.



## Drone Specialist

The green-collar industry is on the cutting edge of technology. Among the many professionals working in high tech are drone specialists. These pilots fly drones to conduct surveys of fields and forests.



## Urban Forester

Cities need trees, but those trees need more maintenance than the ones in a forest. The urban forester might work for a city government, a utility company, or a tree service company keeping trees trimmed and healthy.



## Extension Agent

An expert and adviser, the extension agent helps people by translating the latest horticulture research into usable information for home gardeners and business owners.



## Botanist

The ultimate expert on plant biology, a botanist is dedicated to examining the power of plants. Botanists might spend their days teaching, conducting research on plants, or advising businesses on horticulture practices.



# Career Profiles



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher Email: \_\_\_\_\_ School City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**BLOOM!**

Plant scientists sometimes design new plants! They take two plants with special qualities and attempt to combine them into a third plant that has qualities of both. These new designs are called hybrids. Creating hybrids can make plants that are more disease-resistant, fruits that taste better, flowers that are more colorful, vegetables that are more nutritious, and provide additional benefits.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Below are six different plants you might find across the United States. Choose two of them (or plants of your own choosing) and use them to create a hybrid with new characteristics.



**Milkweed:** main food source for the threatened monarch butterfly; appealing to many pollinators; hypoallergenic fibers useful



**Coneflower:**  
attracts birds  
and pollinators;  
blooms in late  
summer and fall;  
can help treat a  
cold



**Garlic:** often used to boost the body's immune system, helping prevent and reduce some illnesses; popular food ingredient



**Marigold:** beautiful, fragrant, hardy, and edible flowers; long-lasting, easy-to-grow blooms



**Aloe vera:** sap is healing to the skin; needs warm weather



**Apple trees:**  
produce tasty  
and healthy  
fruit; attractive  
flowering tree;  
popular home for  
birds

**Name the two plants you are combining:**

**Illustrate your hybrid:**

**In the space below:**

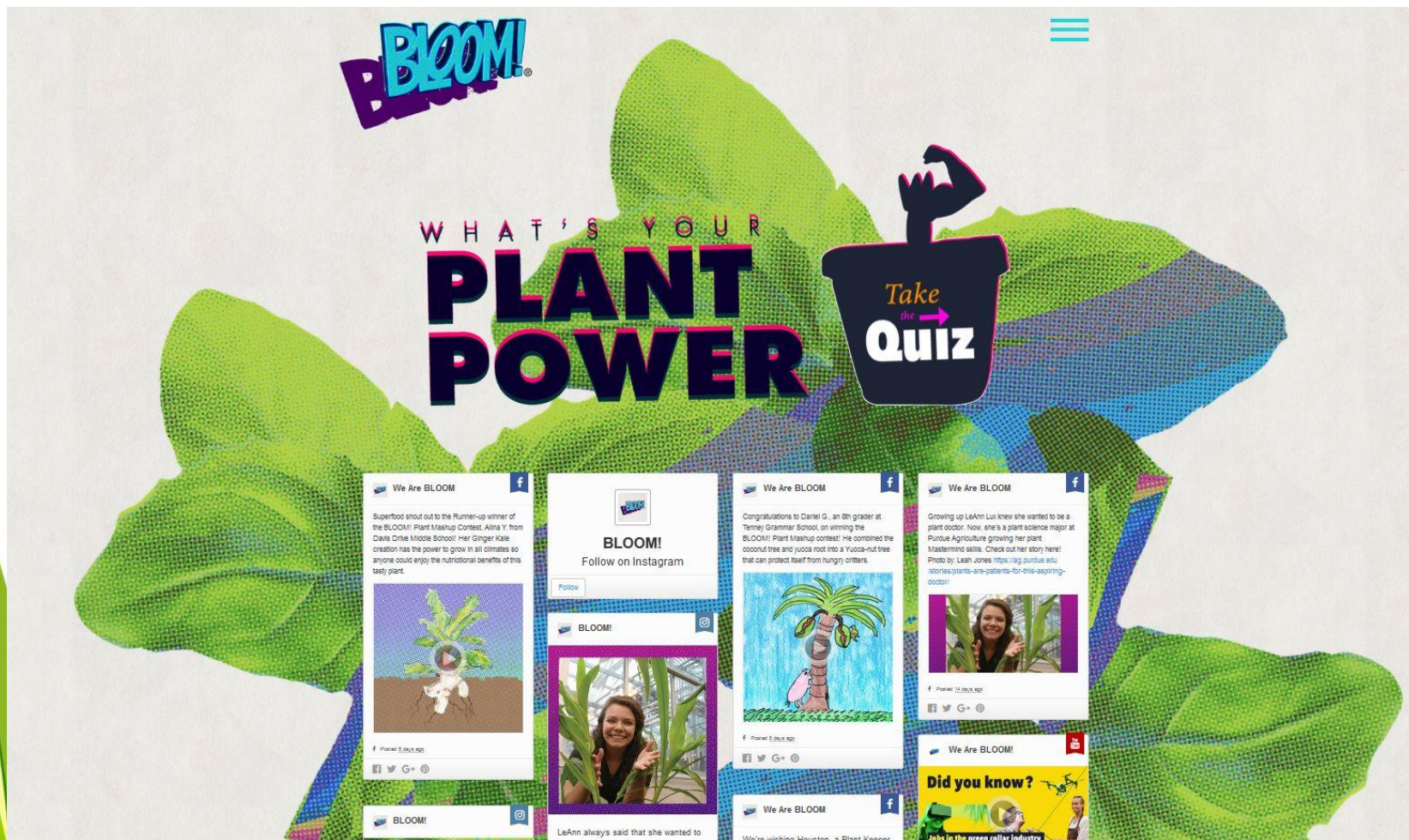
- ✓ Describe the features of your hybrid
- ✓ Explain how your hybrid will benefit others

