

Job Description

Job Title: Horticulture Conservation Officer (Cumbria Seed Bank Project)

Weekly Hours: 24.5 hours per week

Based At: Gosling Sike Seed Bank and Plant Nursery

Reports To: Horticulture Manager

Job Purpose:

The purpose of the job is to coordinate and facilitate the collection and propagation of seeds from identified rare plants to contribute to the enhancement of species-rich grassland, in conjunction with our grassland specialists. This plays a pivotal role in enabling the supply of locally sourced and grown native plant species for the restoration of these rare and harder-to-establish plant populations, contributing to the overall health and biodiversity of the landscape. Our funder for this project is the National Lottery Heritage Fund, so the work must be delivered in line with the project activity plan and within the budget agreed with the funder.

Special Features of the Role:

This is a Cumbria Wildlife Trust project supporting the work of a network of volunteers in identification skills that will benefit both the project and the wider understanding and protection of grassland wildlife sites. In addition to working with existing partners, the role of the job will include developing new opportunities for volunteers and young people in the work of the seed bank and propagation nursery.

Main Responsibilities and Accountabilities:

Provide wildflower plugs to grassland conservation sites:

- Working with the Horticulture Manager and specialist volunteers to collect (with permissions), catalogue and store seeds in the seed bank as identified on the project species list.
- Provide specialist horticultural advice, support and expertise to the project
- Use and refine growing techniques to propagate and nurture a diverse collection of native wildflowers focusing on the project species list as required by the Grassland Conservation Officer

Further appreciation, enjoyment and understanding of species-rich grassland:

- Working with the project team and specialist volunteers, the post holder will organise volunteer identification training days and visits to see the work of the seed bank, which will also be offered to new volunteers and the volunteers of partner organisations.
- Work closely with the nature reserve staff team to ensure the right conditions for the introduction of the propagated rare plants into our control sites at Eycott Hill and Barkbooth Lot.
- Liaise with Royal Botanical Gardens Kew as part of the Millennium Seed Bank partnership who provide technical guidance on seed collection, storage and propagation.

Organise and provide a programme of activities for volunteers and young people:

- Organise, plan and deliver regular weekend volunteering sessions at the Seed Bank
- Facilitate volunteering, activities and visits at the seed bank for youth providers in Carlisle (Carlisle Youth Zone and local schools).
- Work with the Grassland Conservation Officer to support our young volunteers at the seed bank to see the work taking place to introduce the plants on the project sites.
- With the whole project team, contribute to an end-of-project - young volunteers 'environmental champions' project residential to Kew.
- Assist the Horticulture Manager by undertaking tasks and activities in the nursery, and seed bank garden at Gosling Sike, including an element of tree growing.

In addition to the above the post holder will support the Trust by:

- Proactively working to increase funds and membership for the Trust and generally raise its profile.
- Develop and participate in educational aspects of the Trust's work including events, guided walks and illustrated talks.
- Working alongside other Trust staff, Trust members and the general public to produce press releases and media articles for the work including where necessary recognising the contribution of funders;
- Preparing quarterly reports to be included in the Conservation Report to the Trust's Conservation Group;
- Any additional duties as outlined in the Annual Work Plan or that may reasonably arise from time to time;
- All tasks and responsibilities are to be carried out in accordance with the Trust's policies and procedures.

November 2024

Person Specification

Post: Horticulture Conservation Officer

1. Qualifications & Experience:

The post holder will be expected to have qualifications and recent and relevant experience in the following areas:

		Essential	Desirable
1.	Strong interest in horticulture and plant nurseries	•	
2.	Demonstrable strong interest in nature conservation	•	
3.	Previous experience of working in a plant nursery and/or commercial horticulture site		•
4.	Previous experience working or volunteering in nature conservation		•
5.	Accredited horticulture qualification Level 2 or above		•

2. Knowledge & Skills:

The post holder will have the following knowledge and skills:

		Essential	Desirable
1.	Excellent communication skills	•	
2.	Understanding of, or willingness to learn plant identification and growing of different species	•	
3.	Understanding of, or a willingness to learn basic seed biology and seed biology and seed banking principles	•	
	Understanding of or willingness to learn general plant care, growing conditions and needs	•	
4.	Use of Microsoft Office Word, Excel and Outlook		•

3. Personal Qualities:

The post holder should possess the following:

		Essential	Desirable
1.	Motivation and enthusiasm for nature, gardening and growing	•	
2.	Ability to work well on own intuition but also cooperatively as part of a team	•	
3.	Willingness to learn and confidence to regularly lead a range of volunteers and groups	•	
4.	Flexibility and responsiveness to changing situations and new opportunities	•	
5.	Be willing to undertake basic tasks	•	
6.	Able to work regular weekends	•	
7.	Be committed to wildlife conservation		•