SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS RESERVE

Southern Highlands Reserve (SHR) is a nationally recognized native plant arboretum and research center located in Lake Toxaway, NC. The organization, established in 2002, is a 501(c)(3), nonprofit corporation with deep experience in high elevation native plant management, propagation, and restoration. Set among 120 acres along the Blue Ridge escarpment of the eastern continental divide at an elevation of 4,500 feet, the site includes a 22-acre display garden and a new state-of-the-art greenhouse.

The Reserve is comprised of staff and volunteers collectively working to create an awareness of and education about the ecosystems of the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Among other projects, SHR has been at the forefront of red spruce restoration in the Southern Appalachian Mountains and is a charter member of Southern Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative (SASRI). Staff at SHR collaborate with other organizations such as the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to establish a framework for mapping, planning, and completing red spruce restoration projects. To date, SHR has grown more than 10,000 mature red spruce seedlings and planted more than 7,000 red spruce trees on public land with SASRI partners and volunteers.

Since inception in 2002, integrity, stewardship, and excellence have been hallmarks of the organization. These principles are carried forward from our founders, Betty and Robert Balentine. SHR is actively seeking to grow partnerships and recruit like-minded professionals to assist in its expansion.

POSITION: SEASONAL GARDENER

Executive Summary

SHR is currently seeking seasonal gardeners. This position will support the Gardens Manager in the maintenance and development of the gardens on a flexible schedule during the growing season, March through November. This individual will monitor, manage and maintain garden areas including new installations, weeding, watering, pruning, composting, mulching, identifying problems and treating them.

Outcomes

SHR is a nationally recognized native plant arboretum and research center dedicated to sustaining the natural ecosystems of the Blue Ridge Mountains. We accomplish this mission through the preservation, cultivation, and display of plants native to the region, and by advocating for their value through education, restoration, and research. Our staff functions as a single team, dedicated to outstanding guest and partner service and excellence in conservation. To adhere to our culture of excellence, we have defined the following outcomes for this position.

Demonstrate and understand internal and external requirements in regard to all tasks by:

- Following established operating procedures and policies
- Taking direction while showing initiative and thriving in a work environment where all staff wear many hats
- Communicating effectively with colleagues and showing enthusiasm for working in a team environment
- Creating new solutions to tasks and problems
- Maintaining gardens with pride and ownership, achieving a high standard of aesthetic display

Job Description

Gardening & Landscaping:

- Maintain all plantings on a daily basis, including watering, weeding, deadheading, mulching, fertilizing, pruning, and other maintenance as directed

- Operate and maintain tools and equipment, including blowers, trimmers, and utility and company vehicles to transport materials and equipment
- Maintain landscape features such as walkways, stonework, and trails as directed
- Monitor garden conditions for visitor safety and report problems to supervisor
- Report problems related to pests, diseases, and damage to gardens and ground
- Assist with propagation of plants, seed collecting, and other greenhouse tasks
- Assist with recordkeeping related to chemical applications, plant documentation, and equipment inventory
- Supervise and work with garden volunteers
- Work with SHR colleagues on conservation and restoration projects
- Perform tasks related to weather protection to include repair work related to storm damage
- Perform proper weeding by hand in landscape beds to create a neat, clean appearance and inhibit the growth of weeds
- Assist with landscape renovations to include performing landscape construction to improve the visual impact of the garden
- Assist with tour and event setup and breakdown as required
- Maintain cleanliness of all assigned areas as needed
- Perform other duties as assigned

Qualifications:

- Working knowledge of methods, materials, techniques, tools, and equipment used in a wide variety of grounds maintenance activities
- Knowledge of the planting and care of native perennials, woody shrubs, and trees, and the appropriate control measures of their major pests and diseases
- Proficiency in the use of computers and MS Office applications
- Ability to lift, carry, push or pull 50 pounds. Position often requires strenuous activity outdoors with exposure to a variety of conditions ranging from hot and humid to cold and wet.
- Experience in horticulture, landscaping, or any combination of related skills
- Proficiency with irrigation installation and repairs
- Comfortable performing minor repairs on power equipment
- Preference will be given to those candidates with experience in a public garden

Competencies:

1) Analytical Thinking
   A. Ability to think logically through a situation to identify and avoid potential pitfalls and arrive at the best-case and most feasible outcome
2) High Standards
   A. Extreme attention to detail
   B. Treat every task and project diligently
   C. Calmly maintain standards of excellence when under high stress or tight deadlines
3) Curiosity
   A. Desire for continued growth personally and professionally
   B. Investigative nature, eager to understand all levels of a task
   C. Enthusiasm for learning
4) Communication
   A. Provide and receive information and instruction and respond accordingly in a professional and friendly manner in both verbal and written format
   B. Listen to and connect with people and respond accordingly in varying situations

C. Recognize own and others' emotions and create positive interactions through fairness, empathy, and sensitivity
D. Build authentic relationships

5) Self-management
A. Ability to stay focused and make progress on multiple projects even when not held to specific deadlines by a supervisor
B. Ability to self-manage, prioritize, and work hard both individually and collaboratively

Compensation

Competitive hourly compensation will be offered. If interested, please email a cover letter and resume to info@southernhighlandsreserve.org. Please use the subject: Seasonal Gardener – YOUR NAME.