



Project Area: Living Collections

Project Title: Enhancing Plant Curation Through Seed Trials & Specialized Care

Earliest Start Date: 18 May 2026

Latest End Date: 21 August 2026

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.

In this internship, participants will gain valuable exposure to the core practices that underpin professional plant curation within a major public garden. Interns will work directly with Living Collections staff to understand how plants are evaluated, documented, and maintained as part of a research-driven, conservation-minded institution. Through hands-on activities such as field-based plant observation, collection documentation, and engagement with specialized botanical care, interns will see how living plant collections support scientific inquiry, ecological stewardship, and public education. This experience offers a meaningful introduction to the dynamic intersection of horticulture, botany, and conservation that defines modern public garden work.

Project Summary: Enhancing Plant Curation Through Seed Trails & Specialized Care

This project centers on advancing the Garden's conservation and horticultural research through two primary initiatives. The first major focus is conducting comprehensive seed trials on an extensive collection of West Texas native plant species. Interns will assist in testing germination protocols, documenting germination success rates, and evaluating early seedling vigor. Successful seedlings will be grown to transplant size and ultimately introduced into curated garden spaces, supporting the Garden's mission to expand its representation of regionally significant flora and promote ecological resilience in cultivated landscapes.

The second component of the internship involves revitalizing and replanting the Garden's orchid and cactus collections. Interns will gain hands-on experience in plant care, propagation, and collection management while contributing directly to the enhancement of two of the Garden's most distinctive and botanically valuable groups. Through this project, interns will deepen their understanding of plant diversity, conservation horticulture, and public garden operations while making a tangible impact on long-term collection development.

Intern Responsibilities

- Assist in conducting seed trials for a wide range of West Texas native plant species.
- Test, record, and refine germination protocols across multiple species.



- Document germination success rates and monitor early seedling vigor.
- Support the care, propagation, and replanting of the Garden's orchid collection.
- Participate in revitalization and replanting efforts for the cactus collection.
- Contribute to the management and documentation of special, general, and natural living collections as needed.
- Assist with routine plant care tasks such as watering, repotting, sanitation, and monitoring for pests or disease.
- Learn and apply best practices in conservation horticulture, public garden operations, and collection stewardship.

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 trained for safe interactions around minors.

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: 19 May 2026- Orientation

Progress Report Due: 20 July 2026

Final Deliverables Due: 21 August 2026

Presentation: 17-21 August 2026