

CAROLINA YARDS

A MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO ENCOURAGING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING

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PROGRAM GOAL:

Residential landscapes are an integral part of the environment. Thus, the management of these landscapes can have positive or negative impacts on local ecosystems. Carolina Yards was developed to assist South Carolinians in conserving water and making positive changes in the environmental quality of their yards, neighborhoods, and surrounding waterways by implementing twelve basic principles.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

Carolina Yards aims to attract a diverse audience of individuals to utilize some or all of the online and in-person educational resources provided by Clemson Cooperative Extension, cultivating a network of resources to design unique and environmentally friendly landscapes. The Carolina Yards Program encourages participants to incorporate the following 12 Carolina Yards Principles:

CAROLINA YARD PRINCIPLES

- 1 MAINTAIN HEALTHY SOIL**
- 2 RECYCLE YARD WASTE**
- 3 MULCH MATTERS**
- 4 RIGHT PLANT, RIGHT PLACE**
- 5 GARDEN LIKE A LOCAL**
- 6 REMOVE INVASIVES**
- 7 BE WISE WHEN YOU FERTILIZE**
- 8 MANAGE PESTS RESPONSIBLY**
- 9 WATER WISELY**
- 10 RAIN AS A RESOURCE**
- 11 REDUCE RUNOFF**
- 12 PROVIDE FOR WILDLIFE**

PARTNERS:



METHODS & ACTIVITIES:

1. YARD CERTIFICATION

Yard Certification can be completed online through Canvas. The certification includes a 9-minute video review of the 12 Carolina Yard Principles and a 55-question scorecard survey. Upon successful completion of the video, participants receive an emailed certificate for their Carolina Yard and may purchase branded recognition items including a garden flag and yard sign.



2. ONLINE COURSE

The Carolina Yards Online Course is a 10-week self-paced program designed to provide information and techniques for creating and maintaining a more environmentally friendly landscape. Learning modules include hands-on components that provide the opportunity to apply the practices learned. An optional field day allows attendees to see the Carolina Yards principles and recognize there is flexibility for the property owner to achieve their desired goals/aesthetic. A digital badge is issued for successful completion of the course, and participants are encouraged to certify their yards.

3. ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

The Carolina Yards website seeks to provide easily accessible resources that raise awareness of environmentally friendly landscaping principles and encourage people to take action in their own landscapes.

