

## Fircroft College Green Skills Courses





## About us

We are an adult education college for people aged 19 or over, up to any age, situated in Selly Oak, Birmingham, close to the city centre and easily accessible by train, bus, car and bike. We were established as a college in 1909, with the manor house once owned by George Cadbury Jr., eventually transformed into a place of learning, continuing his legacy of enabling people to reach their potential and the prospect of a better life, through education. Today, we are a vibrant college welcoming students from across the West Midlands county, offering a range of residential short and longer courses.

In 2021 we were the first college to declare a climate emergency and since then, we are working hard to become a sustainable college. This brochure highlights the many actions we have taken to combat climate change including introducing new and exciting courses that involve using our 6 acres of grounds; establishing a staff and student Green Team; ensuring each member of staff has a "green" objective each year and in 2023 we became the first college in England to be awarded "Cycle Friendly Employer" status by Cycling UK. We are award-winning, having won a Green Gown Award in the Campus Health, Food and Drink category in 2022 and being finalists in other categories in 2023 and 2024. The journey continues to build on what we have already done and to always explore new and innovative ways to play our part in helping our planet become a better world.

Our Green Skills courses are designed to teach, empower and motivate students to continue what they learn at the college into the future in their own gardens and green spaces, in community areas and to have a more in-depth knowledge of a wide range of green skills and environmental topics to help themselves, their family, friends and neighbours and their local community.

### Our Fees

If your individual annual income is less than £34,000 this course could be FREE to you. Go to [www.fircroft.ac.uk](http://www.fircroft.ac.uk) for more information.

### Entry Requirements

Our courses are funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority and are for people living in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull and Coventry. If you live outside of those areas, you may still be able to apply for our courses. Please contact the Admissions team on telephone number 0121 472 0116 or email [admissions@fircroft.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@fircroft.ac.uk) to find out more.

Because we are funded as an adult further education college, you must be aged 19 or above by 31<sup>st</sup> August.

Our courses are residential (3 days and 2 nights each week of the course) and you will be required to stay overnight even if you live locally to the college.

Other entry requirements may apply.

For more information about our entry requirements and FAQ's about the college, please go to [www.fircroft.ac.uk](http://www.fircroft.ac.uk)

### Applying for a Course

To apply for a course, go to [www.fircroft.ac.uk](http://www.fircroft.ac.uk) or come to an open day session - see our website's event page to register, or visit the college Monday to Friday between 10.00am and 4.00pm to complete an application form.

If you need help to apply for a course, please contact the Admissions team on telephone number 0121 472 0116 or email [admissions@fircroft.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@fircroft.ac.uk)





## Mother Garden Bootcamp - Level 2

**Scheduled over 4 months, students are required to stay 3 days and 2 nights at Fircroft College once each month, along with the option of attending non-residential gardening days.**

This course is ideal if you want to develop your own project and is for:

- Those involved in community food growing projects
- People wishing to create their own Mother Garden

A Mother Garden is a garden that helps create new gardens through the growing and sharing of plants, seeds, skills and resources. This course will equip you to use the Mother Gardens' model to develop your own community food project, including community allotments, community orchards, food forests, or nature-conservation projects. It is a practical course where you will take part in developing spaces both on our college grounds and in community spaces across the city. You will learn about growing and propagating perennial edible plants.

During this course, learning will include:

### **Spring and summer programme (March to June)**

Organic gardening  
Propagating edible plants and trees  
Permaculture design basics  
Forest gardening and designing food forests  
Community engagement  
Mother Garden matrix

### **Autumn and Winter programme (September to December)**

Fruit tree growing  
Fruit tree pruning  
Orchard design  
Propagating edible plants  
Seed saving  
Nature conservation  
Community organising basics

Get hands on experience to develop food forest and edible conservation spaces in the Fircroft college grounds. Learn the principles, philosophy, and practice of Mother Gardens, to then apply them to your own green space

### **Entry Requirements**

In addition to the standard entry requirements on page 2, you must be working at Literacy Level 1, or above.





