

Ecological Horticulture Certificate Program

Personal Project Guide and Requirements Checklist

Use this checklist to guide you through the successful completion of your Capstone Project. The capstone is the final step in the Certificate program and is designed to help you synthesize coursework and apply ecological horticulture principles to a topic of personal interest.

Eligibility & Planning

- ☐ All required Ecological Horticulture coursework has been completed
- ☐ Registration for 'Capstone Project' completed on the Morris website
- ☐ Project timeline reviewed (4–6 weeks after registration, unless extended approval is granted)

Project Focus & Proposal

- ☐ Selected a clear project focus aligned with ecological horticulture principles and Certificate Program coursework
 - Examples include (but are not limited to):
 - Stormwater-focused garden design
 - Native plant propagation
 - Soil health strategies
 - Community greening initiatives
 - Habitat restoration
- ☐ Submitted a brief project proposal outlining:
 - Project topic and goals
 - Planned approach (research, design, experimentation, observation, etc.)
- ☐ Received approval from certificate staff **before** beginning project work

Project Development

- ☐ Dedicated approximately **8–10 hours** to project work
- ☐ Engaged in at least one of the following:
 - Research and literature review
 - Hands-on experimentation or installation
 - Design or planning work
 - Site-based observation or analysis
- ☐ Applied ecological principles learned throughout the Certificate Program

Documentation & Reflection

- ☐ Documented the project process (notes, images, sketches, data, or other materials)
- ☐ Identified key learnings and insights
- ☐ Reflected on how ecological horticulture principles informed decisions and outcomes

Final Presentation (Zoom)

- ☐ Prepared a **short recorded Zoom presentation** that includes:
 - Project overview and focus
 - Methods, design choices, or approach
 - Results, findings, or proposed outcomes
 - Key insights and reflections
- ☐ Recorded the presentation on Zoom
- ☐ Submitted the recording by the required deadline

☐ (Optional but encouraged) Agreed to share the recording with fellow certificate students

Submission & Review

☐ Presentation submitted within **4–6 weeks** of registration (or approved extended timeframe)

☐ All materials uploaded according to program instructions

☐ Awaiting asynchronous review and feedback from certificate staff and instructors

Questions or Support?

- Contact: education@morrisarboretum.org and/or sbruneau@upenn.edu

Ecological Horticulture Certificate

Personal Project Student Rubric

Your capstone project is a chance to bring together what you've learned and apply it to a topic that matters to you. Projects are reviewed as a whole, with the goal of supporting your learning and growth.

Performance Levels

- **Exceeds Expectations** – You went above and beyond
- **Meets Expectations** – You completed what was required
- **Needs Development** – Some parts need more work
- **Incomplete** – Required pieces are missing

1. Project Topic & Proposal

What reviewers look for:

- A clear project idea connected to ecological horticulture
- Proposal submitted and approved before starting

Level	Description
Exceeds	Project topic is clear, meaningful, and strongly connected to Certificate Program course topics and concepts
Meets	Project topic is clear and connected to ecological horticulture
Needs Development	Project topic is somewhat unclear or connection is weak
Incomplete	Topic was not approved or proposal was not submitted

2. Using Ecological Horticulture Principles

What reviewers look for:

- How you applied what you learned in the program
- How ecological thinking guided your choices

Level	Description
Exceeds	Clearly and thoughtfully uses several ecological concepts
Meets	Uses ecological concepts in appropriate ways
Needs Development	Limited or unclear use of ecological concepts
Incomplete	Ecological concepts are not evident

3. Project Work & Effort

What reviewers look for:

- Meaningful engagement through research, design, observation, or hands-on work
- Time spent aligns with the project goals (about 8–10 hours)

Level	Description
Exceeds	Strong engagement and clear effort throughout
Meets	Adequate effort that fits the project scope
Needs Development	Limited or uneven effort
Incomplete	Minimal work completed

4. Documentation & Reflection

What reviewers look for:

- Evidence of your process (notes, photos, sketches, data, etc.)
- Reflection on what you learned and why it matters

Level	Description
Exceeds	Clear documentation and thoughtful reflection on learning
Meets	Process and learning are explained
Needs Development	Documentation or reflection is brief or unclear

Incomplete	Documentation or reflection is missing
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5. Final Zoom Presentation

What reviewers look for:

- A short, recorded presentation that explains your project clearly
- Covers topic, approach, outcomes, and takeaways

Level	Description
Exceeds	Well-organized, engaging, and easy to follow
Meets	Clear and complete presentation
Needs Development	Some parts are unclear or missing
Incomplete	Presentation not submitted or very incomplete

6. Submission & Timing

What reviewers look for:

- All materials submitted by the deadline (or approved extension)

Level	Description
Meets	Project submitted on time and complete
Needs Development	Late or missing pieces
Incomplete	Project not submitted

Final Outcome

To successfully complete the capstone, your project should **meet expectations in all required areas**.

Questions or support: education@morrisarboretum.org