

Arboretum Accreditation Information

Individuals and organizations have long sought definitions, standards, and means of establishing an official or legitimate arboretum. No other national or international program of accreditation exists that is specific to arboreta. The Morton Arboretum has established the Morton Register of Arboreta and a basic system of accreditation as a service to 1) foster the establishment and professionalism of arboreta, 2) identify arboreta capable of participating or collaborating in certain scientific, collections, or conservation activity, and 3) advance the planting and conservation of trees to improve the world.

Accredited Arboretum: An arboretum or public garden recognized by the Morton Register as having met certain professional standards of established arboreta.

Arboreta may become accredited by evaluating and submitting documentation on the level of achievement of specified standards.

Levels of Accreditation: Different levels of accreditation have been established to recognize arboreta of various degrees of development, capacity, and professionalism. These levels may encourage accredited arboreta to seek and achieve higher professional standards. Categorization also allows an assessment of which arboreta are capable of participating or collaborating in certain scientific, collections, or conservation activity.

Level I Accreditation

The base level of accreditation requires achievement of the following basic standards:

- **An Arboretum Plan:** Documentation of some sort, such as an organizational plan, strategic plan, master plan, or other that defines the purpose of the arboretum, its audience, the types of plants that are to be grown to achieve that purpose and serve that audience, provisions for the maintenance and care of the plants, and provisions for continuing operation of the organization through time.
- **An arboretum organizational group** of people or governing board or authority that is dedicated to the Arboretum Plan and its continuation beyond the efforts of a single individual. Such an organizational/governance group can affirm fulfillment of standards and authorize participation as an accredited arboretum.
- **An Arboretum Collection** with a minimum number of 25 kinds (species or varieties) of trees or woody plants having been planted and growing in accordance with the Arboretum Plan. Plants in the Arboretum Collection must be labeled in some way as to their identity, and documented in some way as to their acquisition (source or origin, date, etc.).
- **Arboretum staff or volunteer support** that ensures fulfillment of the Arboretum Plan and provides for the basic needs of the Arboretum Collection and functions of the arboretum.
- **An arboretum public dimension** that includes some level of public access, and at least one public event or educational program each year focused on trees or arboretum purposes (e.g., Arbor Day observance).

- **Participation in ArbNet.**

Level II Accreditation

Level II Accredited Arboreta have met the following enhanced levels of arboretum standards, in addition to those specified for Level I Accreditation:

- **A larger Arboretum Collection** with a minimum number of 100 kinds of trees or woody plants having been planted and growing in accordance with the Arboretum Plan.
- **An Arboretum Collections Policy** that describes the development and professional management of the plants in the Arboretum Collection, in accordance with standards developed in the public garden and museum fields. Such a policy and related practices would include rationale for holding the particular collections of the arboretum, and collections inventory and record keeping practices.
- **One or more arboretum employees** who have job responsibilities that specifically include management or operation of the arboretum in fulfillment of the Arboretum Plan and Collections Policy.
- **Enhanced educational and public programming** beyond the base level required in Level I Accreditation.

Level III Accreditation

Level III Accredited Arboreta have met the following enhanced levels of arboretum standards, in addition to those specified for Level I and Level II Accreditation:

- **A substantial Arboretum Collection** with a minimum number of 500 kinds of trees or woody plants having been planted and growing in accordance with the Arboretum Plan.
- **A dedicated Curator**, or curator-equivalent employee, who is focused on the care and development of the Arboretum Collection, in accordance with the Arboretum Plan and Collections Policy.
- **A professional capability to collaborate** in some way, preferably with evidence of existing collaboration, with other arboreta and arboretum-related organizations, including cooperative plant evaluations, conservation projects, educational programs, exhibits, and interpretive efforts.
- **Sharing of plant collections data** with networked collections databases, such as BGC PlantSearch Database, the PlantCollections database, or other collaborative collections databases.
- **An active agenda and programs** related to tree science, planting, or conservation.
- **A substantial program of education** related to trees, conservation, and other related topics.
- **Specific consideration of a conservation role linked to the Global Trees Campaign.**

Level IV Accreditation

Level IV Accredited Arboreta have met the highest levels of arboretum standards, including those specified for Level I, II, and III Accreditation and the following:

- A scientific and/or conservation staff and capability to **collaborate on sophisticated scientific or conservation activities** with other arboreta or organizations related to trees.
 - Institutional capacity, stability, and **commitment to hold and safeguard plants of collections or conservation value** on behalf of the collective interests of the profession.
 - Specific **participation in collaborative scientific or conservation activities related to trees**, such as the North American Plant Collections Consortium or the Global Trees Campaign.
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