

Strengthening your garden programs for teenagers: A hands-on workshop

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Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn, New York, USA

Workshop aim

To share successful strategies for engaging teens in learning – and teaching – about plants.

Objectives

- Introduce participants to both the informal and formal aspects of youth programming at Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG).
- Engage participants in a sampling of activities including ice breakers, teambuilding exercises and inquiry based lessons that are featured in various Brooklyn Botanic Garden youth programs.
- Provide participants with an opportunity to exchange their own best practices and ideas for connecting botanic gardens and teens.

Format

We will begin with a brief presentation to give participants an overview of Brooklyn Botanic Garden's current formal and informal teen educational programming. The formal school-based connection with teens is through the Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment (BASE), a small public high school founded in 2003 in partnership with the New York City Department of Education, Prospect Park Alliance and Brooklyn Botanic Garden. BBG's informal out of school – time link with young people is the Garden Apprentice Program (GAP), a multi-year internship opportunity for 13 – 18 year olds.

Attendees in this workshop will then have the opportunity to participate in actual lessons and activities used during youth programming with both BASE and GAP at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. The program components modeled can easily be replicated or modified for any site and done for little or no cost.

Finally, there will be time for everyone to share their own institution's or personal best practices and ideas for motivating and engaging teens in teaching, learning and working with plants in a botanic garden.

Biographies

Elyssa Arnone, the Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment Program Manager at Brooklyn Botanic Garden, has a degree in Plant Biology from Ohio University. Elyssa has been an educator for over ten years.

Barbara Kurland is the School Programs Manager in the Education Department at Brooklyn Botanic Garden where she has been teaching and learning about plants with children, youth, and adults since 1989.