



ORGANIC LAND CARE ACCREDITATION FAQ

What is organic?

While there are many meanings of the word, we are mostly referring to practices that use natural and/or biological pesticides or fertilizers while emphasizing soil health and natural cycles. In the case of the Oregon Tilth Accredited Organic Land Care Program, “organic” also refers to any practice or material that is allowed under the Oregon Tilth Organic Land Care Policies and Standards.

What is organic land care?

Organic land care practices work to improve the health of the landscape, protect the environment, eliminate harmful practices, and use no synthetic pesticides, fertilizers or soil amendments.

Why should landscapers offer organic land care?

Organic land care offers benefits to human and non-human communities. By reducing the use of pesticides, OLC lessens the risk of pesticide exposure in humans, which is known to create health problems and risks. Pesticides absorbed by plants or insects can accumulate in the food chain as birds, fish, other wildlife, and people feed on the contaminated organisms. Organic land care eliminates chemicals used in lawn and garden care that enter into storm water and pollute water systems. Storm water run-off is reduced through the use of pervious hardscapes, rain gardens, and plant selection and placement. OLC practices reduce the use of fossil fuels by emphasizing a closed-loop system in which inputs and outputs are reduced; and by prohibiting the use of two-stroke, gasoline-powered equipment such as blowers and weed trimmers.



Since when has organic land care been accredited?

The first U.S. organic land care program designed specifically for managing ornamental landscapes was developed by the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) in 2000-2001. NOFA created the Standards for Organic Land Care: Practices for Design and Maintenance of Ecological Landscapes and has accredited about 700 landscape professionals in the northeast since its inception. Check out the NOFA Accreditation Course in Organic Land Care page to learn more about NOFA's accreditation program.

Who can participate in the Oregon Tilth Organic Land Care Accreditation Training?

While the Oregon Tilth Organic Land Care Accreditation Training is designed for landscape professionals who want to adopt or fine tune organic land care practices, any one interested in learning about organic land care is welcome to participate.



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How can I become accredited under the Oregon Tilth Accredited Organic Land Care Program?

Accreditation is offered to all individuals who attend the annual training, pay an examination fee, pass the examination and sign the Professional Agreement to abide by the Program requirements when providing Oregon Tilth Accredited Organic Land Care Program services. Accreditation is initially for a period of two years and may be renewed in two- year increments through continuing education and paying a biennial fee. Twelve (12) hours of continuing education units are required for each two year period.

What can I gain from participating in the Oregon Tilth Organic Land Care Accreditation Training?

By participating in the training, landscape professionals will learn how to design and maintain ecological landscapes, maintain healthy soil, identify and encourage beneficial insects, and market Organic Land Care Practices.

Can I enroll in the training even if I am not seeking accreditation?

Yes, accreditation is optional. The examination will be held on the last day of the course and will require an additional fee.

What is the purpose of the Oregon Tilth Accredited Organic Land Care Program?

The Oregon Tilth Accredited Organic Land Care Program is working to encourage sustainable landscaping practices by training and accrediting Organic Land Care Practitioners.



Is organic land care more expensive than conventional land care?

In the long run, organic land care can cost less than conventional land care because routine applications of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides are eliminated and the need for mowing and other maintenance is generally reduced. Additionally, landscape clients may be willing to pay more for organic land care.

Can a landscape professional provide both Oregon Tilth Accredited Organic Land Care and conventional land care?

Yes, but only those sites that are managed organically may be claimed to be under the program.

Can landscapes become certified organic?

Oregon Tilth does not certify landscapes. The Oregon Tilth Accredited Organic Land Care Program accredits individual practitioners. However, the accredited practitioner may designate, advertise or otherwise indicate a site as organically managed under the Program when program requirements as set forth are met.