



# YEW DELL BOTANICAL GARDENS

## Volunteer Handbook

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## Yew Dell Overview

### History

Yew Dell is an internationally-recognized center of gardening, plants and education, all offered in a stunning site of significant historical importance. Originally the home, gardens and commercial nursery of the late Theodore Klein and his family, Yew Dell now offers the public exceptional display gardens, an ambitious schedule of education programs and community events, ongoing garden plant research, hiking trails and event rental opportunities.

Yew Dell is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Preservation Partner Project of the Garden Conservancy, a national non-profit dedicated to saving the nation's most exceptional gardens.

### Mission

Yew Dell's mission is *to spark a passion for plants and gardening through accessible science and inspiring beauty.*



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### Volunteer Policies

#### Goal of volunteer program

- Support Yew Dell's mission to spark a passion for plants and gardening through accessible science and inspiring beauty
- Provide opportunities for learning and engagement
- Expand the reach of Yew Dell Botanical Gardens
- Have fun!

#### Benefits of volunteering

- Learn about horticulture
- Work with and learn from Yew Dell staff
- Help this wonderful organization support its mission
- Access to the bi-annual Volunteer & Staff Plant Exchanges
- Invitation to join the Annual Volunteer Celebration

#### Joining our volunteer program

Most volunteer opportunities require attendance at a volunteer orientation prior to signing up. Orientations are typically held monthly between February and October.

STEP ONE: Set up an account in our volunteer portal, Volunteer Matrix.

STEP TWO: Register for and attend a volunteer orientation.

STEP THREE: Register for and attend a volunteer opportunity.

Opportunities that do NOT (always) require orientation include\*:

- Saturday Workdays
- Plant Sales
- Boo Dell
- Yuletide
- Fairy House creation

*\*Please note that these opportunities do still require creation of a volunteer account in Volunteer Matrix.*

Volunteers for whom two years have lapsed since their most recent volunteer shift are considered "inactive" and must re-attend an orientation prior to signing up for a shift.

**Volunteer opportunity areas include:** Gardens, Nursery, Woodlands, Tour guides, Events, Fairy Forest, Photography, Administrative, Group volunteering. Read more on the following pages.



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### Scheduling and Attendance

Most volunteer shifts are planned out by the beginning of the year and volunteers are able to sign up for them using our virtual volunteer portal, Volunteer Matrix. Some opportunities, such as the Garden Adoption Program (GAP) or Nursery Volunteering, encompass a weekly commitment through our annual volunteer season upon joining.

- **FAQ: Why do volunteers have to sign in?**
  - There are multiple reasons we request that volunteers sign in when working with Yew Dell:
    - Recognition of hours donated to Yew Dell at our annual Volunteer Celebration
    - Safety: knowing who is on the grounds and when in case of emergencies
    - Many grants and funding opportunities require volunteer-related data to apply for support.

### Preparing to volunteer:

- Closed-toe shoes are required for all volunteer shifts
- Dress appropriately for your volunteer shift
- Bring sunscreen and/or insect repellent if needed
- Bring a reusable water bottle and a snack if needed; there is potable water in the Horticulture Center and a water bottle refill station on the Upper Pavilion
- Bring garden gloves and favorite hand tools (optional)
- Read through the volunteer shift email for further details

### Day-of Volunteer Shift

- All volunteers park in our front lot
- Enter through Visitor Center (VC; red barn) if we're open (let the VC staff know you're here to volunteer before entering)
  - If the VC is NOT open, enter through black gate, ensuring it is securely closed after entering
- Meet staff in the horticulture center
- Sign in and sign out at the beginning and end of every volunteer shift
- Collect volunteer badge/vest, tools, etc.
- Work alongside staff for the day's task(s)
- Clean and return tools to the Horticulture center after use

### Other notes

- Leave any valuables or personal belongings in your vehicle. Yew Dell does not have lockable cabinets for storage. Coats, water bottles, umbrellas, etc. may be stored in the Horticulture Center during your shift.
- If the task is unclear, ask questions.





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### Finding & Signing up for Volunteer Opportunities

All open volunteer opportunities and orientations may be signed up for through Volunteer Matrix which can be accessed through the Volunteer Page of the Yew Dell website ([www.yewdellgardens.org/volunteer](http://www.yewdellgardens.org/volunteer)).