[illegible]

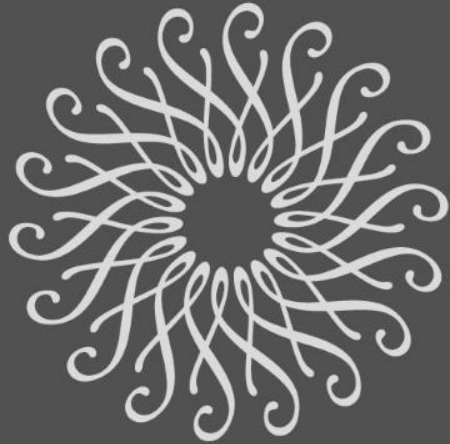
# Lesson Plans Activities Contest

# Digital Hub

www.WeAreBLOOM.org







LONGWOOD  
GARDENS

# Encouraging Careers in Horticulture Longwood Gardens

Sarah Cathcart, Vice President Education





Would you like a career in  
horticulture?

Or

How can you have  
horticulture as part of your  
career?



# Community Read



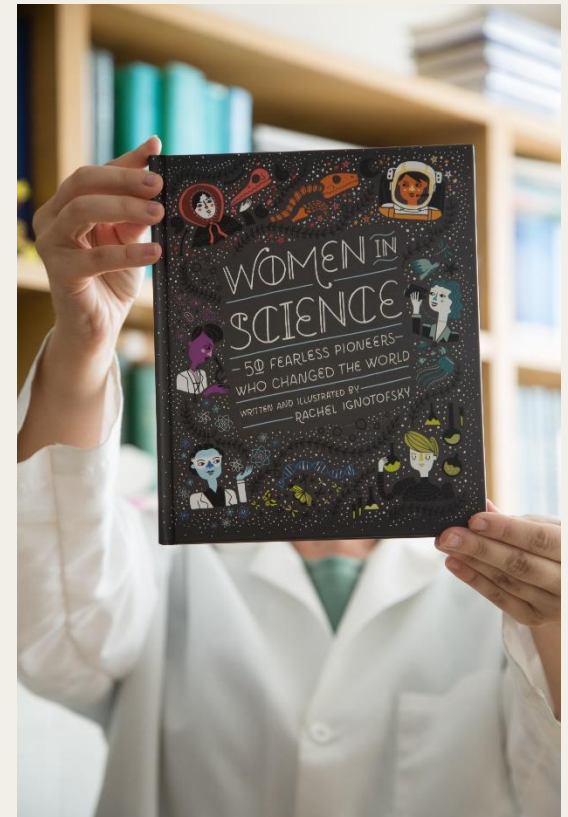
**Community Read**

Read. Think. Engage.



# Community Read

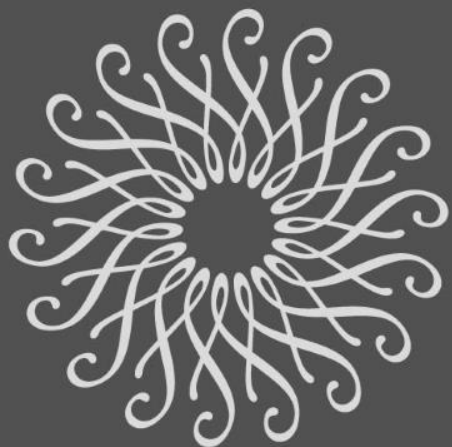
- Encourage reading
- Build relationships across organizations and in the community
- Explore common ideas
- Engage audiences around the topics of nature, plants, and gardens
- Widely used format in public libraries to focus on literary topics
- One book, one community
- Highlighting careers in horticulture



# School Partnerships







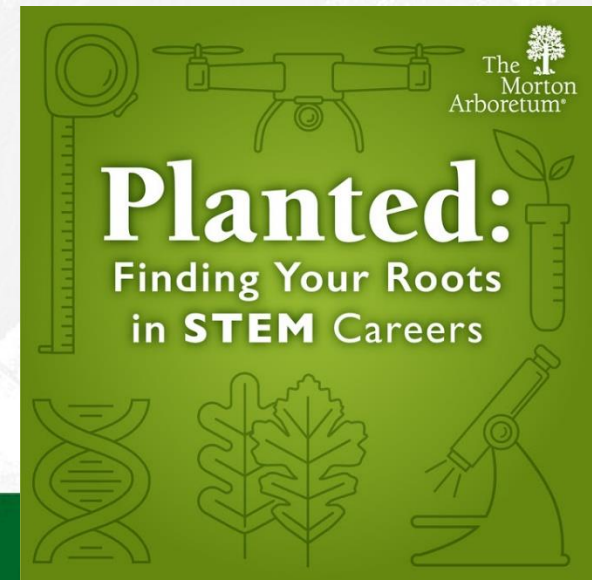
LONGWOOD  
GARDENS

# Planted Podcast

A joint project between Education and Science & Conservation  
at The Morton Arboretum



1. Engage the next generation in tree-science and plant-related topics
2. Introduce the next generation to the plant-related STEM career paths
3. Humanize plant professionals





# Horticulture Pipeline



CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN



*To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.*

- Audrey Hepburn



# Getting the ball rolling in a large institution

- Movement
- Challenges
- Progress



# Horticultural Training Program “The Pipeline”

## 3 Goals

- Develop 1-2 current seasonal employees' horticultural knowledge
- Address deficit with internal talent
- Increase diversity





# Horticultural Training Program “The Pipeline”

## Eligibility

- Be in good-standing, current permanent or seasonal staff position
- Have enough working knowledge of the English language to complete classroom components and written coursework



# Horticultural Training Program “The Pipeline”

## Program

- Classroom-based coursework---Professional Gardener 2 certificate
- Hands-on internship and gardening skills development
- Keystone project





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CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN



ASSOCIATION OF  
ZOOLOGICAL  
HORTICULTURE







**What We Can Do.**



# Thank You!



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