

TYLER ARBORETUM GARDEN AMBASSADOR VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE OF SERVICE:

1. To help the public gain an understanding of the garden(s) by sharing details on the plantings, practices ecosystems and gardening methods.
2. To encourage the public to be actively involved in Citizen Science Projects, live demonstrations, and to participate in hands on learning activities as scheduled.
3. To encourage the public to grow or enhance their own gardens through interpretive tours.
4. Be a resource to the public regarding their gardening questions as it pertains to Tyler's gardens.

QUALIFICATIONS/SKILLS:

1. Available to volunteer at selected times associated with demonstrations, tours and similar events. A minimum of 6 hours per month are requested May through September, with less hours expected in October.
2. Good health with ability to stand, walk and/or stoop for 2 hours at one time.
3. Must be people oriented and enjoy engaging with diverse visitors including children.
4. Have an email account that is checked on a regular basis (every other day minimally).

TYPICAL AMBASSADOR ASSIGNMENTS FOR POLLINATOR PARADISE: Be prepared to share details with the public regarding pollinator plants and insects by leading interpretive tours of the gardens. Be prepared to describe the life cycles of insects, their dependence on host and nectar plants, and the threats to pollinators and their habitats. Assist with providing engaging interpretation of the interactions between plants and insects. May be asked to participate in live demonstrations on occasion. Suggest outreach and social media ideas, photos and videos to Tyler staff. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to also volunteer as a Pollinator Preserve Guide or Gardener in order to remain up to date on the weekly changes that occur throughout the season.

TYPICAL AMBASSADOR ASSIGNMENTS FOR LUCILLE'S GARDEN: Be prepared to share details regarding Lucille's garden by leading interpretive tours of all of the gardens surrounding the schoolhouse. Be ready to describe the vegetables and fruit growing throughout the year. Be aware of garden plans, growing methods, and seasonal and succession planting practices for the vegetable garden. Include the herb garden, rain garden, pollinator garden and potted plants in discussions. Share updates regarding food donations and upcoming classes as appropriate. May be asked to participate in live demonstrations on occasion. Suggest outreach and social media ideas, photos and videos to Tyler staff. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to also volunteer in Lucille's garden in order to remain up to date on the weekly changes that occur throughout the season.

EXPECTATIONS:

1. Sign-up for work days using Sign Up Genius and report as scheduled. Notify the supervisor in advance if you are unable to keep your commitment, and delete your sign-up.
2. Engage visitors in a manner that is welcoming, positive and educational.
3. Learn and use the radio while on duty.
4. Dress for presenting to the general public with the Tyler shirt and nametag; clothing should be well kept.
5. Attend all training sessions and complete shadowing with your supervisor (or designee) as needed.
6. Have a desire to learn about the garden plants including their requirements throughout their growth period, the associated diseases, the insects they attract, and recommended practices.
7. Follow instructions from your supervisor. Ask what you need to know to complete your assignments. Communicate openly with your supervisor to build productive working relationships. Document and escalate issues as appropriate. Be sure to mention physical limitations and safety concerns.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

Interacting with the public requires in depth knowledge of the garden that is provided in the spring and throughout the season. This includes training on the plants, harvest, insects and interpretation as applicable. General knowledge about the arboretum is encouraged. Garden Ambassadors are invited to attend portions of the spring Docent Training to provide additional knowledge. These additional optional trainings include the following topics:

1. Overview of Tyler Arboretum's history
2. Tour of the arboretum's historic core, including the Painter and Champion trees
3. General knowledge of the collections, gardens, natural areas, and citizen science projects
4. General knowledge of the volunteer program and volunteer opportunities

Training specific to the Pollinator Garden and/or Lucille's Garden (as applicable) will be both formalized and informal throughout the growing seasons as the plants, plant requirements, and overall environment will change.

In order to be aware of safety measures and the work conditions that may be encountered as you perform various tasks, volunteers are to be familiar with the details under 'Safety While Volunteering' section of the Volunteer Handbook.

Updated: 2/5/2021, 2/20/2023