

THE MORRIS COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Job Description

Title: Assistant Gardener

Full Time - Salary Grade: Local 32 - Class VI

Division: Horticulture Maintenance

Effective Date: 10/27/2021

Prepared by: B. Crawford

Approved by: R. Vitale

Position Charter:

Employees in this position are responsible for the hands-on maintenance of the gardens and plant collections throughout the Horticulture sites operated by the Morris County Park Commission. Individuals should have a basic understanding of horticulture, possess the primary skills necessary to perform horticulture maintenance tasks, and be familiar with the identification and cultivation of common woody, herbaceous, and annual landscape plants. The Assistant Gardener works under the general supervision of the Manager of Horticulture and reports to the Superintendent of Horticulture for the coordination of daily activities, attendance and other operational procedures.

Essential Functions:

- To maintain – and develop those skills required to maintain – annuals, perennials, shrubs, and trees in assigned garden areas in a manner consistent with the horticulture standards of the Morris County Park Commission.
- Identify, prioritize, and perform maintenance tasks and coordinate work needs with the supervisor and other staff members as needed.
- Physically work in all aspects of arboretum maintenance and development including soil preparation, planting & transplanting, mulching, watering, weeding, fertilizing, pruning, propagating, mowing, raking, sweeping & blowing, tree & brush cutting, and chipping.
- To learn how and to operate in a proficient manner push mowers, riding mowers, flail mowers, string trimmers, backpack blowers, push blowers, garden ATV's, tractors and their associated attachments, pickup trucks, chainsaws, chippers, and other power equipment in accordance with MCPC safety protocols and regulatory standards.
- Utilize shovels, trowels, fan rakes, grading rakes, spades, digging forks, pick axes, brooms, hand shears, hand saws, loppers, pole pruners & pole saws, wheel barrows, fertilizer spreaders, garden carts, ladders, and other hand tools properly to complete assigned tasks.
- Monitor gardens and plant collections for pests and diseases. Report pest and disease problems to supervisor.
- Apply pesticides and herbicides and maintain application records.
- Report changes to the accessioned plant collections to the Plant Recorder including additions, removals, and deaths. Perform periodic plant inventories. Request accession tags and display labels.

- Successfully perform the above functions and use of said equipment independently without constant supervision once trained on how to properly operate the equipment and having displayed proficiency in the operation of this equipment.
- Maintain an attendance record adequate to complete the essential functions of the position.

Other Functions:

- Supervise seasonal staff, interns, and volunteers, as assigned, in garden maintenance activities.
- Operate Park Commission motor vehicles to transport personnel, materials and equipment on Park Commission property and public roadways.
- Advise supervisor of equipment and supply needs.
- Function as an advocate of the arboretum and the Park Commission to visitors. Answer visitor questions.
- Load and unload materials and supplies.
- Clean and sharpen tools, make minor repairs to tools and equipment.
- Assist with the maintenance of buildings and facilities including cleaning, restroom provisioning, painting, and performing minor repairs.
- Assist with carrying out standard operational procedures, as required, including working overtime for snow removal, events, and other assignments.
- Assist with other arboretum maintenance activities, as required.

Qualifications:

- A two-year Associate's degree in Horticulture or a related field, or equivalent experience, plus one year's work as a professional gardener or groundskeeper.
- The ability to identify and prioritize work tasks and competently maintain annuals, perennials, shrubs, and trees in garden and arboretum settings.
- A strong desire to learn additional horticultural techniques and further their knowledge of plant materials, garden design and insects (both beneficial and harmful).
- A demonstrated understanding of basic horticultural practices and procedures required for soil preparation, planting & transplanting, mulching, watering, weeding, fertilizing, pruning, propagating, mowing, raking, sweeping & blowing, tree & brush cutting, and chipping.
- The ability to identify frequently used woody, herbaceous, and annual landscape plants by common name.
- The ability to identify common insect pests and diseases of annuals, perennials, and woody landscape plants.
- The ability to use shovels, trowels, fan rakes, grading rakes, spades, digging forks, pick axes, brooms, hand shears, hand saws, loppers, pole pruners & pole saws, wheel barrows, fertilizer spreaders, garden carts, ladders, and other hand tools effectively.
- The ability to operate push mowers, riding mowers, string trimmers, backpack blowers, push blowers, garden ATV's, tractors, pickup trucks, chainsaws and other power equipment effectively.
- The physical strength, dexterity, and coordination sufficient to perform the above functions.
- The ability to follow written and verbal instructions and perform basic mathematical calculations.

- The ability to lift and carry weights of up to 50 pounds.
- Possession of a valid New Jersey Driver's license.
- The ability to maintain an attendance record adequate to complete the essential functions of the position.
- The ability to obtain Pesticide Operator Registration from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.
- The ability to perform the essential functions of this position with or without reasonable accommodation.
- Applicants must pass Assistant Gardener test to be eligible for this position.

Nothing in this job description restricts management's right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to this job at any time.