UCF student planted, harvested, and studied medicinal plants with the UCF Arboretum. The Arboretum benefited through help with maintenance in the garden and the student is now graduating and exploring a career in medicinal plants and sustainability!
What is Service Learning?

According to Andrew Furco, Service Learning strives to benefit not only the provider (Arboretum), but also the recipient (student). Differing from volunteering, Service Learning places equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring. Along with volunteering, the UCF Arboretum offers Service Learning opportunities to students.

For Faculty

Faculty are encouraged to make their class a Service Learning course (20 hour minimum) by visiting the UCF Service Learning website.

There are many benefits to the students, the Service Learning and the faculty members’ department, and the Arboretum. Though designating your course as “Service learning” is desired, it is not necessary to have your students engage with the Arboretum; you may assign them as many hours as you see fit.

If your students will be completing their service hours with the Arboretum, we highly encourage you to send us an email to arboretum@ucf.edu with the following information:

- The syllabus for the course
- The potential number of participating students
- The number of hours to be completed by each student
- Time frame for service hours to be completed
- Desired objectives of service learning engagement (if not provided in syllabus)

For Students

Students sometimes have the option to choose which non-profit they would like to work with or their faculty member might have set them up to work with one non-profit in particular. If you are interested in working with the Arboretum to complete your Service Learning hours we will require that you do the following:

- Come into our office during our operating hours to let us know you would like to complete your hours with us
- Fill out a waiver
- Provide a copy of the syllabus for the class at the start of your service
- Provide a one-page abstract, summary or creative statement of no more than 250 words that describes your service learning project or experience, and the outcomes of that experience

   The paper will focus on what you did that addresses a community need and how that relates to the coursework

- Consider entering into the Service Learning Showcase (offered every Spring semester) where students can win scholarship money. For more information please see the UCF Service Learning website

   The same paper written for the Arboretum (above) can be used for entry into the Showcase

- Complete a post-survey (this is only for students satisfying <10 hours) that helps the Arboretum to improve the student experience. These are available in our office upon request.

UCF student plants okra and sunflowers to research companion plants in the UCF Community Garden. She learned valuable research techniques and helped to maintain a part of the garden.

Students learn valuable skills while helping UCF staff plant a roof-top garden on the new Physical Sciences building.