### Photo Release

By joining the Yew Dell volunteer program, each volunteer gives Yew Dell permission to capture their photograph and utilize it in their marketing or other related efforts.

### Youth Volunteering Policies

All volunteers under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian complete the virtual documents sent to them ahead of the volunteer shift. Volunteers must have reliable transportation to be dropped off and picked up in a timely manner.

- Volunteers age 6-13 may volunteer with a parent or guardian's direct supervision. This parent or guardian is encouraged to also participate in the volunteer project.
- Volunteers age 14-17 may volunteer independently during regular business hours (including Workdays that begin at 9 am). To volunteer for evening events, we require that these volunteers sign up and volunteer in pairs.
- Groups of ten or more youth volunteers must have 1 adult per 10 youth.

### Communication

If a volunteer has a question regarding a they should include both the volunteer coordinator and their primary staff contact on any communication. If cancelling, they should do so through Volunteer Matrix. (See the list of volunteer opportunities to learn the primary staff contact for each opportunity.)

If Yew Dell needs to make a change to a shift with 12 hours or more notice, they will send an email. Any changes made within 12 hours will receive both an email and a phone call if possible to ensure the change has been communicated.

**Interacting with visitors:** Volunteers are often the most visible workers at Yew Dell and visitors will often engage with them. Please be sure to represent Yew Dell well and politely answer their questions or connect them with a staff member. *Pro tip:* It's okay to say "I don't know" as long as it's followed with "but let's try to find out!". Yew Dell is a place of learning for everyone and you don't have to know all the answers!

**Interacting with staff:** Yew Dell has a small but mighty team. Schedules are carefully coordinated to ensure that specific staff is available to volunteers at certain times. Please pay attention to communications and the whiteboard in the Horticulture Center to know who to contact with questions and when they are available. This is to help volunteers get answers faster and allow our staff to address their responsibilities in a timely manner.





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### Volunteer Health & Safety

#### Stretch, Hydrate, & Take Care of YOU

- Avoid staying in one position too long.
- Use the largest muscle you can (Example: upper arm vs wrist)
- Protect your knees using kneeling pads
- Better gardening posture: Straight back, work over your center of gravity, avoid reaching
- Pay attention to your body;
  - If you're hot, stop and go inside to cool off
  - If you're thirsty, stop and drink. Bottles may be refilled in the Horticulture Center or at the Upper Pavilion's water bottle refill station.
  - If your *[insert body part]* hurts, stop, stretch, and re-evaluate your garden posture

#### Medical Emergencies

- **First aid kits are located in the gift shop office, first floor administration building bathroom, castle kitchen cabinet and the horticulture center under the volunteer sign in and the metal cabinets.** A list of local emergency services contacts is with each first aid kit.
- In case a visitor becomes ill or has a minor accident, have that person sit down or lie down and call the office (502-241-4788) to report what is happening and where to send staff. The visitor and staff person will determine if a call should be made to 911. If the illness or injury appears to be life threatening to that person, call 911 immediately. Do not provide medical intervention. Stay with the person until a staff member or emergency services arrive on scene.

#### Sickness Policy

- If you are feeling ill, please communicate with staff and stay home to rest and heal.
- All volunteers must respect the decisions of fellow volunteers, staff, and visitors in regard to mask wearing and social distancing.
- If you experience any issues in this regard, please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator immediately.

#### Severe Weather Policies

- In case of severe weather Yew Dell's grounds will be closed to visitors when Oldham County Public Schools are on a delayed schedule or closed.
- A volunteer shift should not be started or continued if severe weather conditions exist—tornado watch or warning, hail, high winds, driving rains, temperature below 40 degrees or above 90 degrees Fahrenheit (during your shift).
  - If severe weather occurs (examples follow) an **air horn** is heard from the house or visitor center, seek shelter. Examples include: **tornado watch or warning, lightning event** (the grounds will close and will reopen 30 minutes after the all clear is given).
  - If the weather is merely inclement, volunteers may choose to continue with their shift or seek shelter in the buildings.

**Where to seek shelter:** The Administrative House basement, accessible from the staff entrance or in the basement of the Gheens barn, whichever is closest.





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### Volunteer Opportunities

Please visit the Volunteer page of the website for the most up-to-date information. Training is provided for every shift.

