



## **The North Carolina Arboretum Society Green Weddings Frequently Asked Questions - July 2009**

### **What is a Green Wedding at the NC Arboretum?**

The North Carolina Arboretum, located at Milepost 393 along the Blue Ridge Parkway, is nestled in one of the most beautiful natural settings in America. The Arboretum will now share this treasured setting with couples who are interested in reducing their carbon footprint through their wedding event. The Arboretum's green wedding program will offer Arboretum green buildings and sustainable landscapes as sites for ceremonies and receptions. Couples will follow guidelines for using organically grown and natural products as part of their wedding and pledge to reducing consumable products during their activities.

### **Why is the Arboretum Society starting a Green Wedding Program?**

The Arboretum property and facilities offer excellent examples in sustainability through its green buildings, sustainable gardens and outdoor exhibits, water conservation, and recycling.

Offering green weddings allows the Arboretum to provide this service within its economic development, education and conservation mission areas. The program will help educate the public about the importance of being a good steward of the natural environment within the context of the wedding celebration. The green wedding program is an additional component to the Arboretum's successful facility rental program and allows the Arboretum to extend its public service and economic development reach to a new audience.

The North Carolina Arboretum has been an affiliate institution of the University of North Carolina for almost 24 years. Its mission is to cultivate connections between people and plants through creative expressions of landscape stewardship including economic development, education, research, garden demonstration and conservation. The North Carolina Arboretum is committed to the use of its facilities and grounds to support the Arboretum's mission areas and for the general benefit of North Carolina citizens and visitors to Western North Carolina.

The North Carolina green wedding program is a product of the North Carolina Arboretum Society, and, as a result, adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.

The North Carolina Arboretum Society is a 501 (c) 3 organization that provides financial, philanthropic and volunteer assistance to support and promote the Arboretum as a valuable resource to the people of North Carolina and the region.

**How did the Arboretum make the decision to offer Green Weddings?**

To make green weddings an addition to its offerings, the Arboretum was required by law to request approval from the University of North Carolina Umsted Review Panel. This group makes decisions that allow University institutions to provide University facilities, equipment or expertise to the area community within certain guidelines. The Arboretum received approval from this panel in April 2009 to begin its green wedding program.

In addition, the Arboretum for many years, has received numerous requests to host weddings on its property from residents in the region as well as visitors from other locations. With the concept of the green wedding program, the Arboretum will now be able to meet this community need while staying connected to its mission.

**What is required to have a green wedding at the Arboretum?**

The wedding party must abide by the Arboretum's green wedding policy which includes a security/damage deposit, Laurel Membership or gift to the Arboretum, contract signing deposit, and specific guidelines that meet green/sustainable standards, such as catering, floral, printing, and transportation.

Weddings, rehearsal dinners, wedding receptions, and wedding anniversary gatherings and commitment ceremonies are allowed as part of the green wedding program.

To have a green wedding at the Arboretum, interested parties must meet all marriage laws of the State of North Carolina. A marriage license can be obtained by contacting the County Register of Deeds.

**What types of activities are not included in the green wedding program?**

At this time we are not able to offer opportunities for bridal/bachelor showers or parties because of the need to balance Arboretum building usage between facility rental activities and Arboretum educational programs.

**What other guidelines are important?**

The Arboretum requires a wedding planner for all ceremonies and receptions held at the Arboretum. The wedding party is responsible for all rental equipment, décor, entertainment, catering, transportation and officiator. The Arboretum will provide an event coordinator, public safety officer and housekeeper for the event.

Please keep in mind that Arboretum property is open to the public until 9 pm April –October and there will be other guests on property during the wedding event. The Arboretum will provide private event signs to direct visitors away from the wedding activities, but cannot prevent visitors from observing events from afar.

The North Carolina Arboretum's facilities are not a "public forum," and The North Carolina Arboretum reserves the right to approve or reject at its sole discretion, for any reason, any and all requests to schedule events in the facility.

**What Spaces Are Available?**

An indoor space must be included in all packages as an inclement weather backup. No tenting is allowed. Both the Education Center and Baker Exhibit Center serve as indoor locations. Outdoor spaces include: Heritage Garden, Outdoor Events Garden, Plants of Promise Lawn, Education Center Entrance Plaza, Baker Center Lawn, and Blue Ridge Court.

**What are the costs involved?**

Costs range from \$1,700 to \$3,000 depending on date and location.

**What dates and times are available?**

April- October, Friday-Sunday, most weekends, unless other events are scheduled. Ceremonies are only allowed after 5 pm, after buildings close to the public. Set up time may begin at 3 pm depending on location. Ending time for event is 11 pm.

**How many guests can be invited?**

Depending on the space selected, accommodation can be made for 50 up to 150 guests.

**How do I get more information?**

Visit the Arboretum Web site at [www.ncarboretum.org](http://www.ncarboretum.org) or contact Cindy Blankenship at [cblankenship@ncarboretum.org](mailto:cblankenship@ncarboretum.org) or Angie Chandler at or [achandler@ncarboretum.org](mailto:achandler@ncarboretum.org).