



BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Birmingham Botanical Gardens launches new certificate program

BIRMINGHAM, AL – Beginning this May, Birmingham Botanical Gardens will offer a new Certificate in Native Plant Studies, designed to zero-in on Alabama's natural habitats and the plants that call them home. The Gardens partnered with Alabama Plant Conservation Alliance, Aldridge Botanical Gardens and Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve to develop the program. The first class offered, Introduction to Native Plant Studies, is scheduled for Saturday, May 21. The eight-hour course will give students an overview of the program, emphasizing the impact of native plants on our environment.

Topics will include native species, plant conservation, invasive species, botany, taxonomy and more. Participants will gain essential knowledge and hands-on experience that can be applied to diverse settings such as horticulture, landscape design, conservation, land management, ecological restoration and environmental education. Modeled after similar programs across the nation, the Certificate in Native Plant Studies is the first of its kind in Alabama. Curriculum will be a combination of core courses, electives and practical application. Part of that practical application will include field trips to local environmental sites; it will also incorporate volunteer service, something The Gardens strongly advocates for both on-site and in the community.

According to The Gardens' Executive Director, Fred Spicer, the new program "celebrates Alabama by connecting people with the plants that surround us. Most people encounter native plants every day and are completely unaware of what they are. Practically speaking, many native plants make beautiful and essentially carefree garden subjects, while providing the basis of life for countless other native organisms."

Participants must fulfill the certificate requirements within three years, but anyone may attend individual courses. Prices range from \$45 for electives to \$90 for core courses; members of Friends of Birmingham Botanical Gardens receive discounts on classes. For more information about the Certificate in Native Plant Studies, contact The Gardens' Kaul Wildflower Garden Curator John Manion at 205.414.3985 or jmanion@bbgardens.org.

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2011 Course Schedule

Introduction to the Study of Native Plants†

Instructor: John Manion
Location: Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Saturday, May 21, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
\$80 for members, \$90 for non-members

Non-Native Invasive Plants Workshop‡

Instructors: Arnold Rutkis and John Manion
Location: Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve
Saturday, May 28, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
\$40 for members, \$45 for non-members

Native Woody Plants in Summer: Trees, Shrubs, Vines‡

Instructor: Fred Spicer
Location: Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Saturday, June 11, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
\$40 for members, \$45 for non-members

Introduction to Botany†

Instructor: Larry Davenport
Location: Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Saturday, July 9, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
\$80 for members, \$90 for non-members

Native Ferns and Their Relatives‡

Instructor: Dan Jones
Location: Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Saturday, July 23, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
\$40 for members, \$45 for non-members

Introduction to Soil Science‡

Instructor: Henry Hughes
Location: Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Saturday, August 20, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
\$40 for members, \$45 for non-members

Introduction to Plant Taxonomy‡

Instructor: Mike Hardig
Location: Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Saturday, September 17, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
\$80 for members, \$90 for non-members

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Native Plants for Pollinators‡

Instructor: Sallie Lee

Location: Aldridge Botanical Gardens

Saturday, September 24, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

\$40 for members, \$45 for non-members

Medicinal and Edible Native Plants‡

Instructor: Darryl Patton

Location: Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Saturday, October 22, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

\$40 for members, \$45 for non-members

Ecology of Alabama Native Plants†

Instructor: Scot Duncan

Location: Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve

Saturday, November 19, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

\$80 for members, \$90 for non-members

† Indicates a core course; ‡ indicates an elective course.

About Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Birmingham Botanical Gardens is Alabama's largest living museum with more than 10,000 different plants in its living collections. The Gardens' 67.5 acres contains more than 25 unique gardens, 30+ works of original outdoor sculpture and miles of serene paths. The Gardens features the largest public horticulture library in the U.S., conservatories, a wildflower garden, two rose gardens, the Southern Living garden, and Japanese Gardens with a traditionally crafted tea house. Education programs run year round and more than 10,000 school children enjoy free science-curriculum based field trips annually. The Gardens is open daily, offering free admission to more than 350,000 yearly visitors.