

SCHOOL OF WOODLAND ECOLOGY

EASILY ACCESSIBLE ECOLOGICAL
KNOWLEDGE.

Over the last 30 years, Macphail Woods has offered a huge variety of workshops focused on ecological concepts, woodlot management and building forestry skills. The more that we understand nature the more we can appreciate it, and the more sound our restorative actions.

macphail
ecological **woods**
forestry project

Contact



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**Part of a
watershed or other
environmental
group? Get 30% off
courses**

SCHOOL OF WOODLAND ECOLOGY COURSES

CALENDAR YEAR AT A GLANCE



MAY

- Buds, Bark, and Branches I: Native Tree ID in the Field **May 3d (Saturday 9 am- 12 pm)**
- Buds, Bark, and Branches II: Native Shrub ID in the Field **May 3d (Saturday 12:30-3:30 pm)**
- Building a late-successional, resilient forest: **May 31st (Saturday 12 pm-3 pm)**

JUNE

- Through the Lens: Discovering the World of Mosses and Lichens **June 28th (Saturday 9 am- 12 pm)**
- Don't be Sori- Know your Ferns!: Fern Id **June 28th (Saturday 12:30 pm- 3:30 pm)**

AUGUST

- Planting for the Future: Propagation with Native Plants with Becky Lyons **August 2d (Saturday 12-3 pm)**
- GIS Mapping: Beginner: **August 16th (Saturday 9 am- 12 pm)**

OCTOBER

- GIS Mapping: Intermediate: **October 4th (Saturday 9 am- 3 pm)**
- Sustainable Trail Design: **October 18th, (Saturday 9 am-3pm)**

NOVEMBER

- Preserve your saw: Chainsaw Maintenance with Evan Young **November 1st (Saturday 9 am-3 pm)**
- Restoration Pruning: How to improve the health of trees and shrubs by pruning **November 8th (Saturday 9 am-12 pm)**
- Island Connections: The Ecology and Economy of PEI's Landscapes **November 22d (Saturday 9 am- 12 pm)**

DECEMBER

- Bare Branches: A Winter Guide to Tree Bud Identification **December 13th (Saturday 12 pm-3 pm)**

SCHOOL OF WOODLAND ECOLOGY COURSE CATALOGUE 2025

Our courses combine hands-on experience with theoretical learning, tailored to meet participants at any knowledge level. They foster meaningful connections with both the environment and fellow participants, leaving you empowered to make informed decisions that benefit ecology. Whether you're a woodlot owner, a professional in the environmental field, someone looking to integrate environmental education into your career, or simply curious about ecology and eager to connect with nature and others — these courses are designed for you.

TUITION

- ½ day course (morning or afternoon) - \$60
- 1-day course (9 am-3pm) - \$110

Register for 2 or more and get 15% off!

Native Botany *(Beginning with basic I.D. principles, exploring patterns and creating a learning language with plants we encounter)*

- Buds, Bark, and Branches I: Native Tree ID in the Field **May 3d (Saturday 9 am- 12 pm)**
- Buds, Bark, and Branches II: Native Shrub ID in the Field **May 3d (Saturday 12:30-3:30 pm)**
- Bare Branches: A Winter Guide to Tree Bud Identification **December 13th (Saturday 12 pm-3 pm)**
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- Don't be Sori- Know your Ferns!: Fern Id **June 28th (Saturday 12:30 pm- 3:30 pm)**

Restoration Techniques *(Building on a foundational appreciation for ecology, using techniques to improve the health of our ecosystems).*

- Planting for the Future: Propagation with Native Plants with Becky Lyons **August 2d (Saturday 12 pm -3 pm)**
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Environmental Stewardship *(developing stewardship towards the natural world, and how you can tangibly implement these values).*

- Building a late-successional, resilient forest: **May 31st (Saturday 12 pm-3 pm)**
- Island Connections: The Ecology and Economy of PEI's Landscapes **November 22d (Saturday 9 am- 12 pm)**
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NATIVE BOTANY



Buds, Bark, and Branches I: Native Tree ID in the Field

This course offers an immersive, hands-on experience in the outdoors, focusing on the identification of native trees through their leaves, buds, branches, bark, and distinctive patterns. The diverse array of native tree species plays a vital role in all Island habitats, whether they thrive in the canopy or grow in the understory. Gaining the skills to identify these species will empower you to make informed decisions that enhance habitats while fostering a deeper appreciation for the intricate details in nature.

May 3

Saturday 9am- 12pm



Buds, Bark, and Branches II: Native Shrub ID in the Field- May 3d (Saturday 12:30-3:30 pm)

This course focuses on providing outdoor hands-on experience looking at leaves, buds, branches, bark, and the basic patterns of native shrub identification. Our diverse array of native shrub species are a critical component of all Island habitats, whether on coastlines, woodlands or beyond. Shrubs are also an incredible way to encourage wildlife in any area, due to the creation of habitat, source of food and more!