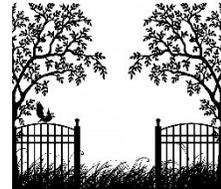
#### General Garden Volunteer

- Supervisor: Garden staff
- Description: Assist staff in a diverse range of projects to help maintain and enhance the gardens and grounds. Beginner and expert gardeners are welcome!
- Opportunities:
  - **Weekly Workdays:** Orientation is required; Wednesdays and Thursdays
  - **Saturday Workdays:** Completion of registration and annual Release & Hold Harmless Agreement forms. (*Volunteer Orientation not required*); 2-3 Saturdays per month March-November



#### Garden Adoption Program (GAP) Volunteer

- Supervisor: Garden staff
- Description: GAP volunteers assist staff in ongoing maintenance of a select garden throughout the growing season (Mar-Nov). GAP Volunteers work closely with our Garden Staff.
- Requirements:
  - Must volunteer at least five garden shifts
  - Additional GAP Orientation
  - Attendance of annual GAP meeting with Yew Dell staff
- Typical Schedule: Weekly or Monthly Commitment



#### Nursery Volunteer

- Supervisor: Nursery Manager
- Description: Assist staff with the weekly tasks in the nursery which may include weeding, up-potting, propagation, and more.
- Requirements:
  - Must volunteer at least five garden shifts
  - Additional Nursery Orientation
  - Attendance of annual Nursery meeting with Yew Dell staff
- Typical Schedule: Weekly or Monthly Commitment



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### Woodland Workday Volunteer

- Supervisor: Buildings & Grounds Maintenance Technician
- Description: Work to clear paths, remove exotic invasive species, and promote native plant growth along the woodlands and trails.
- Requirements:
  - Volunteer must be able to walk/hike at least one mile.
  - Registration as a volunteer in Volunteer Matrix
  - *Orientation not required for Saturday opportunities*
- Typical Schedule: Third Saturday of each month April-October

### Docent and Tour Guide Program

- Supervisor: Volunteer & Website Coordinator; Event & Program Manager
- Description: Share the gardens and history with new people. Wandering Docents engage with visitors in the gardens. Tour Guides provide tours for visiting groups.
- Requirements:
  - Mandatory orientation and training
  - Registration as a volunteer in Volunteer Matrix
  - Attendance at annual Docent meeting with Yew Dell staff
- Typical Schedule: Weekly or Monthly Commitment



### Special Events

- Supervisor: Volunteer & Website Coordinator and/or Events & Programs Manager
- Description: Tasks vary depending on the event but could include assisting with children's crafts, information booth, plant haulers, event set up, greeting guests and so much more.
- Requirements:
  - *Most events do not require orientation.*
  - Registration as a volunteer in Volunteer Matrix
  - See Youth Volunteering Policies.
- Typical Schedule: Seasonal

### Fairy Forest Volunteers

- Supervisor: Volunteer & Website Coordinator
- Description:
  - Fairy Forest Volunteers make and lend fairy houses to reside in the Fairy Forest from approximately June through October. (Houses are returned to their creators in November.)
  - Fairy Forest Committee: Maintains the Fairy Forest and hands-on area on a semi-weekly basis.
- Requirements:
  - House building & lending: *Does not require orientation*
  - Fairy Forest Committee: Volunteer orientation required
- Typical Schedule: Seasonal, monthly, or weekly





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### Photography

- Supervisor: Public Relations & Media Manager
- Description: Capture all of the best elements of the gardens including volunteers, visitors enjoying workshops, events, gardens, and trails, Yew Dell's scenery and wildlife. The primary focus of this program is on capturing the human element of the gardens.
- Requirements:
  - *Orientation is required for most shifts.*
  - See Addendum B for the Photography Program Overview
- Typical Schedule: Seasonal or event-based

### Administrative

- Supervisor: Volunteer & Website Coordinator; Database Assistant
- Description: Tasks may vary, but could include envelope stuffing, filing, or similar activities.
- Requirements:
  - *Orientation is required.*
- Typical Schedule: Monthly or as-needed

### Group Volunteering

- Supervisor: Volunteer & Website Coordinator; other varies by project
- Description: Groups of up to 40 individuals may volunteer throughout the year. Tasks include invasive removal, plantings, mulching, trail maintenance, and more, depending on seasonal needs.
- Requirements:
  - Each individual must complete a Hold Harmless Agreement forms.
  - Youth groups:
    - See Youth Volunteering Policies on page 4.
    - Ages 6-13 must have 1 adult per 5 youth
    - Ages 14-17 in groups larger than 10 must have 1 adult per 10 youth
- Typical Schedule: Group volunteers are accepted from February through November on a case-by-case basis. Minimum shift length is 3 hours.





