



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), non-profit corporation with deep experience in high elevation native plant management, propagation, and restoration. Set among 120 acres along the Blue Ride escarpment of the eastern continental divide at an elevation of 4500’, the site includes a 22-acre display garden and propagation facilities.

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 US Forest Service, US Fish & Wildlife Services, The Nature Conservancy, and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to establish a framework for mapping, planning, and completing red spruce restoration projects. To date, SHR has grown over 10,000 mature red spruce seedlings and planted over 2500 red spruce trees on public land with other 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: Gardener

Executive Summary

SHR is currently seeking an individual to serve as an additional full-time gardener. This position will support the Director of Horticulture in the maintenance and development of the gardens, applying best practices in horticultural techniques to a wide variety of plant materials to ensure they are maintained to the highest horticulture standards. This individual will monitor, manage and maintain garden areas including new installations, weeding, watering, pruning and grooming, composting, mulching, identifying problems and treating them.



SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS RESERVE

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
- Creatively problem-solve 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, 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 reporting problems to supervisor
- Report problems related to pests, diseases, and/ or 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



SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS RESERVE

- 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.
- Proficient 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.
- Minimum of 5 years of 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 or museum environment.

Competencies

- 1) Analytical Thinking
 - 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/Attention to Detail
 - Extreme attention to detail
 - Treat every task and project diligently
 - Calmly maintain standards of excellence when under high stress or when presented with tight deadlines
 - Outstanding ability to communicate and listen
 - Ability to provide and receive information and instruction and respond accordingly in a professional and friendly manner in both verbal and written format.



SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS RESERVE

- 3) Curiosity
 - Desire for continued growth personally and professionally in order to add value in new ways
 - Investigative nature; eager to understand all levels of a task
- 4) Excellence
 - Ability to read and connect with people and respond accordingly in varying situations
 - Ability to recognize own and others' emotions and use to create positive interactions
- 5) Micro/Macro Flexibility
 - Ability to prioritize individual tasks keeping in mind the larger picture of what needs to be accomplished
 - Ability to apply previously acquired knowledge to the unique circumstances of the current issue at hand
- 6) Process Management
 - Ability to identify and communicate a repeatable solution that increases efficiency and reduces risk of error
- 7) Self-management
 - Ability to stay focused and make progress on multiple projects even when not held to specific deadlines by a supervisor
 - Ability to self-manage, prioritize, and work hard both individually and collaboratively

Compensation

A competitive compensation package will be offered, including an attractive base salary and paid time off. If interested, please send a cover letter and resume via email to kholdbrooks@southernhighlandsreserve.org. Please title the subject heading: Gardener - YOUR NAME.