

NORTH HAVEN Gardens

Professional Designations and Certifications – What do they mean?

Horticulturists work and conduct research in the disciplines of gardening and landscaping, plant propagation and cultivation, crop production, plant breeding and genetic engineering, plant biochemistry, and plant physiology. The work particularly involves fruits, berries, nuts, vegetables, flowers, trees, shrubs, and turf. Horticulturists work to create beautiful landscapes, improve crop yield, quality, nutritional value, and resistance to insects, diseases, and environmental stresses. Horticulturists can work in industry, government or educational institutions or private collections. They can be cropping systems engineers, wholesale or retail business managers, garden center employees, greenhouse growers, propagators and tissue culture specialists (fruits, vegetables, ornamentals, and turf), crop inspectors, crop production advisers, extension specialists, plant breeders, research scientists, and of course, teachers.

Arborists, or tree surgeons are professionals in the practice of arboriculture, which is the management and maintenance of ornamental or shade trees. Work can include tree surgery and also care of shrubs, vines, and other perennial woody plants. An arborist is distinct from a forester, or from a logger. Those professions may have much in common, but the scope of work is different. Arborists frequently focus on health and safety of individual trees, or wooded landscapes, rather than managing forests or harvesting wood.

A Horticulturist may also have experience as an arborist and can address tree issues in your landscape, just as an arborist may have additional horticultural and landscaping knowledge. If you hire any professional to assist you in your landscape, you should always ask for credentials to determine the individual's background, regardless of the title they may be using.

Degrees and Professional Certifications

Most individuals that represent themselves as either a **Horticulturist** or **Arborist** most likely have a degree or advanced degree in Horticulture, Botany, Biology, Forestry or related field. Or they may have worked in the industry for many years and have chosen a professional certification. These professional certifications are not state controlled or mandated, however they do represent additional commitment by the individual to stay current and active in their field. Continuing education is required to maintain these certifications.

TCNP – Texas Certified Nursery Professional - The Texas Certified Landscape Professional (TCNP) program certifies individuals in the nursery and landscape industry that possess a high degree of knowledge and skill in horticulture and the retail nursery business. Individuals must pass an exam developed by experts that covers: Plant Culture, Plant Identification, merchandising, and Landscape Design.

An applicant must meet one of the following educational or work requirements in addition to the exam:

- Bachelor's degree in an industry related field
- Associate degree in an industry related field plus 500 hours of industry work experience within the last 2 years
- Completed 2000 cumulative hours of industry work experience within the last 2 years
- Completed 300 hours of classroom instruction in high school horticulture and 1000 hours of industry work experience

TMCNP – Master Texas Certified Nursery Professional (additional testing required)

TCLP- Texas Certified Landscape Professional

CA – Certified Arborist - certified arborists have a minimum of three years experience in some aspect of tree care and have passed an exam developed by a panel of experts. The exam extensively covers every aspect of tree care and the individuals must have an acceptable level of knowledge in all areas of arboriculture.

Volunteer Organizations

Master Gardener - Master Gardener Programs are volunteer programs affiliated with a Cooperative extension service office and a land-grant university that educates the public on gardening and horticultural issues. Typically Master Gardeners answer questions via phone, speak at public events and participate in community gardening displays. Individuals that pursue Master Gardener training are generally amateur gardeners with an interest in community outreach and supporting the professional community. Master Gardener is not a professional certification and should not be confused with professional degrees or certifications.