

THE WATER CONSERVATION GARDEN

Work Experience Internship Syllabus

“Plant a five cent tree, in a twenty-five cent hole”

Fall/2015

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I. About Our Program:

The Water Conservation Garden’s Work Experience (WEX) program was created to give horticultural and agriculture students in San Diego a place to practice their skills in a supportive and exciting environment. By applying the skills students have learned through their education they will develop a more objective understanding of their future careers.

This internship was developed for students who are enrolled in horticulture, landscape design, or any other related programs. Each student will work closely with the Work Experience Program Coordinator to have their responsibilities align with their degree as much as possible. However, the approach of this internship is to give students a well-rounded view of various horticultural fields.

II. Your Semester at the Garden

Every student has a different number of hours to complete during the semester and their work schedule will be created during orientation. Most students will work one or two eight hour days a week. Each semester lasts 14 weeks and during that time our WEX interns work together on a project that leaves a lasting impression on the Water Conservation Garden; sharpening their plant skills along the way. Each project is broken into six parts that demonstrate a certain skill in a botanic garden setting:

Week 1: Orientation

In your first week at the garden we will cover your orientation. The syllabus will be covered and interns will be assigned their daily tasks.

Week 2: Planting Bed Preparation

To ensure the success of the planting site a number of tasks must be completed before any plants are installed: mulch removal, application of soil amendments, disconnecting drip irrigation, the potting of existing plants for later use, etc...

Week 3-4: Pruning and Hedging

Most large shrubs and trees will remain in the planting area. To rejuvenate them, they will be pruned. This also provides more workspace for the remainder of the project.

Week 5-6: Hugelkultur Beds

As a result of the compacted and nutrient deficient native soil in the garden, we take advantage of the permaculture technique, Hugelkultur. This practice of burying nitrogen rich material and small pieces of dry wood beneath planting beds creates a long-lasting growing medium that is high in nutrients and retains moisture.

Week 7-8: Construction for Gardens

The final step before planting will be assembling or repairing any inorganic elements in the planting area. Some examples are: repairing benches, positioning boulders and rocks, installing pathway edging, or creating dry streambeds. At this time, any new irrigation trenches will be dug, and PVC pipe will be laid.

Week 9-10: Planting

These weeks fall in mid to late October, which is the perfect time to plant in San Diego County. After a lesson on proper planting methods, interns will help install a wide variety of plant material under the supervision of the Horticultural Director. A group planting day will be scheduled to accommodate the large number of plants.

Week 11-12: Irrigation

Once all the planting is finished, fresh drip irrigation will be put in place. In addition, all existing overhead spray will be adjusted and assessed for repairs.

Week 13-14: Final Touches and Cleanup

With the semester project nearly complete, the final touches include: the addition of fresh mulch, any last minute pruning, fertilizer application, and raking of pathways.

III. Daily Schedule

Each intern will be assigned daily tasks in addition to working on the semester project. These tasks will be tailored to the interests of the student, but will also focus on the care of our plant collection and propagation area. Interns will work eight hour days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and a 45 minute lunch will be taken around noon each day.

IV. Weekly Journals

Each intern is required to email the WEX Program Coordinator a brief journal describing what they have accomplished each week. Journals should be no longer than 300 words and are due by midnight every Saturday.

V. Requisite Classes & Tour

Every month the Water Conservation Garden hosts a series of classes, which are listed on the next page. Interns are required to attend one class of their choice during the semester. Classes are free to interns and offered on Saturday mornings. In addition, each intern must attend one of our docent led tours, which are scheduled on Saturday mornings as well. The class and tour combined will count as eight hours towards the internship requirements. Any student who cannot attend a class or tour must make other arrangements with the Work Experience Coordinator.

Fall 2015 Class Schedule

After Tossing the Turf – Design Your Garden & Drought Tips

September 19, 10:00 – Noon

Firescaping with Natives

September 26, 10:00 – Noon

Drought 101 – Prioritizing your Landscape & Drought tips

October 3, 10:00 – Noon

How to Hire a Landscaper and Save \$\$

October 10, 10:00am – Noon

Irrigation 101 & Drought tips

October 24, 10:00 – Noon

Composting Workshop

November 7, 10:00 – Noon

Faux Artistic Rock/Boulder Making

November 2, 10:00 – Noon

VII. Absences and Tardiness

Interns are required to adhere to an agreed upon work schedule. An intern is allowed 3 *excused* absences per semester and any hours missed will be rescheduled for another day. If the Intern has 2 *unexcused* absences their internship will be terminated and they will be unable to continue their work experience at the WCG that semester. Any excessive tardiness will be considered an *unexcused* absence.

VIII. Work Attire and Water Bottles

Close toed footwear is mandatory while working in the garden; any intern wearing opened toed footwear will be sent home to change. Steel or hard toed boots are encouraged; as well as a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Water is available on site and a water bottle is very useful while working outdoors.

IX. Working conditions

Work is performed mostly in a field environment. Extensive physical activity is sometimes required, including the ability to climb ladders, handling of average-weight objects up to 40 pounds, work in cramped and/or damp areas, and standing and/or walking for more than (6) hours per day. Manual dexterity is needed to use tools. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, distance vision, color vision, peripheral vision, depth perception and ability to adjust focus. Private means of transportation must be available along with a valid driver's license. Limited exposure to physical risk. Workplace is non-smoking and drug-free. Weekend work may be required.

X. About the Water Conservation Garden

The Water Conservation Garden, a non-profit organization founded in 1999, is a nearly a 6-acre public botanical garden whose mission is to promote water conservation in the southern California landscape through excellent programs and exhibits that educate and inspire the public. The Garden serves over 50,000 annually and offers educational tools via display gardens and a full program of tours, classes, and events for children, adults and landscape professionals, both on and off-site. In 2007, The Garden won the Rain Bird Corporation's international award for leadership in water conservation. In 2009, Sunset Magazine listed The Garden as one of the "Top Ten Western Gardens."