

November 9, 2009

For Immediate Release:



**Nantucket Land Council announces \$1,000 scholarships for local landscapers, gardeners, and municipal workers to attend the Northeast Organic Farming Association's 5-day Accreditation Course.**

The NLC has distributed \$24,000 in scholarships over the last two years, and Nantucket now boasts the highest number of NOFA accredited organic land care professionals per capita than any other community in the USA.

**THE COURSE**

Hosted by the Northeast Organic Farming Association, the course is recognized nationally as the preeminent accreditation process for organic land care professionals. The NOFA [Standards for Organic Land Care](#) is the first set of comprehensive organic standards for landscape services and has been recognized across the U.S. as a model.

This 30-hour course for professionals will provide the education needed for an understanding of organic land care design and maintenance. The curriculum is based on NOFA's Standards for Organic Land Care: Practices for Design and Maintenance of Ecological Landscapes, written by NOFA's Organic Land Care Committee. These Standards, published in 2001 and revised annually, extend the vision of organic agriculture to the care of the entire landscape, both private and public. At the end of the course attendees will be able to incorporate methods and materials that respect natural ecology and the long-term health of the environment.

**ACCREDITATION**

An optional exam will be given at the conclusion of the course. Those who pass the exam can become NOFA Accredited Organic Land Care Professionals. A list of these professionals and their services is widely distributed throughout the region in NOFA's Guide to Organic Land Care and on its website. Annual reaccreditation is granted based on continued demonstration of competence in organic land care.

**WHY ORGANIC?**

The Nantucket Land Council is focused on increasing awareness of the damage that traditional landscaping techniques have on Nantucket's environment. The effects of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers can be seen in our ponds, harbors and most importantly, our groundwater, which is the source of our drinking water supply.

"It is essential that Nantucket visitors and residents are made aware of the negative effects that non-organic landscaping has on our water," explains NLC Executive Director Cormac Collier. "By providing both professionals and amateurs with affordable, hands-on learning opportunities, we can help reduce the harmful practices that are a threat to our environment. This is an easy, concrete way that we can make a positive change."

Organic landscaping practices have evolved to meet today's standards and skeptical homeowners will be pleased to discover that an organic garden can look as lush and healthy as a chemically treated garden, but without the dangerous side effects for their families and Nantucket's water.

**Scholarship Applications are now available:**

Interested landscapers, gardeners, or municipal professionals working on Town, school or other local recreational properties are encouraged to apply. Contact the Nantucket Land Council office at 508-228-2818 or email [nlc@nantucket.net](mailto:nlc@nantucket.net) to request your scholarship application. For more information on the course, please visit [www.organiclandcare.net](http://www.organiclandcare.net). Recipients will be announced in December.