



TYLER ARBORETUM WISTER RHODODENDRON GARDEN VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE OF SERVICE: The rhododendron collection began near the present Native Woodland Walk and North Woods. This initial collection quickly became popular during the bloom season, inspiring Wister to clear another, larger swathe of land to continue development of the collection. Planting of this new garden, now known as the Wister Rhododendron Garden, began in earnest in 1961 and continued throughout the early 1960s. In 2010, funding was received to hire a part-time gardener for the Rhododendron Garden. Jerry O'Dell, current president of the Valley Forge chapter of the American Rhododendron Society (ARS), was hired for this position and worked tirelessly in the Wister Rhododendron Garden until December, 2019. The largest project conducted during Jerry's time at Tyler was the planting of the Azalea Bowl, conceptualized by W. Gary Smith to be the centerpiece of the Wister Rhododendron Garden. Volunteers will provide day to day support to the gardener in the Wister Rhododendron Garden.

QUALIFICATIONS/SKILLS:

- Available to volunteer mornings as per the schedule, typically weekdays, with occasional special projects offered at other times. Requesting 6 hours of commitment per month from February to December (weather dependent).
- Can work independently and manage tasks effectively and in a timely manner with little oversight.
- Good health with physical dexterity, ability to bend and kneel, and tolerance for working outdoors.
- Ability to lift large debris, push wheelbarrows of mulch, clear woody invasive plants, and other physical labor. The work can be physically demanding.
- Possess good stamina, endurance, and ability to problem solve. Has a positive outlook and likes to be creative.
- Willingness and desire to learn about garden management and specifics of Rhododendron culture and healthcare.
- Beneficial: experience with gardening or trail building, plant identification skills

TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS: weeding, removing invasive and undesirable trees with weed wrench or spade, devining, pruning, mulching, occasional special projects including planting, stonework

EXPECTATIONS:

- Sign-up for workdays using SignUpGenius and report as scheduled. Notify the supervisor in advance if you are unable to keep your commitment, and delete your sign-up. Note: dates and times could be adjusted based on weather or other conditions.
- Dress for work outdoors, in comfortable, serviceable, and presentable clothing. Wear sturdy shoes. Bring a hat, gloves, sunglasses, insect repellent, and sunscreen as needed.
- Be able to do the following without much supervision: hand weeding, devining, debris removal

- Treat all tools with care and learn proper techniques to use them. Return all tools and Arboretum property to the proper location, clean and ready for reuse.
- 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. Be sure to mention physical limitations and safety concerns.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- Required annually: Volunteer Safety Training covering tools, dress code, personal protective equipment, vehicle requirements and safety. Volunteers will sign and date their attendance at each training session (minimally annually).
- Volunteers learn through hands-on experience. The supervisor is responsible for your training and will orient volunteers to the projects. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in informal learning sessions or field trips to enhance their experiences.

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