



Volunteer Handbook

OUR MISSION

***to maintain a living museum for the enjoyment,
education, and inspiration of all people***

Updated November 2013

Table of Contents

Overview of KABG

p. 3	History of Klehm Arboretum
p. 4	Facts for visitors
p. 5	The trees of Klehm
p. 6	Staff directory

Becoming a Volunteer

p. 7	Position descriptions
p. 8	Volunteer expectations
p. 9	Application process
p. 9	Training
p. 9	Recording hours
p. 10	Benefits
p. 10	Communication
p. 10	Performance expectations
p. 11	Transfer and separation

Organizational Policies and Procedures

p. 12	Appearance
p. 12	Visitor interaction
p. 12	Absences
p. 12	Ethical standards
p. 13	Equal opportunity and harassment policies
p. 13	Restricted activities
p. 13	Driving Klehm vehicles
p. 14	Safety
p. 14	Garden property
p. 14	Media contact
p. 14	Reimbursement
p. 14	Personal property

History of Klehm Arboretum

This 155-acre site began with landscape architect William Lincoln Taylor, who established the land as Rockford Nursery in 1910. Many of the rare trees on the site are a result of experimental plantings by Mr. Taylor.

The Klehm family bought the nursery in 1968 and maintained the land until 1985. Realizing its value, the Klehms generously donated the land to the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District with the stipulation it be maintained as an arboretum.

In 1991 arborists concluded that Klehm Arboretum has an assortment of plant life unlike any other natural area in the United States. The combination of native plants and those from around the world provides a unique botanical resource for study. The site includes many unique species from throughout the United States that normally do not thrive in this region, plus the Midwest's most vigorous evergreen collection.

The arboretum launched a \$2 million capital campaign for development in May of 1992. Plans included a 13,500 square foot education center, demonstration gardens with plots for exhibiting new plant varieties and gardening techniques, and a special events garden with an area for gatherings and performances.

Once funding was in place, Klehm grew by leaps and bounds. In the spring of 1993, a 1½ mile figure-eight paved walking path was completed. Named in honor of the first corporate donor, the CLARCOR Garden Pavilion was completed in February 1994. The fall of 1994 saw the completion and dedication of the Fountain Garden. The Nancy Olson Children's Garden, designed for kids to explore the wonders of nature, was dedicated October 1996. Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden opened on a full time, seven-day-a week basis in March of 1998.

In 2003 the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District and the Klehm Arboretum Board of Directors adopted a 10 year master plan for future development. This plan includes new gardens, revitalizing existing gardens, increasing the diversity of collections, and the addition of facilities to better meet the needs of visitors and offer unique indoor garden exhibits.

Important Facts for Visitors

What is an arboretum and botanic garden?

An arboretum is a collection of living trees permanently maintained for study, research, and education and is distinct from a forest, nursery or park. It is in a sense an outdoor museum of trees. Today, arboreta also feature other types of flora, including shrubs and woody plants. A botanic garden is an institution for the maintenance of a living collection of research; its essential purpose is the acquisition and dissemination of botanical knowledge of all stripes, and may include elements like greenhouses, herbariums and libraries.

Why should we have arboreta and botanic gardens?

There are several reasons for a community to support an arboretum and botanic garden. One reason is that as more people take an interest in home gardening and landscaping, it's important to have a place where they can learn about the different varieties and techniques that they may wish to include in their own yards.

Another important role the arboretum plays is in the area of conservation and preservation. In the state of Illinois alone there are 251 endangered and 81 threatened plants. Just as zoos have played a vital role in educating people about animals and their habitats and preserving endangered species, arboreta and botanic gardens are places where endangered plants and trees can be protected and propagated to preserve the biological diversity of our planet.

The arboretum is also important as an aesthetically pleasing place for people to visit and enjoy. Communal green space is important not only for physical health but also for the spiritual and emotional health of individuals who want to feel in touch with their environment.

How is Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden unique?

Visitors will see a wide variety of trees and plants unlike anywhere else in the world at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden. If this was just a naturally-occurring Midwestern forest, you might find 50 woody plant species; Klehm Arboretum has 400.

Who makes all of this possible?

Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden is a non-profit organization supported by contributions from the community, fundraising projects and events, and private grants. Klehm operates with a small staff and many, many volunteer hours provided by people who care about and enjoy living plants.

