

Organization Name: The Mercer Society, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) support organization partnering with Mercer Botanic Gardens

Location: Mercer Botanic Gardens 22306 Aldine Westfield Road, Humble TX 77338, 713-274-4160

Website: <http://themerchersociety.org/> and <http://www.hcp4.net/community/parks/mercer>

Mission: The Mercer Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit support organization, assists Mercer Botanic Gardens by organizing and implementing activities that encourage membership support, expand community awareness and raise funds for the continued enhancement of infrastructure, programs and collections.

Title of Internship: Seeds for the Future

Internship Overview:

- The development of the Seeds for the Future program will provide technical, yet easy to understand, information about plants and seeds – from pollination to germination – with the visiting public and beyond.

Core Responsibilities:

- Assist staff botanists with Mercer plant conservation programs; assist horticulturists with various propagation techniques; develop interpretive guides with the education director; communicate professionally with Mercer Botanic Gardens staff, The Mercer Society, volunteers, and the visiting public at Mercer Botanic Gardens
- Collect seeds from rare and endangered plant species onsite and at offsite preserves; collect seeds from desirable landscape specimens onsite
- Participate in best propagation practices based on research of various species; soil and water testing; pest/disease identification and possible treatments; seed scarification and stratification; recognizing proper times to collect seeds; identifying ways to protect and store seeds
- Access the onsite botanical library, online resources, and personal experiences of others to research local seed propagation
- Optimize volunteer seed collection for memorial seed distributions
- Develop educational reports, images, and posters to support *Seeds to Seedlings* educational programs, including information for children and family tours
- Participate in the Mercer Botanic Gardens Student Research Symposium

Job Dimensions/Other Requirements:

- Intern must enjoy working outdoors as well as in an office setting.
- Intern will participate in Summer Children's Programs, attend Lunch Bunch presentations, and attend the Summer Plant Sale and Workshop.
- Intern will travel from Mercer Botanic Gardens to the Mercer Botanical Center research building (one block away) on a regular basis. All other necessary travel will be facilitated through the supervisor.
- Must be available: May 30, 2016 through July 22, 2016; 40 hours per week, worked primarily Monday – Friday; 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. with a 30 minute lunch. Some weekends may be required.
- This is a paid internship, with funding provided by the ExxonMobil Community Summer Jobs Program. The stipend for the eight-week, full-time internship period is \$2,750 (subject to FICA and income tax withholdings).

Community Impact/Outcomes & Deliverables:

- Educational tools will be made available to the public to encourage confidence in working with plants, from seed to seedling to mature plants. Growing plants from seed will stimulate the public's excitement to grow fun plants

and nutritious food at home, encourage new hobbies, and bring families and friends closer together in new endeavors.

- Best practices guidelines, from seed to healthy plant for rare species, will be provided as an end-result of the Seeds for the Future program.

Student Qualities/Experiences Desired/Qualifications and Requirements:

- Familiarity with plants/botany, knowledge of Microsoft Office, highly proficient research and writing skills, and experience working with volunteers and children.
- Applicants must be currently enrolled, full-time, undergraduate students who will be returning to college as full-time sophomores, juniors, or seniors in the fall of 2016. Full-time enrollment is defined as 12 or more credits in one semester. When applying for the internship, the student must provide The Mercer Society with written enrollment verification from the college confirming the student's enrollment status. Student ID cards and/or phone calls are not sufficient documentation. Official enrollment verification must come from a university's registrar office.
- Ability to lift up to 40 lbs., and work outdoors in heat, humidity, rain, cold and dust.
- A background check and drug screening will be administered by Harris County Precinct 4 prior to hiring.
- Family members of The Mercer Society staff and/or board and family members of Mercer Botanic Gardens staff are not eligible to be hired as ExxonMobil CSJP interns.

Learning Objectives/Educational Benefits:

- The intern will learn how to communicate professionally with coworkers, as well as with volunteers and visitors while working in the garden. The intern will develop strong time management skills to keep tasks moving forward. Operating equipment such as microscopes with cameras, seed germination chambers, greenhouse irrigation controls, and copy machines will also be taught during this internship. The intern will develop the ability to work successfully within a team.
- The intern will learn about the impact of environmental health and societal health and sustainable practices.
- The intern will gain an understanding of the functions of working in a public facility and the non-profit sector with hands-on participation in day-to-day operations and special events.
- The intern will work alongside other potential interns to produce and present the Mercer Botanic Gardens Student Research Symposium, by preparing PowerPoint presentations and public speaking to a varied audience.

How to apply:

- Please email a resume and cover letter to Suzanne Chapman (schapman@hcp4.net) by March 28, 2016.

Final Thoughts:

- The goals of The Mercer Society and Mercer Botanic Gardens is to connect people with plants and to instill a love of nature and our role as inhabitants and stewards of our environment.