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### Volunteer Code of Conduct

Yew Dell Botanical Gardens (Yew Dell) is a non-profit organization that benefits from the work volunteers put into the grounds and events. We want everyone to have a great experience when they come to volunteer. This code of conduct helps volunteers understand what is expected of them, but also what to expect from the experience at Yew Dell. Please read each bullet point and sign below. Let us know of any questions or concerns.

#### I agree to:

- Conduct myself in a safe, respectful, and professional manner as a representative of Yew Dell. (Yew Dell has a Zero Tolerance Policy for discrimination against race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, veteran's status, religion or disability.)
- Remain courteous and kind to all visitors, staff, and other volunteers. (Yew Dell has a Zero Tolerance Policy for harassment of any type.)
- Promptly report any and all issues or incidents related to behavior, safety, policies, or anything else to the Volunteer Coordinator or appropriate staff member.
- Practice punctuality and always contact the Volunteer Coordinator by e-mail as soon as possible to let them know I will be late or unable to attend a scheduled volunteer shift.
- Keep accurate track of my hours by signing in and out for every shift.
- Abstain from the possession or use of alcohol and/or any illegal substance while volunteering.
- Abstain from the use of tobacco products while on the grounds.
- Maintain confidentiality of information relating to Yew Dell projects, donors, members or volunteers.
- Avoid conflict of interest such as accepting money, gifts or favors in exchange for volunteer work at Yew Dell.
- Always clean and return all Yew Dell tools after task completion as shown in the training video(s).
- Come to volunteer with safety in mind. This involves always wearing closed toed shoes, having water available for hydration, and paying attention to my physical needs.
- Re-attend volunteer orientation before my next volunteer shift if I miss three shifts without informing Yew Dell staff.
- Refrain from expressing personal religious and political viewpoints while volunteering or representing Yew Dell.

By completing volunteer registration, individuals agree to abide by the rules described above and understand that they may be removed as a participant if they violate any of these rules.



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### VOLUNTEER FAQs

**Q: Why do I have to sign in and out when volunteering?**

**A:** This helps us keep track of the contribution of your time both for the purposes of our recognition program but also for submission to funders who wish to know the extent and value of time contributed by our volunteers. This also helps our staff monitor what volunteers are currently on the property for safety purposes, so it's imperative that you sign in at the beginning and out at the end of every on-site opportunity.

**Q: How do I find volunteer opportunities through the Yew Dell website?**

**A:** Volunteer opportunities can be found on our website ([yewdellgardens.org](http://yewdellgardens.org)) under the "Get Involved" tab and "Volunteer". This page will contain the most current list of volunteer opportunities. (Scan the QR code on this page to visit.)

**Q: What other news or publications will I receive to keep me updated about volunteer opportunities, classes, events, etc. happening at Yew Dell?**

**A:** Through your Volunteer Matrix profile, you may sign up for our email lists to receive our monthly Volunteer eNews, our monthly Garden eNews, and other periodic updates about things happening at Yew Dell.

**Q: Do I have to become a member in order to volunteer?**

**A:** We do not require volunteers to become members. However, we strongly encourage it because members get discounts on classes and events and most merchandise items in the gift shop, and also receive other benefits.

**Q: What happens if it is raining or snowing on a day I've signed up to volunteer?**

**A:** If volunteer projects are cancelled due to weather, we will notify you via email. If rains are heavy and/or there is thunder/lightning you can safely assume the project has been cancelled. Your comfort and safety are of greatest importance to us so you should always feel free to make a determination about engaging based on your own sense of safety and wellbeing. We simply ask that you send an email to the Volunteer & Website Coordinator and your staff supervisor (who will be copied on your shift email) if you need to cancel. Please see the "Severe Weather Policies" section for more information.

**Q: What if I don't have gardening tools to bring?**

**A:** Yew Dell has all of the tools needed to complete each task. We recommend that volunteers bring their own tools because many have specific preferences. We do have gloves (that may contain latex) available for volunteers.

*If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact the Volunteer and Website Coordinator, Amanda Allred ([amandab@yewdellgardens.org](mailto:amandab@yewdellgardens.org)).*



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