

volunteer handbook



the **gardens**
at HCP
Horticulture Centre of the Pacific

505 Quayle Road
Saanich
250 479 6162

<http://hcp.ca>
volunteers@hcp.ca

Welcome

Thank you for choosing to volunteer at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific (HCP). We are happy to welcome you to our team of over 200 volunteers! The HCP was started by volunteers and for more than 30 years volunteers have been involved in the creation of the Gardens at the HCP. We are proud to acknowledge their immense contribution. We would not exist without their dedication and commitment. As a new volunteer at the HCP, you in turn will become part of our long history of volunteerism.

Cheri Le Brun

Volunteer Coordinator - The Horticulture Centre of the Pacific

How To Use This Guide

The purpose of this guide is to help new volunteers to integrate and become part of the HCP. It is also a useful reference for volunteers during their service as a volunteer at the HCP. Another useful resource for volunteers is the HCP website - www.hcp.ca - which has more information about what we do, educational programs offered and annual events.

About the HCP

Our Vision

"We will be an internationally recognized botanical garden and a respected centre of lifelong learning, conservation and research."

To read our mission statement, please visit our website - <http://hcp.ca/vision/>

History

HCP was created in 1979 as a "garden for gardeners". It was incorporated as a not-for-profit society in November 1979. HCP is situated on Crown lands, now owned by Saanich and the first lease was signed in 1986 for 135 acres. The lease was renewed in 1995 for 103 acres. By 1983 funds were secured and workers were hired to create the gardens. Funding was precarious and many volunteers assisted to continue the work in the 80s & 90s. Eventually funding became more regular and paid staff was employed. However, still today funding remains a challenge and the organization would not exist without the support of volunteers.

The Present Day

HCP is a not-for-profit society that receives funding from a number of sources including grants from the District of Saanich, membership dues, admission fees, facility rentals, general donations, plant sales, community education programs and fundraisers. The society employs a small staff of 6 people both fulltime and part-time and is administered by a volunteer Board of Directors. HCP operates with the assistance of approximately 200 volunteers who contribute over 11,000 hours annually. HCP supports a diverse number of activities, but the key focus is education.

The HCP Description

HCP has a beautiful **public garden** situated on 103 acres of lands leased from the District of Saanich. The gardens are approximately 10 acres in size divided into demonstration gardens showcasing a variety of gardening styles sustainable on the West Coast. Visitors can view breathtaking examples of gardening excellence in our Japanese Garden, Rhododendron Garden, Mediterranean Garden, Bonsai Garden, Vegetable Gardens and many more. In addition to the public garden, there are **conservation areas**, including the Conservation Park, Ethnobotany Trail and Native Plant Gardens.

HCP is home to the **Pacific Horticulture College** which offers an accredited Full-Time Landscape Horticulture Certificate Program as well as several other part-time programs.

Community Education programs and workshops offered by the HCP keeps the community learning and exploring their horticultural interests. There are a number of adult programs run year round including some great weekend classes on pruning, weaving, garden design and much more. HCP also offer workshops and programs for youth, families and children including a kids garden club, Master Gardener summer camps and school programs.

The HCP offers **facility rentals** and has become a popular venue for weddings, birthdays and corporate functions.

Each year, HCP hosts some exciting **public events** including the annual Arts and Music festival which attracts over 2000 people to the gardens. Other events include plant sales, summer picnics, Saanich Seedy Saturday and more.

In addition, there is a members **library, gift shop**, and restaurant on site. Charlotte & the Quail **restaurant** is a great place for visitors to refresh themselves on local, nutritious fare.

Finally, HCP offers **memberships** to the public which provide those members special privileges such as unlimited entry, the use of the library and discounted rates on community education courses, plants and at the gift shop.

Volunteering at the HCP

The information below will help to guide you through your experience as a volunteer at the HCP. Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator for more information should you have any questions.

Policies and Processes

Hours of Operation: The gardens are open from 9am - 5pm 7 days a week from April 1 to October 31. Winter hours, November 1 to March 31 are from 10am until 4pm. The gardens are closed over the Christmas holidays.

Public Transit: Public transit is limited to the gardens especially on weekends. Please contact BC Transit for up-to-date transit information.

Volunteer Applications: It is easy to apply to become a volunteer at HCP. Simply email the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@hcp.ca. Please include your contact information, availability and area of interest. Once your application is received, the coordinator will be in touch with available positions or place you on a waiting list until one becomes available.

Volunteer Orientation: All new volunteers are required to attend an orientation session before starting to volunteer at the HCP. Once orientation is completed, they will start to volunteer with their assigned group/task.

Trial Period: New volunteers are accepted on a trial basis to ensure that their assignment is a good match for them. At the end of this period, they may continue to volunteer in their position, be reassigned with their permission or placed on a waiting list until something more suitable becomes available.

Recording Volunteer Hours: All volunteers are required to record their hours in the binder provided. Volunteers will be shown the binder during their orientation. Recording your hours is important as it can impact grants and funding to the HCP.

Volunteer Notices: Notices, newsletters, volunteer opportunities and event invitations are communicated to volunteers via email. If you are not receiving our messages, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator via email so that you can be added to the mailing list - volunteers@hcp.ca. For those who do not use email, notices are also posted on the Volunteer Message Board in the lunchroom.

Terminating your Volunteer Position: Please inform the Volunteer Coordinator if you decide to leave a volunteer position. In some circumstances the HCP may choose to terminate the services of a volunteer. Depending on these circumstances, the volunteer may be invited to an exit interview. Once you cease to volunteer, you will be removed from the volunteer contact and no longer receive volunteer notices.