May 3

Saturday 12:30-3:30 pm



Bare Branches: A Winter Guide to Tree Bud Identification

Without the telltale clues of leaves, identifying trees and shrubs in winter can feel intimidating. This course will introduce you to the distinct characteristics of buds, bark, and branching patterns, helping you confidently recognize species even in the coldest months. Expand your knowledge of winter botany and deepen your connection to the natural world year-round!

December 13

Saturday 12 pm-3pm



Through the Lens: Discovering the World of Mosses and Lichens

Small species, such as our native mosses, liverworts and lichens, are often mysterious, overlooked and difficult to identify. Despite their small size, they are an essential component of habitat health, fulfilling a number of critical ecological functions. This half-day course will introduce participants to several common and rare small species and the stories that they tell.

June 28

Saturday 9 am- 12 pm



“Don’t be Sori, know your ferns!”

Ferns are a world of beauty, yet often mysterious. In this course, you’ll explore the basic botany of ferns and develop a framework for identifying native species based on frond structure, spore patterns, and habitat preferences. By examining their ecological roles, you’ll also learn how ferns serve as indicators of environmental conditions, offering insight into the landscapes they inhabit.

June 28

Saturday 12:30-3:30 pm

RESTORATION TECHNIQUES



Planting for the Future: Propagating Native Plants with Becky Lyons

Want to grow native species from seed? Join Becky Lyons and Brandon Bernard, foundational members of Macphail Woods, as they share their expertise in native plant propagation. This course will cover the essentials of seed collecting, including how to identify ripe seeds, proper storage, and stratification techniques. You'll also learn expert tips for successful germination and how to integrate native plants into your landscape. Perfect for gardeners, conservationists, and anyone passionate about restoring local ecosystems! Participants will receive a gift of one small seedling at the end of the day.

August 2

Saturday 12-3 pm



Preserve your saw: Chainsaw Maintenance with Evan Young

Evan Young has taught chainsaw courses at Macphail Woods for the last several years and has countless hours of sharpening and maintaining saws under his belt. Begin with an overview of key components of your saw, and useful tools and techniques on how to approach maintenance, finally, the class will take saws apart and do full maintenance altogether. Bring your own saw and tools if you have them, but if not one will be here for you to practice on. Leave with the ability to sharpen and maintain your own saw, and keep your saw out of the shop.

November 1

Saturday 9 am-3 pm



Restoration Pruning: How to improve the health of trees and shrubs by pruning

This course will focus on learning hands-on skills that you can take home to your yard or forest to help ensure the vigour and beauty of your trees and shrubs. Over the three-hour course, participants will learn proper pruning techniques to help maintain healthy, attractive, and safe trees, and to add value to trees in your forest.

November 8

Saturday 9 am- 12 pm



GIS Mapping: Beginner

This half-day course introduces participants to the basics of digital habitat mapping, exploring its uses and potential benefits. Landowners and citizen scientists will learn how to collect more accurate data using modern devices. Bring your own device to get hands-on experience, and discover how mastering this skill can broaden your horizons, enabling you to gather valuable information about the land you care for.

August 16

Saturday 9 am- 12 pm



GIS Mapping: Intermediate:

Building off the beginner GIS mapping course, take a full day and practice using a GIS system. Perfect for those working in an environmental organization that could use some extra experience with mapping, anyone planning on making a trail, doing plantings in the woods, or simply wanting to map an area for an added resource.

October 4

Saturday 9 am- 3 pm

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



Building a late-successional, resilient forest

This course focuses on a key component of restoration forestry- species succession. Due to the nature of forests on PEI, late-successional, multi-aged forests all over the island need to be developed. In this course, participants will learn how a healthy forest becomes a resilient forest, less susceptible to natural hazards such as disease, and intense weather events. The class will then delve into hands-on learning, exploring component of a late- successional forest at Macphail Woods and how to replicate it themselves.

May 31

Saturday 12-3 pm



Island Connections: The Ecology and Economy of PEI's Landscapes

By examining historical data, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the environmental evolution of Prince Edward Island's landscapes. From salt marshes allocated to early settlers, to the shipbuilding yards fueled by tall white pines, to agriculture and tourism, our actions have shaped PEI's landscapes — just as they have shaped us. This course offers an opportunity to explore how we can collaborate with our environment to mitigate the vulnerabilities we've created. By the end, you'll gain valuable tools and techniques to help build a more resilient Island for the future.

November 22

Saturday 9 am-12pm



Sustainable Trail Design: October 18th, 9 am-3pm

Proper access to woodland can transform an underused forest into a welcoming space for exploration. This four-hour course will cover the essentials of trail design and construction. The first two hours focus on trail layout and mapping, highlighting common mistakes to avoid. In the second half, participants will engage in hands-on learning as they create a trail. We'll also explore woodland roads, teaching how to build them to ensure access without damaging the forest's health.

October 18

Saturday 9 am- 3 pm



All courses will take place at Macphail Woods
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Questions?

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