Although the Winnebago County Forest Preserve District owns the property, money for construction of the buildings, construction and planting of the gardens, educational programs and classes, and community outreach programs comes from individual supporters, membership and admission fees.

The Trees of Klehm

The diversity and uniqueness of the existing plant collection at Klehm Arboretum begins at the pre-settlement bur oak grove. It has been estimated that the largest bur oak trees are over 300 years old, and the grove covers 12 acres on the hilly eastern fringe of the arboretum. Other impressive native trees in the grove include an enormous basswood, giant black cherries, white oak, shagbark hickory, black walnut and hackberry – contributors to Rockford's beginnings as a furniture manufacturing center.

Over fifty species and cultivars of coniferous evergreens on site represent nine groups from North America, Europe and Asia. The best of the lot include lush Nikko firs, contorted Meyer's spruce, spiny Irish juniper, columnar spires arborvitae, and the shaggy threadleaf false cypress. Most of the evergreens are forty or more years old.

Many plants at Klehm thrive despite being near the northern edge of their habitat. Brilliant scarlet flowering red buckeyes, clumsy-looking devil's walking-stick, snow white flowering dogwoods, dainty flowered Enkianthus, sourwood, Carolina silverbells, Japanese pagoda tree, sweetgum, Linden viburnum, wisteria, and emerald Moraine ashes contribute to Klehm's outstanding diversity. Klehm dogwoods flower and fruit reliably and the half-dozen or more sourwoods reward us with their white lily-of-the-valley-like flowers and flaming red fall color.

Several plants found at Klehm are quite rare. The spiny Hemiptelea from Northern China was a small tree introduced to North America by Dr. Ware from Morton Arboretum. Other oddities include Fontansea, a willow-like plant of the olive family, three 30' Meyer's spruces, and a groundcover from the Appalachian Mountains called shrub yellowroot. American chestnuts survive in the arboretum, despite having been decimated from their native range by the imported chestnut blight.

Klehm's trees and shrubs represent all major floristic regions of the Northern Hemisphere. Our European contingent includes mature Norway and English hedge maples, English oaks, English elm, European beeches, Horse chestnut, Austrian mugo and Scotch pines, as well as European species of larch, horn-beam, spindletree, and mountain ash. Corktrees, false cypress, katsuratree, Amur maple, Japanese red and white magnolias, flowering-quince, and various honeysuckles represent Eastern Asia. Forest giants of Eastern Northern America include American beech, yellow buckeye, cucumber tree and tulip tree. Western North America's splendid conifers Ponderosa pine, Colorado blue spruce, Douglas firs, and succulent concolor firs complete the list.

All in all, the collection of plants growing at the Klehm Arboretum comprises a living museum of over 400 woody plant species to educate the public on the earth's rich assortment of flora.

Who do I go to with questions?

- Executive Director:** Dan Riggs driggs@klehm.org
- Events & Constituency Manager:** Sarah Lambert slambert@klehm.org
- Events (Garden Fair, Twilight in the Garden, Botanica, etc.)
 - Fundraising
 - Volunteering
- Director of Collections:** John Moors jmoors@klehm.org
- Anything regarding the grounds, trees or gardens
- Rentals & Office Manager:** Dawn Pfluger dpfluger@klehm.org
- Tours
 - Rentals (weddings, corporate, etc.)
 - General office issues
- Bookkeeper/Membership:** Tami Pondelick tpondelick@klehm.org
- Membership
- Marketing Manager:** Carrie Schommer cschommer@klehm.org
- Mailing lists
 - Website, social media, newsletters, etc.



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Volunteer Position Descriptions

Horticulture Helper

- Assist with the care of one of the many gardens within the Arboretum. Tasks include weeding, pruning, mulching, planting, watering, and deadheading spent flowers.
- Basic knowledge of garden maintenance is the only requirement. All other training will be given as needed by the horticulturist assigned to the area.

Garden Volunteer

- Assist with various on-going tasks at the arboretum that include garden maintenance, planting, weeding, watering, pruning and special projects as needed. You may also choose to assist with vegetable, flower beds and maintenance of the garden grounds, equipment, and buildings.
- Specific drop-in work days include Tuesday mornings, Wednesday mornings, and Saturday mornings, but a tailored schedule can be coordinated with the maintenance staff.

