

CURATORIAL INTERNSHIP

Description and Posting



Introduction

The Polly Hill Arboretum on the island of Martha's Vineyard is seeking applicants eager to gain experience in the curation and management of living collections. The Arboretum, a Martha's Vineyard horticultural and botanical landmark, was developed by the legendary horticulturist, Polly Hill (1907-2007). In 1958, Polly began an arboretum by sowing a seed, eventually bringing 20 acres under cultivation while preserving 40 additional acres as native woodland. Established in 1998 as a non-profit institution, the Arboretum is devoted to horticulture, plant-based education, conservation and research, and the preservation of the character of this unique landscape. Please visit www.pollyhillarboretum.org for more information about our programs, activities and mission.

Position Summary

The Polly Hill Arboretum provides a unique 9-month curatorial internship for an individual seeking to advance their career in public horticulture. This internship will focus on all aspects of curation and collections management for the living collection and herbarium.

Essential Functions include:

- Help document the living collection: use the IrisBG plant records database to inventory, map, label, and verify plants, and update records for display and propagation collections; collect and process herbarium specimens from the grounds
- Help document the herbarium collection: use the Symbiota portal to import and label incoming specimens; digitize specimens; collect and process botanical specimens from seed collections and fieldwork
- Complete an internship project focused on the curation of a section of the Arboretum
- Hands-on maintenance of the living collection including outdoor horticultural tasks, plant propagation, and greenhouse/nursery management
- Attend informal training sessions in horticulture and botany such as pruning, planting, plant identification, and basic arboricultural tasks
- Work with volunteers
- Participate in additional activities such as field trips to other public gardens and nature preserves, meetings with staff members, and educational classes
- Potential to lead tours and help out with education programs

Work Schedule and Housing

The Curatorial Internship is a 9-month, full-time position and is flexible in regards to start date, although April 1st is ideal. The Curatorial Intern works 35 hours per week, 8am – 3:30pm, and is paid an hourly wage of \$20 per hour, with housing provided. Occasional weekend hours for greenhouse support and/or special events may be required. Optional housing is provided at the

nearby Hoft Farm where interns from other Island conservation organizations also live in the convivial atmosphere of a restored farmhouse.

Qualifications and Success Factors

The ideal candidates will be recent graduates of a four-year horticulture, botany, environmental studies, museum studies or closely related college program. Priority will be given to applicants with a strong interest in public horticulture and in the management and curation of woody plant collections. Successful candidates will be hard-working, dependable, detail-oriented, and self-motivated. They should be able to work both independently and in a team and possess strong communication and interpersonal skills.

Work Environment

Candidates must be able to work outside in a range of weather and temperature conditions. Common tasks may require lifting up to 30 lbs, squatting, kneeling, bending, and traversing uneven terrain. Candidates are required to use general hand gardening tools, small power equipment and tools, general office equipment, and computer software such as Microsoft Office, Adobe, and the IrisBG database.

Application Instructions

A complete internship application will include a cover letter, resume, and list of three professional references formatted into a single '.pdf' file.

The application deadline for the 2026 Curatorial Internship is Friday, January 16, 2026. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. Please submit inquiries and applications with the subject line "Curatorial Internship" to Curator/Assistant Director, Emily Ellingson; emily@pollyhillarboretum.org.