Horticultural Assistant Job Description

Title: Horticultural Assistant

Pay Level & Current Wage: $10.20/hr.

Number of Positions: 1

Department: Calvin Ecosystem Preserve & Native Gardens

Locations: Calvin Ecosystem Preserve & Native Gardens (1750 E. Beltline Ave SE 49546) and Lake Drive Greenhouse (3770 Lake Dr. SE 49546)

Supervisor: Jeanette Henderson, Program Manager  jmh46@calvin.edu  616-526-7601

Schedule: For the 2021 season, position starts mid-April part time (4 to 8 hours a week) through mid-May. The position then transitions to 40 hours a week until mid-August. During the summer, hours are split between native plant propagation and education. The majority of summer hours are scheduled during weekdays (8:00 am to 4:30 pm), but some evening and Saturday work may be required on occasion.

Purpose of Position (Summary): To assist the preserve staff with propagation and cultivation of native plants for sale and restoration projects and with educational outreach program in the native gardens.

Primary Responsibilities:

Native Plant Propagation
- Propagate plants in greenhouses including sowing seeds, transplanting seedlings, weeding, watering and monitoring for pests and disease.
- Weed, water, organize and monitoring stock in native plant enclosures and in the glasshouse for pests and disease.
- Assist with seed collection and storage as well as record keeping and data collection for ongoing propagation and cultivation projects.
- Work with and train volunteers in plant propagation and seed collection techniques and ensure their safety. Partner with summer camp programs on Service-Learning activities.
- Assist with the management/operations of the greenhouse, glasshouse, and native plant nursery enclosures keeping the spaces cleaned and organized, stocked with supplies, and working properly.
• Assist with retail sales of nursery stock during the spring and summer months including pulling orders and communications with customers.
• Perform additional duties as assigned.

Education
• Plan and execute weekly garden programs for the public (possibilities include garden tours, Games in the Gardens, Create with Nature, Bee Helpful programs, and pop up play events)
• Write and post weekly social media posts (Mindful Mondays, Wild Wednesday, Floral Fridays, event posts etc.).
• Help plan and execute events for National Pollinator Week (middle of June)
• Assist visitors to the native gardens, Bunker Interpretive Center, and the Preserve by welcoming them and answering questions.
• Additional responsibilities potentially could include management of summer photo contest, taking photos and videos of native plants and their pollinators to be used for a variety of educational materials, administering visitor surveys, and developing passive outreach materials related to native plants, pollinators, and birds for the native plant sale and gardens.

Required Skills/Experience/Qualifications:
• Willingness, curiosity, and an excitement to learn about environmental education and interpretation, plant propagation, and the ecology and natural history of the flora and fauna of the Great Lakes region and share that knowledge with Preserve visitors and volunteers.
• Ability to work both independently and collaboratively with the capacity to be a self-starter, take initiative, and know when to ask for help.
• Attention to detail and effective follow-through on projects.
• Experience working with hand and power tools (i.e. shovels, rakes, hand saws, pruners, loppers, hammers, string trimmers, leaf blowers, rototiller, lawn mowers, etc.)
• Possession of a valid driver's license and the ability to achieve Calvin University’s “Approved Driver” status to be able to drive university owned vehicles on public roads.
• Commitment to the Ecosystem Preserve & Native Garden’s mission

Preferred Skills/Experience/Qualifications:
• College-level coursework in botany, horticulture, plant taxonomy, plant physiology, environmental science, environmental education, outdoor recreation, and/or science education.
• Experience designing and teaching programs for a variety of ages.
• Familiarity with horticultural practices, nursery operations, landscaping, and/or previous work in a greenhouse, or farm setting.
• Demonstrated proficiency in using a variety of social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and/or a strong desire to learn how too.
• Prior customer service/retail experience preferred.
• Experience working with volunteers.

Physical Requirements: Applicants must have tolerance for working in heated greenhouses, outdoors in a variety of weather conditions and exposure to the sun, biting insects, poison ivy, thorns, etc. They need to be able to safely lift at least 25 lbs.
Benefits:

- Gain valuable professional experience for your resume and portfolio in the fields of horticultural botany, ecology, greenhouse management, environmental education, interpretation, etc.
- Develop native and invasive plant identification skills and skills in environmental education/interpretation.
- Learn more about native plant propagation and production, project management, volunteer management, display garden maintenance, event management, and public education and interpretation.
- Explore opportunities to network with professionals and attend field trips.
- Enjoy working outdoors in a beautiful setting.

How to Apply: To apply for this position, applicants must apply online via Workday and fill out an Ecosystem Preserve Student Employee Application online at www.calvin.edu/go/preserve (under Get Involved Section). Submit completed application and supporting documents including resume and 3 references to Jeanette Henderson, Program Manager, at jmh46@calvin.edu by the application deadline listed on the website.