Information Desk Associate

- Staff the Information Desk and serve as a main point of contact for guest services. You will provide comprehensive customer service to guests, promote membership to arboretum visitors, direct visitors to various locations within the Gardens, answer telephone inquiries, and assist with general office tasks.
- Schedule will be determined by volunteer and supervisor, with special high-volume events like Donation Days and Autumn @ the Arboretum requiring additional coverage. You may be asked to help with large special projects as well.

Docent/Klehm Express Driver

- Docents provide walking tours to visitors and must have the stamina to walk for one hour. Successful docents have good communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to effectively communicate with a wide variety of visitors.
- Klehm Express drivers must have a valid driver's license and a working knowledge of the arboretum.
- Tours are by appointment only and scheduled at least a week in advance. Your supervisor will contact you as opportunities arise.
- You will also be asked to attend at least two docent trainings per year.

Special Event Volunteer

- Assist with a wide variety of activities at annual special events such as Garden Fair and Woodsong.
- These are one-time commitments, and you will be contacted about each event as it arises. You will have a choice of what activities you participate in, at the discretion of Klehm staff.
- There are also opportunities to work on event committees, which allow you to be part of the planning process and require a commitment of several months.

As a volunteer you may expect of Klehm Arboretum:

- A written position description
- Training and supervision for your volunteer position
- Advice, support and answers to your questions and concerns
- Equipment and materials necessary for the job, as far as is reasonable and within our ability to provide
- Involvement in planning and evaluating the volunteer program in which you participate
- Opportunity for feedback, suggestions and evaluation on performance
- Recognition in a way that is meaningful to you

As a volunteer Klehm Arboretum asks you to:

- Choose an area appropriate to your interests, abilities and time
- Participate in all the training requested for your volunteer area
- Be sincere in the offer of service and committed to carrying out assignments
- Become a member of Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden if you don't already belong
- Be familiar with the policies and procedures (security, safety and emergency) of Klehm
- Respect, support and encourage your fellow volunteers
- Share ideas with staff – volunteers often have a valuable fresh perspective – with the understanding that not all ideas can be implemented
- Seek and accept honest feedback on performance as an opportunity for growth
- Serve as goodwill ambassadors for Klehm Arboretum and its mission
- Keep informed about changes and developments at Klehm
- Ask for guidance or more information if it is unclear what duties you are to perform
- Give prior notice if volunteer work is to be terminated or interrupted for an extended period of time for any reason

Becoming a Volunteer

Application Process:

Individuals interested in volunteering at Klehm Arboretum need to complete a Volunteer Interest form. The form is currently available at the Visitors Center, klehm.org/get-involved/volunteer, or by contacting the Klehm office at 815.965.8146.

Klehm staff develops volunteer positions for work in most areas of the organization. We use the Volunteer Interest form to match the volunteer's skills and interests to available positions. Volunteers may be matched to one or more positions, depending on availability and his or her skills and interests. We expect that the relationship between volunteer and organization will evolve as we get to know each other, and the interest form is just the starting point.

Once you are matched with available volunteer opportunities, you will be invited to Klehm to discuss your placement. We will review the Volunteer Handbook, discuss available positions and determine the best fit.

Depending on the role, you may be paired with a staff supervisor. In that case, you will meet with them to discuss the job description, emphasizing expectations, skills and the time commitment. If at any point in this process either party decides the placement is not suitable, they should notify the Volunteer Coordinator and a new placement sought.

Volunteer Training:

All of our volunteers receive some training to help them in their job at the Arboretum. Training programs vary with the nature of the assignment, the level of special knowledge required, and the skills of the individual. Much of the training is done "on the job", when Klehm staff share their knowledge with volunteers as they work together.

Record of Volunteer Hours:

All volunteers are asked to keep a careful record of hours worked – it's important! Volunteer hours are a measure of the involvement of the community in Klehm's organizational activities. The total number of hours served by volunteers each year is used for grant applications and other funding requests, and can have a significant impact on these awards. Additionally, time sheets are used to calculate hours for volunteer benefits.

