

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Where do I go to do my job? A. Log in each day in area where you volunteer (Welcome Desk, Paul Smith's Children's Village, Production House). Please lock valuables in your car, out of view or in your assigned locker. You will make arrangements with the volunteer coordinator about where you will actually work on a regular basis.

Q. Where do I park? A. Be thoughtful to the garden visitors and use the parking spaces at the west end of the main parking lot.

Q. I work Monday through Friday. Do you have volunteer opportunities on the weekend? A. Volunteer opportunities do exist at the Welcome Desk on Saturdays and Conservatory work on Sundays. Most of the Horticulture opportunities are available only Monday through Thursday, during daylight hours. Check with the volunteer coordinator for details.

Q. How flexible will my volunteer schedule be? A. This depends on your volunteer assignment. Some positions require a regular schedule, Welcome Desk for example, while others are more loosely structured, Conservatory for example. Talk to the volunteer coordinator for more information. We are always willing to work with you to make your volunteer experience as pleasant as possible.

Q. Can my volunteer hours count toward high school or college credit or be used to maintain my Master Gardener certification? A. Possibly. Please check with your career counselor, job center, or Master Gardener Coordinator. We will be happy to discuss the matter with them.

Q. Do you have age restrictions on youth volunteers? A. Volunteers must be at least 12 years old.

Q. What do I do if I'm sick or can't work my normally scheduled day for other reasons? A. Call or email the volunteer coordinator to let them know as soon as you know you won't be able to come in. If you need to call during non-business hours, there is an answering machine that can take your message.

Q. What if the weather is bad? Do I report to work as usual? A. Volunteers should use their best judgment in deciding whether it is safe to travel when inclement weather occurs. If you feel it is too risky to drive because of snow, ice, or other dangerous road conditions, notify the volunteer coordinators that you will not be coming in. If you normally work outdoors, contact the volunteer coordinator, and suitable arrangements will be made. They may have some indoor or greenhouse work you can do if you so desire.

Q. Can we take breaks and lunch breaks? A. Yes. In fact, breaks are encouraged, especially if you are working outdoors.

Q. What do I do if I become sick or am injured while volunteering? A. Your health and safety are our first priority, notify the volunteer coordinator or as soon as is practically possible. In the event of an injury, the volunteer coordinator will have you fill out injury forms. If an injury is minor, there is a first aid kit for your

use. If you need medical attention, let the volunteer coordinator know as soon as possible and they will assist in any way possible.

Q. What if I want to change jobs at some point? A. Cross-training can be beneficial for both volunteers and the gardens, and you are welcome to try new things from time to time. Discuss it with the volunteer coordinator, and suitable arrangement will be made. We want the volunteer experience to be a positive one for all involved, so we attempt to accommodate your wishes.

Q. Whose tools do I use? A. The Gardens have a limited supply of tools. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own hand tools and gloves.

Q. Can I take home any plants or plant materials? A. No. No plant materials of any kind are to leave the premises without the express consent of the coordinator.

Q. Can I be fired? A. As a volunteer, you can't technically be fired, but in the rare instance that a volunteer is exceptionally disruptive, uncooperative, or otherwise proves more damaging than helpful, they may be asked not to return. The volunteer experience is supposed to be a rewarding one for all involved, and you are encouraged to speak to the volunteer coordinator about any concerns you may have regarding your volunteer position before they become serious problems.

Q. How much "authority" do I have in the garden when it comes to dealing with visitors? A. As a volunteer, you are an integral part of the Gardens and are authorized to care for and protect the Garden's collection. You have the authority to ask visitors to abide by the rules posted at the entrance to the Gardens or to discontinue any activity that is damaging to the collection or the structures in the Gardens. If you encounter a visitor who is doing something inappropriate, ask the visitor in a professional and non-confrontational way to stop. It is extremely rare to find someone behaving in a malicious manner, and most of the time, visitors simply don't realize they are damaging anything. Try to educate the offender(s) by telling them why it is important for them not to do what they are doing. If they refuse to stop, notify staff immediately. If you are reluctant to approach the offending visitors for whatever reason, please notify staff, and they will take care of the matter. As a representative of the Gardens, you are expected to always act in a professional manner, regardless of the behavior you may encounter from visitors.