

## **Olbrich Botanical Society**

**Job Title:               Conservatory Orchid Horticulturist**

**Reports to:            Olbrich Botanical Gardens Conservatory Curator**

**Employee Status: Full-time Regular (40 hours/week)**

**About Olbrich Botanical Society (OBS):** OBS operates Olbrich Botanical Gardens in cooperation and partnership with the City of Madison Parks Division. With an operating budget of \$1.8 million, OBS supports education, public relations and marketing, special exhibitions, and participates in the maintenance of the outdoor gardens and Bolz Conservatory. For more information, visit <http://www.olbrich.org/about/>

**Purpose:** The Conservatory Orchid Horticulturist works with the Bolz Conservatory Curator, Production Horticulturist, interns, volunteers, Huber workers to nurture and maintain the plants and systems in the tropical Bolz Conservatory and support greenhouses with a particular emphasis on the tropical orchid collection of more than 800 specimens. The conservatory and greenhouse staff are a collaborative work group who also work with and support exhibitions, events, education, and the outdoor gardens. The Conservatory Orchid Horticulturist works alongside City of Madison staff performing many of the same tasks.

The Conservatory Orchid Horticulturist assists with the daily operations of the 10,000 sq. ft. Bolz Conservatory (which is open to the public from 10 am – 4 pm daily) and the 10,000 sq. ft. support greenhouses. This includes, but is not limited to maintaining a diverse tropical plant collection under the leadership of the Conservatory Curator, and assisting with the propagation and growing of greenhouse annuals and other production crops (ie. Poinsettias, Chrysanthemums, and Primula). In addition, this position is primarily responsible for maintaining the overall health and diversity of Olbrich's orchid collection, displaying blooming orchids in an aesthetically pleasing and educational way, and providing access to the complete collection through education programs, greenhouse tours, and innovative collaborations. This position is responsible for the pest and disease management of the orchid collection, as well as assisting with the Integrated Pest Management program (IPM) in the conservatory and greenhouses. This individual will also aid in maintenance tasks pertaining to conservatory and greenhouse mechanical systems used in daily operations. When special exhibitions and programs occur in the conservatory, this position may be called upon to assist. Planning and research may also be a component of this position.

### **Functions and Worker Activities:**

- 70%       **A. Maintain and curate Olbrich's orchid collection, which contains more than 800 specimens ranging in taxa from all over the world.**
1. Daily care and watering of the orchid collection.
  2. Organize and supervise orchid volunteers (who help prepare orchids for display in the conservatory).
  3. Maintain accurate records and signage for orchids using our plant records system and orchid database.

4. Practice effective IPM and disease prevention/management in the orchid greenhouse.
5. Work with Olbrich's education department to create educational signage.
6. Provide access to the orchid collection by offering education programs, workshops, articles, media interviews, and behind-the-scenes tours.
7. Serve as a resource about orchids (and tropical plants in general) to Olbrich staff, the Schumacher Library Garden Answer Service, volunteers, and the general public.

25%

**B. Assist in maintaining the tropical plant collections within the conservatory and other indoor areas of Olbrich Botanical Gardens.**

1. Monitor individual plants' needs (ie. watering, fertilizing, repotting, and insect/disease control).
2. Wash plants daily, or as needed, to aid in insect control and aesthetics.
3. Assist with the pruning, removal, and addition of plant specimens.
4. Operate and troubleshoot the Wadsworth SEED environmental monitoring computer program that controls mechanical devices in the conservatory and greenhouses.
5. Select and arranges tropical plants for display in the conservatory and other indoor areas.
6. Assist Curator with upkeep of computerized plant accession and deaccession records.
7. Assist with training and supervision of volunteers and interns working in the conservatory.
8. Assist with watering and general maintenance of annuals in the production greenhouse.