Volunteers are asked to record their work time, including time spent at the Arboretum, at home or elsewhere on Klehm business. Be sure to include time spent at planning meetings and training sessions as well.

Time sheets are in binders in the following areas: the Visitors Center, the Maintenance Building, CLARCOR basement and the Gatehouse. Please record time in quarter-hour increments (1hr, 1.25 hrs, etc.). Time sheets will also be available on klehm.org and by request; it's expected that, if you do not record your hours in the binders, you will turn in hours to the Klehm office quarterly.

Volunteer Benefits:

As a Klehm volunteer, you will receive the following benefits:

- An invitation to a special Volunteer Appreciation Event each year
- Access to exclusive volunteer educational opportunities
- A free Klehm shirt for 75 hours of service in a calendar year
- Two free passes for every 25 hours volunteer service

Communication:

Volunteer needs and opportunities will be communicated in a variety of ways. The most up-to-date information will be provided via email, through an email list that is separate from Klehm's general eblast. Opportunities will also be listed on klehm.org and mailings will be sent out for key events such as Garden Fair. Volunteers may also be contacted individually for special projects based on their expressed interests.

Appropriate procedures and policies for volunteers are continuously being reviewed and revised to meet the changing needs of the volunteers and Klehm Arboretum. Updated information will be published in the volunteer newsletter, posted on the volunteer bulletin board in the Visitors Center and announced at volunteer meetings.

Performance:

Each volunteer's individual work performance is important to the success of the organization. Individuals who accept a volunteer position at Klehm assume the responsibilities that accompany that role.

Klehm staff act as support for volunteers assigned to his or her area. Supervisors provide mentoring, training, and feedback on a regular basis to support volunteers in completing their work. Both the supervisor and volunteer are encouraged to discuss suggestions, problems, solutions and other factors concerning their work together. In instances where the supervisor and volunteer need assistance addressing particular concerns, either may request an informal discussion with the Constituency Manager. The goal is to offer both parties support in completing the work described in the position description. A discussion may also be held to redefine or further develop a volunteer position description.

When appropriate, the Constituency Manager may initiate actions following a discussion with volunteer and supervisor. These actions may include:

- Clarification of the job description and responsibilities
- Additional training for the volunteer and/or supervisor
- Reassignment of the volunteer to a new position
- Termination of a volunteer from service at Klehm

Transfers and Separation:

Klehm Arboretum encourages volunteers to explore other assignments after their initial commitment. Request for changes or additions in volunteer assignments should be directed to the Constituency Manager.

Volunteers may take a leave of absence or terminate their service to Klehm at any time by notifying the Constituency Manager. If possible, they will conduct an exit interview. The volunteer's feedback on the position and program will be vital to helping the organization grow and improve.

In particular cases, the Constituency Manager may be obliged to terminate an individual from volunteer service at Klehm. An appeals process will be available to any volunteer so dismissed. This may be done for any one of the following reasons:

- Continued unsatisfactory performance
- Gross misconduct or illegal activity
- Continued failure or inability to fulfill the commitments required by the position
- The position is no longer required

Organizational Procedures

Volunteers shall comply with Klehm Arboretum's policies, procedures and programs during their time of service. Volunteers should contact the Constituency Manager to discuss any questions concerning the policies and procedures outlined here.

Appearance:

Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden considers the appearance of volunteers and staff to be as important to the organization's image as the appearance of its grounds and facilities. While working, dress appropriately but comfortably for your position. Cobbler-style aprons that can be worn over your clothes are available while working in the gardens.

Visitor Interaction:

Volunteers, like all staff, are Klehm's goodwill ambassadors each time they interact with visitors. Volunteers' pleasant and polite attitudes and conduct are essential in maintaining Klehm's high standard of customer service.

When interacting with visitors, volunteers should:

- Answer questions in a courteous manner or direct visitors to those who can
- Provide directions to displays and activities
- Report accidents or injuries to staff person immediately
- Turn in lost and found articles to the Visitors Center

Absences:

Unavoidable absences should be reported as soon as possible. If you cannot reach the person to whom you report as a volunteer, call the Klehm Arboretum office and leave a message so the information can be forwarded to the proper person.

