

Student Guide to Navigating Moodle

Unique to this course, you can navigate through the course in the sequence it was intended, by clicking on the button on the bottom of each page. It is possible to navigate between pages by using the Back and Forward navigation buttons on your web browser. This is not recommended; you will obtain more consistent results by using the navigation options within the website and course pages.

Note that if you navigate to another area of the course while writing a forum entry, your input may not be saved. To avoid this always ensure that you complete what you are doing within the activity first, e.g. post to a forum, save changes. Or, you can open a new window as described below, so you can look at another part of the course (or an external website) while you continue to work on your posting to the forum, or some other activity.

Tips on opening multiple windows:

You can have two web browser windows open at the same time in the course website, or the course website and any other web site. For example, if you are posting a comment about something you saw in the text, if you leave the page you're writing in to go review another part of the course, when you come back what you had written will be gone. To avoid this, open another window or tab, press ctrl-T in most browsers, and a new tab will open. Then, you can have one window open to write in, and with the other you can go to another part of the course or another web site, to recheck on some detail of what you are writing about, for example.

The main course page is divided into a number of specific areas that you will encounter often. An overview of these is given in the following sections.

Modules

Modules reside in the center of the course home page, as shown at the beginning of this user's guide. It is in each module that your instructor will place the activities etc., which make up the online elements of your course.

Blocks

Blocks are on-screen areas which are placed at the side of the main course page. They fulfill a range of functions as described below.

People Block

The People Block provides links to a list of all participants in the course by clicking Participants and to your own user profile by clicking Edit profile. By editing your profile, you can choose many options, including getting forum postings by email, uploading a picture of yourself, changing your contact info, and other functions.

Activities Block

This block displays all of the available activity types in the course. Clicking on the text to the right of the activity icon will display a list of all of the available activities of that type.

Recent Activity Block

As you can see, there are many different activities going on in this course. Each day (or several times a week), when you log on, you may not wish to go through each different part of the course to see what is new. The Recent Activity block is the easiest way to check what new forum postings have been made, without checking each forum individually. The Recent Activity block displays a synopsis of recent activity within the course together with links to the activities themselves, as well as a more detailed full report of recent happenings.

Administration Block

This block contains a link to the Grade book where you can monitor your achievement against each graded activity.

Course resources

As the title of this section suggests, a course can contain various resources that you will need to assist you in your study. These can take various forms e.g. text, images, video, web pages, MS Office documents, or Acrobat pdf files, to name a few. Resources are accessed by clicking the text link to the right of the resource icon (an example is shown below).

Forums and the text editor

The Forums are the interactive part of the course; it's what makes this a real course, not just an online book. Participation is key! Here's how: Enter a forum by clicking on one in the index page. On the white background is the forum introduction, to focus the discussion.

In text below that, it says Add a new discussion topic. Click there to add your own posting, to respond to the introductory question. You can also reply to others' postings, by reading their posting, and clicking *Reply* in the right hand side of their message.

There is a text editor for you to customize your posting: you can add color, change fonts and styles, attach images, etc. Play around to get a feel for it. Below, you can see a wide range of small icons; these are tools to edit your text with (font, bold, italics, indent, etc.).

Now that you've made your way through this guide, you should have good sense of how to get around our Moodle courses. If there are useful tips you discover that you think belong in this guide, please let us know. We are always improving it. This guide can be found as an online resource in the Introductory section of the course main page. Good luck, and enjoy the course!

Adapted March 2012 from a document compiled by Marguerite Wells and modified by Paul Treadwell, 2008

What to Expect

Here is what to expect prior to the course opening. A few days before the course begins you will be added to the online course in an online Moodle interface. The course formally begins on June 1st, but you will have access to the site in advance. The introductory week is designed to give you the chance to get to know the interface and your fellow "classmates". We encourage you to read, review, and become familiar with the site prior to June 1st.

You will find this course to be highly supportive and self-directed. In each unit or “module” you will find readings and assignments that you will complete; a student discussion forum where you will interact; and an opportunity to reflect through a journals and self-reflective assignments that you will submit to the Moodle interface. We find that students who really take the time to go through each and every reading during the first several days are the most prepared, will get the most out of the course.

To help make your experience and transition to working with the Moodle course an easy one, we suggest:

- A recent version of an Internet browser, such as Firefox or Internet Explorer.
- A current version of Acrobat reader, so that you can read pdfs.
- You may need to turn off your pop-up blocker while in the course.
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If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to check in. We look forward to “meeting” you!

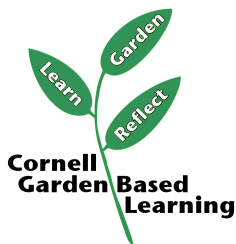
5 Tips for success in this online course

1. Be an active participant. Sense of community in an online course is just as important as in a face-to-face classroom. I believe it is more important, because we depend on our written words to reflect, collaborate and communicate. The discussion forums and group activities serve to enhance and advance the content we are learning. Sounds heavy, but studies support this. Follow the rules of “Netiquette” (referenced) for a positive and open environment. Be respectful of each other’s thoughts and opinions and if you are compelled to disagree, that is OK; we need to hear all perspectives. Keep the discussion forums focused on the topic, and feel free to share other items of interest in the “Place to Share News” forum found in the Introduction section on the homepage of the course.
2. Keep up with readings, discussions and assignments, and adhere to the deadlines. Falling behind in an asynchronous online learning environment will cause you unnecessary frustration and stress. At first, it may seem like there is a lot of work to do, but by manage your time wisely and signing on every other day and devoting 4-5 hours a week, you should be able to keep up with ease. In the rare event of a personal issue or emergency, contact the course facilitators so we can agree on a reasonable time extension if needed.
3. We have 9 Weeks/Modules of study, all which build upon each other and are not viewable at once. Each week runs Monday-Sunday, with all assignments due by midnight Sunday EST. Each subsequent Module is available for viewing the Saturday before it runs. When you are finished with the current week’s assignments, look ahead at the next module as soon as it opens.

4. Keep in touch- if you need support or guidance, do not fade into the background. You invested in this course, and it will pay off for you in the long run.
5. Enjoy the flexibility of this course and all that we have to offer each other....and have fun! We all share a common interest, a desire to maintain the connection we have to our environment, and to share our enthusiasm with others through garden-based learning. We are confident you will leave this course with a few new friends and a bundle of wonderful resources to use as a Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator.

Netiquette

We should approach our online learning environment in the same way we would a face to face classroom, being considerate of others and especially mindful of how the typewritten word can sometimes be misunderstood or interpreted as something other than what we intended. As with every other form of communication, there is a code of proper behavior for talking on the Internet, called "netiquette". Understanding and following proper "netiquette" is very important in the distance learning environment, due to the absence of the expression in non-verbal cues, body language and face-to-face communication. Misunderstandings happen and need to be clarified and sarcasm is easily misunderstood. When replying to discussion posts, always quote or paraphrase the part you are responding to so your classmates will know what you are talking about. Answer individual responses to your postings individually, and submit only relevant responses of global interest to a discussion. To read more about netiquette, see [Alene Rinaldi's User Guidelines and Netiquette](#) and the Netiquette Home Page at <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/>



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