

University of Delaware Botanic Gardens (UDBG) - Garden Assistant
Department of Plant and Soil Sciences
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Up to 25 hours/week based on business needs
Pay: \$22-\$24 an hour depending on level of experience

Overview

As a living laboratory and classroom, the University of Delaware Botanic Gardens (UDBG) promotes an understanding and appreciation of plants through education, extension, research, and engagement within our campus, community, and horticultural industry. This mission and audience provide a unique learning opportunity for those interested in career advancement in public gardens, arboreta, or other horticultural institutions. Here, gain knowledge and skills by actively participating in the operation of a public and university-affiliated botanic garden in alignment with continued horticultural studies.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Under the management of core staff, the garden assistant will help with grant research and reporting, garden and nursery maintenance, plant curation activities, plant sales, and volunteer coordination. The garden assistant will work independently and with staff and volunteers to perform horticultural maintenance in the gardens and may also occasionally supervise the summer intern cohort. As part of this opportunity, the UD Botanic Gardens will facilitate connections to other horticultural institutions and with area professionals to further develop their horticultural knowledge and skills.

These activities are approximately proportioned:

40% garden and nursery maintenance – Independently perform maintenance activities such as pruning, planting, mulching, bed edging, mowing, integrated pest management (IPM), and weed control including the judicious use of herbicide and pesticide. Educate and occasionally supervise the student interns as they assist in performing garden and nursery maintenance tasks.

30% volunteer coordination and supervision – Draft and send the weekly volunteer digest in coordination with the Program Manager, educate and supervise the volunteers as they assist in performing garden and nursery maintenance tasks.

*20% grant research and reporting** (grant term ends July 2025) – Consolidate research data on UDBG's groundcover trials. Develop educational materials and recommendations helpful for both residential and industry audiences.

10% – assist in plant recording and administrative activities associated with UDBG's living collection database and online store to improve accessibility and educational quality for students, faculty, industry, and the public.

*Following the completion of the groundcover trial grant in July of 2025, task percentage may be assumed by the additional activity areas listed and other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

We are seeking a charismatic self-starter with a passion for public horticulture and community engagement. A minimum of 2 years professional experience in horticulture is required, with demonstrated knowledge of plant care and landscape maintenance practices. Strong interpersonal skills are essential to engage our volunteers and UDBG community. Candidates must have a collaborative mindset while being capable and diligent when working independently. This role involves performing physically demanding tasks in a variety of weather conditions. A current Delaware pesticide license upon hire is preferred and required within a year of hire.

To apply: Please send a copy of your resume and a cover letter to Lauren Kope, Director, UDBG at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, via email at lckope@udel.edu.

Employment offers will be conditioned upon successful completion of a criminal background check. A conviction will not necessarily exclude you from employment. The University of Delaware is an Equal Opportunity Employer which encourages applications from Minority Group Members and Women. The University's Notice of Non-Discrimination can be found at <http://www.udel.edu/aboutus/legalnotices.html>