Native Seeds/SEARCH seeks to find, protect, and preserve the seeds of the people of the Greater Southwest so that these arid adapted crops may benefit all peoples and nourish a changing world

Garden Maintenance Volunteer

Native Seeds/SEARCH is a non-profit that conserves and promotes the food and farming traditions of the Desert Southwest. Our collection of arid-adapted, open-pollinated seeds has cultural roots in over 50 Indigenous and other communities. The Garden Maintenance Volunteer will play a key role in maintaining the Tucson seed production gardens to increase the supply of arid-adapted seed for the seed bank and public distribution.

The ideal candidate is reliable, detail-oriented, and comfortable working independently. They should also have some experience growing plants in the Sonoran Desert and a willingness to creatively solve problems. This is a part-time, volunteer position, based at the Tucson Conservation Center with a time commitment of around 10-15 hours/week. We envision a volunteer that can make a long-term commitment and be permanent part of the garden team.

RESPONSIBILITIES:
• Support regular planting activities throughout the gardens, especially: propagation, watering, weeding, and seed harvesting
• Cover weekend watering and gardening responsibilities in rotation with other garden staff
• Inspect and repair irrigation systems, hand tools, and small equipment as able
• Support collection of agronomic data, such as crop populations and flowering dates
• Direct volunteer work during a once-a-week weeding event
• Perform bi-weekly crop inspections to identify pest or pathogen concerns
• Organize, clean, and support other garden activities as time allows

Required Qualifications
• Willingness and flexibility to do a variety of tasks in support of the Conservation Center gardens
• Physical ability to work outdoors in conditions that may exceed 100°F
• Attention to detail, organization, and good time management skills
• Ability to work independently and direct volunteers
• Valid Driver’s License with paid insurance and reliable transportation

Desired Knowledge, Skills & Abilities:
• Basic knowledge of PVC and drip irrigation systems (training available)
• Strong problem-solving skills; experience in basic carpentry and mechanical repair

TO APPLY:
• Please submit a cover letter and CV: jjohnson@nativeseeds.org

Note: This position is intended for an individual who is not expecting to transition to paid work with NS/S. For those seeking part or full-time employment, please check our website for open positions or apprenticeship opportunities.