## Cross Pollinator Course - Level 2

**Running every two years for 18 months divided into 3 sections of four months each, with one residential weekend per month (3 days and 2 nights) at the college**

Cross Pollinators are people that connect and work with groups across a network (rather than focused on a single site or project), raising awareness, delivery training, sharing plants, and helping start up new growing projects, community gardens, Mother Gardens and local networks. The Cross-Pollinator training at Fircroft College aims to equip keen and aspiring community and eco-practitioners in the different skills to make positive and sustained impacts for the planet and their communities. It will build on and deepen the skills learnt on the first Mother Gardens Bootcamp courses, practically applying the Mother Gardens model and other tools to real world issues, and to each learner's unique interests. You will learn and deepen key skills in regenerative gardening, as well as a much wider set of skills and ideas required for building a sustainable future and to respond to emerging social and ecological problems. Students will be encouraged to develop their own interest and niche broadly relevant to the ethos of the course, through their own self-directed learning.

Topics covered on the course:

The course is comprised of a broad set of topics covered by our different tutors. It will bring together different elements of the Mother Garden Bootcamp course, Green Changemaker course, and Green Skills course. There will be five core strands to the course within which topics will sit:

- Core community building skills
- Regenerative land management and agroforestry
- Exploring the bigger picture: alternative models for regenerative futures
- New-world lab: Planning, sketching and designing new initiatives for a new world
- Self-ecology: Nurturing the self through eco-therapeutic practices

### Core Community Building Skills

- Confidence building
- Leadership skills
- Working with groups
- Training / workshop delivery skills
- Video production and media promotion
- Project management
- Managing finances
- Marketing



.....Cross Pollinator Course continued

### **Regenerative land-management**

Permaculture design  
Organic vegetable growing  
Agroforestry (forest gardening and orcharding)  
Mother gardening  
Collaborative Community garden design  
Plant propagation

### **Exploring the bigger picture**

Systems theory  
Regenerative cultures  
Exploring new regenerative models and social systems for the future  
Changemaker skills  
Mother Garden matrix planning

### **New world lab – planning, sketching new initiatives for a new world**

Legacy project: collecting and recording skills and wisdom from elders  
Support for learners to develop their own initiatives  
Project design with mother garden matrix

### **Self-ecology – nurturing the self through eco-therapeutic practices**

Tree of Life  
Mindfulness in nature  
Nature connection and self-reflection  
Group reflection

### **Entry Requirements**

As well as the entry requirements mentioned on page 2, you must be working at Literacy Level 1, or above.

The course is suited for people with an interest in permaculture, community building and regenerative food growing, and with some knowledge of any of these. It is ideal for those who have completed part 1 and 2 of the Mother Gardens Bootcamp.

You must also have: experience in food growing involvement, an interest in community work, and awareness or some knowledge of permaculture.





## Green Skills: Sustainable Communities - Level 2

**2 weeks**

**3 days and 2 nights each week**

The course aims to increase knowledge and skills related to environmental and sustainability issues and solutions within community projects.

It will cover topics such as:

- The 15 Green Skills and how these can be embraced at an individual and community level.
- Introducing circular economy thinking to a project
- Understanding and exploring sustainability and 'green' terminology
- Utilising nature and the outdoors in community projects for food growing, wellbeing, biodiversity, arts & crafts
- Collaboration and consultation in community project set up and design

This Level 2 course is suitable for those currently working or volunteering in community projects, or those working towards this goal.

On completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand a range of sustainability related definitions & concepts
2. Analyse and review a range of sustainability models & concepts
3. Reflect on personal, local, community & global nature connections
4. Establish a collection of skills, tools, & activities to share learning within community projects
5. Develop collaborative working skills

### Entry Requirements

In addition to the entry requirements on page 2, you must be working at Literacy Level 1, or above





## **Introduction to Organic and Regenerative Gardening - Level 1**

**3 days, 2 nights at the college**

This course is suitable for beginners who are interested in organic and regenerative gardening. You will learn the basics of food growing, as well as the core principles and practices of organic horticulture. You will also gain knowledge on the methods for developing and designing sustainable food spaces.

This course will help you to:

- Develop an understanding of the basics of plant growing, including seed sowing, and planting out.
- Develop an understanding of Composting.
- Understand how to develop healthy soil in your garden.
- Understand how to grow food in different spaces.
- Develop an understanding of crop rotation and organic pest management.

### **Entry Requirements**

In addition to the entry requirements mentioned on page 2, you must be working at Literacy Entry-Level 3, or above.



## **Contact us:**

**Our address: 1018 Bristol Road  
Selly Oak  
Birmingham  
B29 6LH**

**Telephone: 0121 472 0116**

**Email: [admissions@fircroft.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@fircroft.ac.uk)**

**Website: [www.fircroft.ac.uk](http://www.fircroft.ac.uk)**