

HORTICULTURE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

DEFINITION

Under direct supervision performs a variety of operations, services, and maintenance activities of the College's horticulture unit; uses and operates a variety of horticulture equipment; assists in the sale and delivery of products.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives direct supervision from the Manager, Farm and receives technical and functional oversight from the Horticultural Operations Specialist. Exercises oversight over student assistant workers and activity of Work Experience and volunteer staff with guidance from Horticulture Operations Specialist.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is an entry-level classification that assists in the operations, services, and maintenance activities of the horticulture unit. Initially under close supervision, incumbents with basic horticulture and maintenance experience learn College infrastructure, systems, and facilities, use of tools and equipment, and a wide variety of practices and procedures. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied and are performed with greater independence. Work is usually supervised while in progress and fits an established structure or pattern. Exceptions or changes in procedures are explained in detail as they arise. This class is distinguished from the Horticulture Operations Specialist in that the Horticulture Production Assistant provides direct support of the College's horticulture unit through performing a variety of tasks and services; whereas, The Horticulture Operations Specialist provides oversight to daily operations, services, and maintenance activities.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

1. Assists in the operation and maintenance of the horticulture unit's crops; performs specialized duties to ensure efficient and safe horticulture operations.
2. Waters, fertilizes, and plants trees, shrubs, flowers, and other plants; programs irrigation, drip, and misting systems according to established schedules; makes adjustments for weather and cultural requirements.
3. Monitors and observes pests; mixes, applies, and sprays chemical applications and pesticides as required according to established laws, regulations, and procedures.
4. Assists in the coordination of the use of agriculture facilities; ensures the availability of appropriate supplies and equipment.
5. Monitors inventory of supplies; orders needed supplies and materials according to established procedures; operates a computer to monitor the automated inventory control system.
6. Operates a variety of equipment related to the agriculture department, including trucks, tractors and implements, weed whip, composter, rototiller, sprayer, and related equipment.
7. Assists in the sale and delivery of agricultural products; drives a vehicle to transport products as needed.
8. Assists in coordinating and scheduling crew to prepare and participate in Farmer's Market(s) and trains staff regarding sales process including conducting credit/debit transactions.
9. Assists in the development of weekly, monthly, and annual goals and objectives; assists with scheduling plant production, propagation, and facilities usage.

10. Prepares and maintains various records and reports related to horticulture unit operations and activities as required.
11. Performs minor custodial and maintenance activities of horticulture units; cleans work areas and other facilities as assigned; empties waste receptacles and replaces linings; performs routine maintenance and repair duties on department facilities and equipment; contacts maintenance department as necessary.
12. Learns and applies emerging technologies such as internet-based inventory and irrigation management systems, to perform duties in an efficient, organized, and timely manner.
13. Performs related other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

1. Basic terminology, techniques, equipment, materials, principles, theories, practices, and procedures related to horticultural production.
2. Basic practices, procedures, and techniques involved in planting, fertilizing, irrigating, propagating, pruning and storing plants, crops, and other horticultural products.
3. Operation and maintenance of various tools and equipment used in horticulture production.
4. Operation of various trucks, tractors and implements.
5. Basic sales and customer service practices and procedures.
6. Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work.
7. Record keeping principles and procedures.
8. Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, students, and College staff, including individuals of various ages, disabilities, socio-economic and ethnic groups.

Skills & Abilities to:

1. Participate in the operations, services, and maintenance activities of a horticulture program.
2. Establish a mentoring relationship with students to support and encourage academic success and provide practical experience to augment professional development.
3. Participate in planting, fertilizing, irrigating, propagating, pruning and storing plants, crops, and other horticultural products.
4. Learn and apply principles, practices, procedures, methods, materials, tools, terminology, and equipment related to horticultural production.
5. Operate trucks, tractors, and implements.
6. Learn, interpret, and apply applicable College policies, rules, and regulations related to areas of responsibility.
7. Make accurate business arithmetic computations; accurately process cash transactions and organize sale documents for submission to Fiscal Services.
8. Estimate and order required supplies and equipment.
9. Establish and maintain filing, record keeping, and tracking systems (maintaining/renewing horticultural crop production certification).
10. Organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical time deadlines.
11. Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and software applications programs.
12. Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
13. Understand scope of authority in making independent decisions.
14. Review situations accurately and determine appropriate course of action using judgment according to established policies and procedures.

15. Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of training and experience which would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

College-level coursework specifically focused on nursery and greenhouse management, plant identification, agronomy, integrated pest management or closely related areas of study. Recent experience, within horticulture production activities preferred.

Licenses and Certifications:

- A valid California Class C driver's license is required, a Class B driver's license may need to be obtained at discretion of the College.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in the field; strength, stamina, and mobility to perform medium to heavy physical work, to operate varied farming and horticulture tools and equipment, and to operate a motor vehicle and visit various College sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone. The job involves fieldwork requiring frequent walking in operational areas to identify problems or hazards. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate above-mentioned tools and equipment. Positions in this classification bend, stoop, kneel, reach, and climb to perform work and inspect work sites. Incumbents must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects, typically weighing 50 pounds, and occasionally heavier weights with the use of proper equipment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

Incumbents work in the field and are exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, dust, fumes, and allergens, chemicals, hazardous physical substances and fumes and mechanical and/or electrical equipment and machinery. Incumbents may interact with staff, students, and/or the public in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

In addition to the above, as this position is located in the College's farm/agricultural area, there are additional environmental elements and potential hazards that are typical of this environment. These include: bio-hazards, dealing with livestock, farm equipment, and walking on slopes, wet surfaces, uneven ground, and navigating open fields which include: bumps, holes, etc.