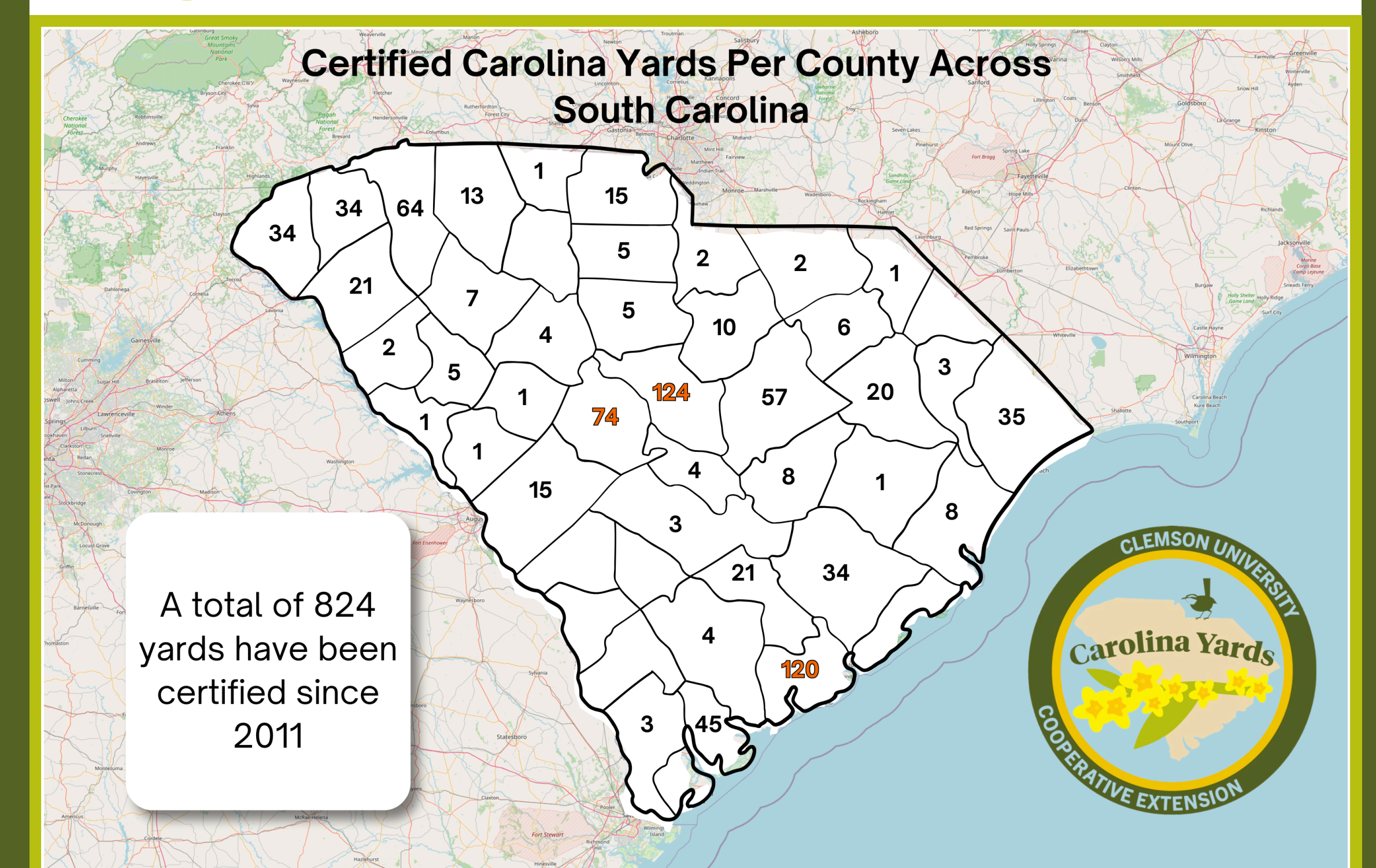
- General information about each principle
- Promote Carolina Yards Online Course
- Encourage yard certification
- Native plant database to allow for more informed decision-making when adding plants to the landscape
- Connection to HGIC, a repository of over 850 fact sheets and blogs, some of which are directly related to Carolina Yards

4. DEMONSTRATION SITE

The Richland County Master Gardener Association designed and installed a Carolina Yard Demonstration Garden at the Sandhill Research and Education Center in Columbia in 2013. They received a grant in 2024 to relocate and revamp the Garden, a move necessitated by changes in accessibility of the Sandhill property.

IMPACT:

- 824** People have successfully certified their Carolina Yards since 2011
- 41** Out of 46 counties in South Carolina have certified yards



- 307** Online Course Participants
- FALL 2016**
 - 38 participants
 - 15 certifications
- SPRING 2018**
 - 35 participants
 - 23 certifications
- SPRING 2019**
 - 40 participants
 - 28 certifications
- SPRING 2020**
 - 32 participants
 - 18 certifications
- SPRING 2021**
 - 25 participants
 - 14 certifications
- SPRING 2022**
 - 39 participants
 - 24 certifications
 - 9 field day
- SPRING 2023**
 - 25 participants
 - 16 certifications
 - 10 field day
- SPRING 2024**
 - 30 participants
 - 23 certifications
 - 5 field day
- SPRING 2025**
 - 43 registrants

“I’VE ENJOYED THIS CLASS AND HAVE LEARNED SO MUCH! SOME OF THE THINGS I HAVE STARTED DOING AS A RESULT OF THIS CLASS ARE LEAVING GRASS CLIPPINGS ON THE LAWN, STARTING A COMPOST BIN, MONITORING MY WATER USAGE MORE CLOSELY, CREATING AN AT-HOME KIT FOR CHEMICAL SPILLS AND INSTALLING A RAIN BARREL AND BUTTERFLY GARDEN.”
— CAROLINA YARDS COURSE PARTICIPANT

FUTURE OUTLOOK:

- Expansion of yard certification to include neighborhoods, HOA landscaping requirements and non-residential sites
- Creation of rack cards displaying the Carolina Yards Principles
- Updates to course content to reflect new research
- Increased field day locations