Lead Steward Volunteers: Each volunteer group within the garden will have a Lead Steward volunteer(s) who leads the group and reports to the Head Gardener. We encourage new volunteers to consider becoming a lead steward once they have at least one year of volunteer experience at the HCP or are an experienced gardener. If you are interested in a Lead Steward position, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator for more information - volunteers@hcp.ca

Grievances: If you have any concerns that you would like to raise with staff, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator via email volunteers@hcp.ca or in person. If you have a disagreement with another volunteer or staff, we ask that those involved try to peacefully resolve the matter on their own. However, if you are unable to do so, or if the matter is serious, then please report it to the Volunteer Coordinator for further assistance.

Communication with Staff: With the wide range of work that we do at the HCP, staff are kept very busy. We ask that volunteers are mindful of this when communicating with staff. Staff love to see volunteers, but their time is limited. Please email where possible and understand that staff may not always be available to assist you right away. They are always interested, but have to manage their time carefully to ensure that they are using their time as efficiently as possible. HCP appreciates all opinions and suggestions, but may not always be able to put them into practice.

Confidentiality: If you are present during confidential discussions with staff or during your volunteer activities, please respect that confidentiality. Gossip can be damaging to individuals and to the organization and we ask you to consider this before repeating sensitive or confidential information.

Communication between Volunteers: We ask that our volunteers are always respectful in their communication with each other. Although it is not possible that we always share the same opinion,

please be gentle in your communications. We want the HCP to be a happy place for all of our volunteers.

Visitors to the Gardens: Your friendly and helpful attitude will ensure that visitors have a wonderful experience at the HCP. We are hoping to encourage visitors not just to return to the gardens but to become members, volunteers and donors.

Project Permission: All new projects in the Gardens need to be approved by the Head Gardener. Projects are reviewed for safety and to ensure that they are in keeping with our long term plans for the garden and the vision of the HCP. Any expenses associated with projects need to be approved by the Head Gardener ahead of time. For administrative projects, please obtain permission from the Office Manager or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Knowing your Limits: Know your limits and work within them. Volunteers are responsible for ensuring that they only undertake tasks that they are physically capable of doing.

Safe Use of Tools: We ask that you use good judgement and common sense when using tools in the Gardens or for construction. Our volunteer liability insurance is limited and we ask our volunteers to help us to prevent accidents and injuries at the Gardens by being careful.

When operating tools and equipment, please use and carry them in a safe manner. Be aware of sharp edges so that neither you or others are injured. Ensure pathways are left free of tools and other obstructions when you leave your work area. If you happen to be using power tools, wear safety goggles, hearing protection and gloves as applicable. Be cautious when climbing ladders or climbing on top of surfaces. Protect your hands and feet by wearing gloves and closed, flat shoes. Remember that volunteers need permission from the head gardener in order to operate the golf cart, tractor or Kubota.

Gates and Deer: Volunteers are required to close all gates behind them when they enter. It is very important to keep any deer from entering the gardens. Deer can do immense damage to the plants and are very difficult to get out of the gardens once they have entered.

Parking: The Gardens at HCP has very limited visitor parking. We ask that volunteers are mindful of this when choosing where to park. Some parking is available through Gate 4 for volunteers. Roadside parking is also available on Quayle and Beaver Roads. When we have events at the Gardens, volunteers may be asked to park in a specific spot. Please work with us to make the experience for visitors as pleasant as possible.

Smoking: Smoking is prohibited in the gardens.

Personal Effects: Please note that we have limited space to store volunteer's personal items. The HCP cannot be held responsible if your valuables are lost or stolen. Please bring along a bag for your things and keep it with you or lock it in your vehicle.

Washrooms: Public washrooms are available to visitors and volunteers. Washrooms are located behind the main building. During events, washrooms inside the Pavilion are also available. Front office volunteers may use the staff washroom which is located off the storage area by the lunchroom.

Garbage & Recycling: Garbage is kept behind the main building and in the lunchroom. A bucket for composting food scraps can also be found in the lunchroom. Recycling can be placed in the containers found in the lunchroom. Garden refuse can be placed in the trailers which are available at various places in the gardens. Volunteers will be shown the location during orientation.

Refundables are collected by a volunteer on the last Wednesday of each month. Please bring along any refundables you wish to donate on that day and leave them in the lunchroom.

Emergencies & First Aid

In an emergency or crisis situation, please remain calm. Never put yourself at risk as that could only add to the problem.

Fire, Earthquakes or Other Emergencies: In the event of a fire or other emergency, please make your way to the closest parking lot. Try to assess the safest route and avoid areas where hazards are occurring. Once you reach a parking lot, please do not leave until you have given your details to a staff member. We need to know that you are safe so emergency workers don't waste valuable time and resources trying to find you after you have safely left the site.

First Aid: Please report all First Aid emergencies to the front office as soon as possible. All staff have First Aid training. Do not attempt to provide First Aid unless you have at least First Aid Level 1 training. If you or someone else is seriously injured or ill, call 911 immediately. Report any incidents to the staff as soon as you can. Do not attempt to drive an injured or sick person to the hospital. First Aid kits are kept in the front office, the Pavilion, The Takata service area and in Polyhouse 1. A defibrillator is kept in the lunchroom and staff are trained to use it.

Introducing the Staff

Deborah Donahue - General Manager & Accounts - director@hcp.ca

Linda Petite - Head Gardener - headgardener@hcp.ca

Giles Collins - Assistant Gardener (Spring & Summer)

Mark MacKenzie Moore - Assistant Gardener (Fall & Winter)

Chelsea Twaddle - Part Time Gardener (Seasonal)

Jo Volek - Office Manager - office@hcp.ca

Megan Stacey - Event Manager - events@hcp.ca

Jessica Jang - College Administrator - collegeadmin@hcp.ca

Cheri Le Brun - Volunteer Coordinator & Community Education Coordinator - volunteers@hcp.ca