



Volunteer Role Description: Plant Records and Library Volunteer

About the Role

Are you interested in plants? Do you enjoy detailed, methodical tasks? Can you help on regular Thursdays during the next few months, and potentially beyond?

The Plant Records Officer and Horticulture team at the Botanic Garden are looking for 1 or 2 volunteers to help with a variety of data-oriented tasks, including:

- data entry from historic, handwritten ledgers and photographs into Excel spreadsheets
- using specialist software to make labels on an engraving machine
- assisting staff with stock-checking and auditing plant collections
- capturing phenological data, e.g., taking photographs of seasonal changes in plants

This mix of ongoing and occasional, indoor and outdoor tasks will help ensure that certain aspects of the Garden's plant data are more reliable, up-to-date, and accessible.

Sarah Edwards, the Plant Records Officer, will coordinate, induct, and train volunteers with the support of the Garden Curator. Horticulture staff will also supervise volunteers and offer extra guidance for certain tasks.

Timing

We're looking for volunteers who can help for a couple of hours on Thursdays on a weekly or fortnightly basis between May and October 2026. Staff and volunteers will agree a mutually convenient slot between 10 am and 3 pm.

About Plant Records and Library volunteers

We're looking for volunteers who:

- are curious about plants
- are confident about using computer spreadsheets and databases
- are willing to learn specialist software for creating labels (training will be given, and written instructions can be provided if helpful)
- enjoy working methodically when following a process and doing repetitive tasks
- have attention to detail, to help ensure that data entry and label designs are accurate
- are happy volunteering relatively independently, but would ask questions if unsure of anything



- would enjoy the variety of tasks, from sitting at a desk to being in the Garden and glasshouses
- can comfortably move around the Garden, which includes uneven paths and natural terrain; some tasks may involve kneeling and/or squatting

This role doesn't require any previous knowledge of plants, although it may be helpful and make the tasks more interesting.

Why volunteers might enjoy this role

It's an opportunity to:

- meet different staff and support various 'behind the scenes' aspects of their work
- develop and/or practise computer skills
- develop and/or practise plant identification skills
- learn more about botany, taxonomy, and the Garden's heritage
- contribute to making data about the Garden's plants more accessible
- support the Garden's mission to inspire learning about plants, people, and the environment

Other Information

- The role is open to volunteers aged 18+.
- This is a new role and will be reviewed in the autumn, with the potential for it to be extended. Staff will be keen to hear volunteers' feedback during their volunteering and at this point.
- This is an onsite opportunity and we anticipate that volunteers will live within easy commuting distance of the Oxford Botanic Garden (OX1 4AZ). Volunteers can claim reimbursement of travel expenses up to £5 per volunteering session. Please note that there is no onsite parking.
- Volunteers new to onsite GLAM volunteering will need to be registered on the Volunteer Service mailing list (through MyImpactPage.com), and the Volunteer Service will need to have received two references and done an ID check before volunteers can start in this role. The role does not currently require any additional checks.

Next steps...

We are looking to recruit 1 or 2 volunteers to this role. Depending on the level of interest, staff hope to invite as many people as possible to an **informal interview between 12.30 and 2.30 pm on Thursday 21st May**. This will be a chance to meet each



other, explain more about the role, answer any questions, and help decide if it seems like a good fit.

If you are interested in getting involved, then please **complete a form by following [this link](#)**. It will ask you to:

- confirm that you could attend an informal interview on 21st May
- indicate your general availability to volunteer on Thursdays
- briefly (max. 150 words) explain why you are interested in the role
- briefly (max. 150 words) describe a time when you had to follow a process and/or do something with attention to detail

If sending a video or voice recording would make it easier for you to apply, then you are welcome to email one to Caroline at volunteering@glam.ox.ac.uk – just make sure you include all of these points!

The deadline to apply is Wednesday 6th May. Caroline will share expressions of interest with Garden staff after the deadline, and someone will then be in touch as soon as possible.

Information will be kept in accordance with the Volunteer Service's [Data Retention Schedule](#).