

College Internship Program

Plant Propagation and Nursery Production, Greenhouse Management

Plants are propagated from seeds, cuttings, offsets, and by transplanting seedlings from The Garden. In addition to plants from the dry garden, we propagate plants from Ruth Bancroft's private perennial garden. Each fall we offer bearded iris rhizomes for sale. Interning in Plant Propagation also encompasses: working at plant sales, helping stock the plant sales area, helping with setup before events, being on hand to answer questions and sell plants, watering, keeping the propagation and plant sales areas clean and pest-free, grooming plants, plant identification, etc.

The Garden's greenhouse collection includes plants that are frost-tender – such as aloes, euphorbias, and cacti – which cannot be planted outdoors. A major portion includes aloes that have been collected by Ruth Bancroft and Brian Kemble, and hybrids Brian has developed during his years of work, research, and aloe breeding at The Garden. The greenhouse and Garden are watered from a well on the property, the water from which is high in boron content. Over time this element builds up in the soil. Repotting the plants every few years with fresh soil prevents toxicity and encourages faster growth. Interns in this area will get experience repotting, watering, monitoring and maintaining the collection.

Landscape Management

The Ruth Bancroft Garden requires maintenance to preserve the design elements and plants that Ruth Bancroft has so carefully cultivated. Interns in the area of landscape management will receive hands-on training to work in The Garden in all aspects of maintenance. These include: weeding garden beds and paths; grooming plants to remove dead inflorescences, branches, or leaves; agave removal after plants have flowered and died; pruning plants that have become overgrown or crowded into the pathways; replanting older succulents that have gotten too tall; preparing beds and assisting with new plantings; installing winter cold frames over frost-tender plants or beds; monitoring for pest problems and damage; etc.

Interpretive Education

The Garden has education programs for third graders, who visit for a two-hour tour to learn about succulent plants, pollination, propagation, local history, and ethnobotany. Adult education includes such workshops and special tours as succulent container gardening, birding, winterization techniques, fall fruit-tasting, and aromatic plants. We also offer a series of tours focused on specific plant groups such as aloes, agaves, and bromeliads. Finally, we offer all-day horticultural seminars for green industry professionals on such topics as South African Plants and Dry Garden Design. Interns will assist with developing and organizing these and other educational programs and resource materials.

Plant Inventory and Database Management

An ongoing plant inventory project of the entire garden was initiated in 2002. This inventory needs constant updating as new plants are added, existing plants are transplanted, and mature or diseased plants die. Ruth Bancroft has kept meticulous handwritten records on plants in The Garden. Records include when and where plants were purchased, when and where they were planted in the garden, whether they were moved, which plants require winter protection, which have died, etc. She

also records daily garden maintenance activities. This set of information is being transferred into a custom-designed plant database to facilitate access of her records for educational and reference purposes. An ongoing effort to capture digital images of each plant as it flowers was also begun in 2002. These images are linked to the plant database and have been used in multiple print pieces and on the website. Interns working in this area will gain experience with data entry and maintenance, plant inventory procedures and updates, and digital photography.