



Arborist Apprentice (50-001-1) Effective 2026/2027

Program Description

Urban forestry combines the science of arboriculture with urban tree management strategies, emphasizing the practical disciplines related to tree planting; tree care and protection, and the retention of a healthy urban tree population for the benefits the trees provide to the community. The urban environment can present many arboricultural challenges such as limited root and canopy space, poor soil quality, deficiency or excess of water and light, heat, pollution, mechanical and chemical damage to trees, and mitigation of tree-related hazards. In this occupation and trade, arborists utilize the science of Arboriculture to manage trees planted in and around human occupied areas. Arborists are individuals trained in the art and science of planting, pruning, and the overall caring for, and maintenance of individual trees. They perform the related job duties and tasks associated with maintaining a viable and safe urban tree population managed by private homeowners and their trees, and urban foresters who manage city tree populations.

Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates will be able to:

- 1 Adhere to safe work practices.
- 2 Operate equipment.
- 3 Maintain equipment.
- 4 Prune trees and shrubs.
- 5 Remove trees and shrubs.
- 6 Establish trees and shrubs.
- 7 Assess trees to mitigate risks.
- 8 Apply plant healthcare treatments.
- 9 Demonstrate core ability skills required for the trade.

Essential Career Competencies

Gateway's six essential career competencies are the general attitudes and skills promoted and assessed by all programs. All Gateway graduates will develop skills in:

- 1 Communication Competence
- 2 Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- 3 Professionalism and Career Management
- 4 Teamwork and Collaboration
- 5 Cultural Competence
- 6 Technology Competence

Get Started as an Apprentice

- 1 You should apply directly to employers, and entry requirement vary by employer.
- 2 If you need assistance finding an employer who will take you on as an apprentice, don't hesitate to get in touch with the local WI DWD-BAS Apprenticeship Training Representative at 414.216.8417 to find an employer who has been approved to train apprentices. You can also find apprenticeship employers at <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/ra/applicants.htm>.
- 3 Once your contract is in place with your employer and WI DWD-BAS, Gateway's Apprenticeship department will communicate with you regarding registration, classes and books.
- 4 You can contact Gateway's Apprenticeship department at apprenticeship@gtc.edu or 262.564.2954.

Graduation Requirements

- *Minimum of 2.0 ("C") or above for all required courses.
- Meet minimum hourly paid related instruction requirements per WI Registered Apprenticeship Contract.

Notes

- 1 Students must be physically capable of performing the activities of the job, including equipment/tool use, for course grading. This may include any of these activities for an extended period: standing, sitting, reaching, bending, finger/hand dexterity, and, the use of head, face, eye, ear, hand and foot protection in various dynamic work environments including cramped/small spaces and hot or cold temperatures.
- 2 Students must be 18 years of age and submit official high school, GED, or HSED transcript including a graduation or passing date.
- 3 Students must complete all courses with a grade of "C" or better.
- 4 Students must have a valid driver's license and pass an aptitude test.
- 5 Arborists work outdoors in all kinds of weather for extended periods of time. The work is physically demanding and requires dangerous equipment such as chainsaws. Moreover, the work is often performed at heights, so arborists use fall-protection gear in addition to personal protective equipment.
- 6 Textbook supplies and personal protective equipment requirements and sources will be provided by your instructor as well as outlined in the syllabus.
- 7 Virtual instruction will require the students to participate with the computer camera and microphones on when requested by the instructor.
- 8 Upon completion of the Arborist Apprenticeship program, a student will qualify to sit the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) certified arborist exam.

Gateway Technical College reserves the right to modify curriculum requirements for students who interrupt enrollment for one year or take over seven years to complete. Tuition and material fees are determined by the board of the Wisconsin Technical College System. Consult My Gateway for exact fee amounts. The District reserves the right to modify, cancel, or relocate course offerings in response to factors such as low enrollment, resource availability, or other relevant considerations to ensure high-quality educational experiences. Students will be notified in writing and are encouraged to meet with their Academic Advisor to adjust their academic plan.



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The course sequence shown on this sheet is the recommended path to completion. Courses will be scheduled in the terms indicated here.

All courses should be taken in the order shown to help you stay on track and graduate according to your academic plan.

Courses in this program may be offered in a variety or combination of formats (for example: in-person, video conferencing, online, etc.).

More detailed scheduling information for this program can be found at <https://www.gtc.edu/arborist-apprentice>.

Please see your academic advisor for additional information.

Course Number	Course Name	Requisites	Credits	Hours
*001-133	Chainsaw Safety and Operation		2.0	54
*001-124	Fundamentals of Aerial Tree Work		2.0	54
*001-173	Urban Tree Maintenance		2.0	54
*001-118	Landscape Plant Identification		2.0	54
*001-156	Tree Care Practicum 1	Pre: 001-124	2.0	72
*001-189	Plant Health Care & Treatments		2.0	54
*001-110	Tree Growth & Development	Pre: 001-118; 001-133; 001-173; 001-189	2.0	54
*001-191	Leadership & Teamwork in Tree Care	Pre: 001-118; 001-124; 001-133; 001-156; 001-173; 001-189	1.0	36
*455-455	Transition to Trainer		.20	8

(*) Students must achieve a minimum of 2.0 ("C") or above for this major course to meet graduation requirements.

Training at a Glance

- Time to complete – Approximately 3 years
- On the job time – 5400 Hours
- Related Instruction Time – 440 Hours
- Additional training – First Aid & CPR Certifications; State of WI Pesticide Applicator; ISA Certified Arborist Credential
Consult the Wisconsin Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards website for more information at <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/occupations/arborist.htm>

If you need assistance getting started,
Gateway's Apprenticeship Department is happy to help.

QUESTIONS?

PLEASE CONTACT:

Gateway Technical College

Apprenticeship Department

262-564-2954

apprenticeship@gtc.edu