Ethical Standards:

Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden believes fulfilling its mission depends not only on the abilities and dedication of all its volunteers and staff, but also upon their individual common sense, integrity and goodwill. In order for Klehm Arboretum to conduct its business in accordance with high ethical standards, volunteers shall:

- Safeguard Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden's resources
- Obey all applicable federal, state and local laws
- Not receive compensation (fees, gifts, favors or other things of value) for duties performed as a volunteer
- Not violate the confidentiality of privileged information related to Klehm Arboretum activities
- Not use Klehm Arboretum property, materials, equipment or supplies for anything other than Klehm business
- Not engage in any outside activity that might result in a conflict of interest – actual, potential or perceived

Equal Opportunity Policy:

It is our policy to recruit, place, train, promote and in all ways provide fair treatment on the basis of merit without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, handicap, age or veteran status. The organization in accordance with all applicable laws does not discriminate against any employee, volunteer or applicant for employment or volunteer work.

Sexual and Racial Harassment Prevention:

Klehm Arboretum wishes to affirm its belief in the dignity of all persons. Any behavior which has the effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating or offensive environment, or which demeans another person is unacceptable. All volunteers and staff are responsible to conduct themselves in ways that ensure others are able to work or visit in an atmosphere free from harassment.

Any incidents of harassment must be immediately reported to a supervisor or the Executive Director. Appropriate investigation and disciplinary action will be taken. Any volunteer found to have harassed another volunteer, employee or subordinate will be subject to severe penalty and possible discharge. No adverse employment action will be taken for any volunteer making a good faith report of alleged harassment.

Klehm Arboretum accepts no liability for harassment of one volunteer by another volunteer. The individual who makes unwelcome advances, threatens, or in any way harasses another volunteer is personally liable for such actions and their consequences. Klehm Arboretum will not provide legal, financial or any other assistance to an individual accused of harassment if a legal complaint is filed.

Restricted Activities:

Klehm Arboretum is committed to establishing a healthy, safe environment. We request that you do not smoke while in the offices or buildings at the site, and when outdoors you must be at least 15 feet away from any opening to any building.

The following activities are forbidden at Klehm Arboretum to protect the safety of volunteers, employees, visitors and contractors:

- Use, possession or distribution of alcohol or controlled substances
- Possession or use of firearms or other dangerous weapons

Driving Klehm Vehicles:

Any volunteer assigned to drive Klehm-owned or leased vehicles must have a valid driver's license, obey all traffic laws, and be deemed fit by Klehm staff. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining a valid driver's license and for operating any vehicle in a safe, responsible manner.

Safety:

Klehm Arboretum is committed to making every reasonable effort to create and maintain a safe, healthy and enjoyable environment for its volunteers, staff and visitors. Use common sense and good judgment in performing all tasks. In the case of serious accident or injury and a staff member is not available, call 911. An accident report should be completed as soon as possible. If a situation arises where the Forest Preserve regulations need enforcement, contact the Winnebago County Sheriff's Department at 815 (282)-2600 and request the Forest Preserve patrol.

For treating minor injuries, first aid kits can be found in the maintenance building, Visitors Center or CLARCOR Pavilion. **Volunteers cannot provide first aid to visitors.**

Garden Property:

Books, plants, tools and any other material may not be removed without permission from the Klehm Arboretum staff. All concepts or products, including but not limited to such items as photographs, drawings or manuscripts created by or resulting from work performed as a Klehm Volunteer will become the property of Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden, unless specifically released. You may be asked to sign an additional release form to meet legal requirements.

Media Contact:

Klehm Arboretum is often contacted by reporters or editors seeking information for news or feature stories. These stories may appear in newspapers or magazines, or broadcast on radio or television. It is requested that all media contact be coordinated through the Klehm Arboretum office. Volunteers are encouraged to submit suggestions for media contacts and ideas for Garden publicity to the Marketing Committee for consideration.

Reimbursement:

Klehm Arboretum will make every possible effort to provide you with supplies necessary for projects on which you are asked to work. All out-of-pocket expenses require prior approval by Klehm Arboretum and document receipts for reimbursement.

Personal Property:

Items such as eyeglasses, contact lenses, hearing aids, clothing, vehicles, tools, and equipment or any other personal property are not the responsibility of Klehm Arboretum. The owner is responsible for repairs or replacement in case of damage, loss or theft.