5%

**C. Assist with general upkeep and light preventative maintenance of equipment related to the conservatory and greenhouse operations.**

1. Mix fertilizers and acids for injections systems supplying the conservatory and greenhouses.
2. Monitor and clean insect screens and filters to ensure proper functioning of the greenhouse cooling system.
3. Install and remove vent and damper insulation as needed for heating and cooling seasons.
4. Maintain fog system nozzles in orchid houses and assist with the nozzles in the conservatory.
5. Maintain lighting systems in the greenhouses (ie. changing light bulbs on HPS light fixtures)
6. Clean and disinfect containers, windows, floors, benches, and related areas as needed.
7. Assist with maintenance and cleaning of the conservatory water feature.
8. Acquire supplies as needed.
9. Assist in monitoring and care of the birds and fish in the conservatory.
10. The conservatory and greenhouses are in operation 365 days a year. This position may also be responsible for the operation of the conservatory and greenhouses in the scheduled absences of the Conservatory Curator.

\* Other duties and responsibilities may be assigned as situations warrant. \*

**Knowledge, Skills, and Experience Required (Essential Functions)**

- Ability to work with and around the plants, conservatory animals, and butterflies at Olbrich Gardens.

- Considerable knowledge of growing orchids and tropical plants in a greenhouse and/or conservatory setting.
- Knowledge of greenhouse management practices and procedures.
- Knowledge of plant diseases, pests, and control methods.
- Working knowledge of the tools and equipment used in conservatory and greenhouse operations and maintenance, including computerized environmental systems.
- Considerable knowledge of best management practices regarding orchid sanitation, virus detection and disposal, and care/culture for a wide-encompassing taxa.
- Ability to perform or oversee the propagation and growth of a wide variety of plants including floriculture crops.
- Ability to operate and perform basic maintenance and adjustments on equipment used at Olbrich Gardens.
- Ability to learn and use software including basic word processing, email, Excel spreadsheets, and Access databases.
- Ability to organize and manage one's own time.
- Considerable ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
- Ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with the public, volunteers, and co-workers.
- Ability to work weekends and holidays as required.

Ability to accommodate varying weekly schedules. Holiday and weekend work will be required. (Holiday and weekend schedules are negotiated within the department.) Public programs may be scheduled in the evening or on weekends. Overtime may be required on occasion for special projects, education programs and classes, and emergencies.

**The ideal candidate will possess:**

- A bachelor's degree in horticulture, botany, plant sciences, or related field.
- 3 or more years of horticultural or botanical facility work experience where the candidate worked regularly with tropical plant collections or in a landscape under glass.  
(Other combinations of training and/or experience, which can be demonstrated to result in the possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform the duties of this position, will be considered.)
- 2 or more years of experience working with orchids in a conservatory/greenhouse setting.
- Attention to detail and excellent record keeping skills; ability to maintain and update a plant records database.

**Special tools and equipment required:**

- Computer literate.
- Available by phone in case of emergency calls from the Wadsworth environmental control system.
- General horticultural tools and equipment are provided by Olbrich Botanical Gardens.

**Required licenses and/or registration:**

- Valid driver's license
- Wisconsin State Pesticide Applicator Certification, or the ability to obtain certification within 90 days.

**Physical requirements:**

Employees must be able to lift up to 50 pounds. Employees are expected to work in hot, humid conditions, occasionally working on ladders/lifts, and must be able to perform manual and skilled tasks relating to the care and maintenance of a tropical conservatory and the propagation of plants and the operation of greenhouses and conservatory. Candidate must be able to work in adverse environments such as a glass house in the summer months with high heat and humidity.

**Supervision received (level and type):**

This position receives first line supervision from the Conservatory Curator and group/section supervision from the Director of Olbrich Gardens. The candidate is expected to be able to work independently and receive general direction from the Conservatory Curator.

**Leadership Responsibilities:**

This position: ☐ is responsible for supervisory activities (Supervisory Analysis Form attached).  
☐ has no leadership responsibility.  
X provides general leadership  
This position, along with the Conservatory Curator and Production Horticulturist, is responsible for the supervision of hourly seasonal staff, interns, and volunteers.

*Olbrich Botanical Society is an equal opportunity employer and offers a competitive wage and benefit package including health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, dental and vision insurance and a 401(k). The starting salary for this position is \$22.69/hour or \$47,189 annual. (The salary is linked to the City of Madison salary schedule Gardener title.)*

Please submit a completed application, resume and cover letter by email to:

Colten Blackburn, Conservatory Curator

[CBlackburn@cityofmadison.com](mailto:CBlackburn@cityofmadison.com)

Please No Phone Calls!