



**Project Area:** Living Collections

**Project Title:** Curating, Vouchering, and Inventorying Living Collections

**Earliest Start Date:** 20 May 2024

**Latest End Date:** 20 August 2024

**Reports to:** Seth Hamby (primary); Benjamin Durrington (secondary)

## **Overview**

Every internship at Fort Worth Botanic Garden (FWBG) is important to the organization's success and contributes to the accomplishment of the strategic goals and, ultimately, achievement of its vision for the future.

The purpose of this internship is to provide real-world experience working in a public garden for someone interested in Horticulture, Living Collections, & Herbaria. The intern will collect herbarium vouchers of trees on the FWBG campus, where appropriate. The intern will also assist with inventories and other related curation practices. This internship will directly address Objective 1 of Priority Area 2 in the Botanical Research Transformative Goal of the Strategic Plan through the collection of herbarium vouchers of woody taxa.

## **Project Summary: Curating, Vouchering, and Inventorying Living Collections**

FWBG has three types of living collections: special collections, general, and natural. Each type is defined by its conservation value, level of documentation, and intensity of management. Our special collections are the most intensely managed and documented, have the highest conservation value, and include an internationally recognized Begonia Species Bank, an American Public Gardens Association (APGA) Nationally Accredited Plant Collection since 2015. The collection comprises over 400 species and approximately 700 hybrids/cultivars. We have begonia species from around the globe (including 15% of all IUCN Red List begonia species), a New World orchid collection, a tropical rainforest conservatory, and a native plant garden featuring species from north central Texas. Our general collections include a diverse array of plant materials displayed in 23 unique gardens across the campus. These collections are managed and documented with a standard level of care and have a lower conservation value than our special collections. Our natural collections include a living roof replicating the Fort Worth Prairie ecosystem, a tallgrass prairie restoration, and vast managed natural areas on campus. These collections have various levels of management and documentation and have not been properly assessed for conservation value.

This project will focus on the inventorying and vouchering of the FWBG woody plant collection. Additional experiences will include compiling plant trial data, testing specimens in our orchid collection for viral infections, and assisting the Director of Living Collections as needed.



### **Intern Responsibilities**

- Work with Director of Living Collections to perform collection curation tasks as needed.
- Voucher with exemplars important woody living collections based on spreadsheets, database, and mapping of existing woody species in the garden.
- Work with Plant Records Coordinator to perform diagnostic testing on the FWBG orchid collection.

### **Supervisor Responsibilities**

Project supervisors will train and instruct interns on all techniques, data entry, and other project-related tasks. Interns may also be trained by other FWBG staff for related tasks (e.g., collections curation). Supervisors will assist with these duties where necessary and as time allows. The supervisors will recognize all participant efforts through acknowledgments in publications, presentations, and web-based reports.

### **Time Commitment & Schedule**

FWBG Living Collections interns during the summer session are asked to commit to a minimum of 180 hours. This internship position is best suited to a fixed weekly schedule, although there is room for some flexibility throughout the summer. Project tasks intended to be completed on-site at FWBG are restricted to normal business hours of 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday. For all internships, a mutually agreed upon schedule will be confirmed in writing. Expected absences (e.g., vacations) must be discussed in advance.

### **Skills & Background Requirements**

- Current or former student in Horticulture, Biology, Ecology, or related field.
- Data collection experience.
- Basic knowledge of plant identification and taxonomy.
- Must have basic computer and mobile phone app skills.
- Basic computer literacy: spreadsheets, report creation, presentation creation, email attachments, files/data organization and hierarchy.
- Internet literacy as it relates to research (primary literature searching, etc.)
- Independent thinking and ability to work both alone and as an assistant.
- Must be at least 18 years old with a clean record; background checks are done by BRIT for all volunteers and interns; will be to be trained for safe interactions around minors.

### **Intern benefits include learning and growing skills in the following:**

- Collections vouchering and curation
- Project management



- Time management
- Research data processing and analysis
- Interaction and networking with professional Horticulturists and scientists

### Measure of Success

Interns will be given verbal feedback throughout the internship. Where appropriate, results from this project will be submitted for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals and presented at scientific conferences by FWBG staff and associates. Project participants are encouraged to contribute to publications where possible and to also make public presentations of the data as time, interests, and skill level allow. All student interns are required to create a minimum of one product (e.g., poster, report, annotated dataset, infographic) and one project reflection piece (e.g., an essay, blog post, drawing, video) which will be shared with the public via FWBG's website and social media. Additional contributions beyond these products are encouraged.

### Project Goal

Learn the basics of professional curation of living plant collections.

### Project Timeline

Begins: 20 May 2024- Orientation

Progress Report Due: 15 July 2024

Final Deliverables Due: 19 August 2024

Presentation: 12-16 August 2024