

Auroville Botanical Gardens

Internship Program

Starting in September 2020 The Auroville Botanical Gardens will offer three internship programs in the following specialized fields: *Botany, Forestry and Horticulture*. These programs will offer a unique practical learning experience to individuals with knowledge and interest in the given fields. Thus, applicants are required to either be currently studying, or have completed a program in one of the three focus areas. Interns with a background in the life sciences will also be considered.

Location of the Internship

The internship will be based in Auroville, Tamil Nadu, in the Auroville Botanical Gardens. These gardens were started in August 2000, and since then they have been transformed into a flourishing landscape that offers environmentally sustainable approaches to land management, ecological restoration, biodiversity conservation, and environmental education. The gardens span 50 acres, and include over 1500 unique species of plants in a range of thematic gardens, including medicinal, cactus, ornamental, cultural and ethnobotanic gardens. More than 300 tree species have been planted in the 25-acre arboretum, and 5,500 specimens have been planted in the 10-acre conservation forest. There are also conservation gardens for plants that are endangered or threatened in the wild, and a plant nursery capable of producing 50,000 seedlings per year to promote the re-introduction of the indigenous flora of the region.

Structure of the Internship

All three programs start with an orientation week where interns will learn about Auroville, the Botanical Gardens, the ecology of the local bioregion, and be introduced to the plants of the Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest (TDEF).

After orientation the interns will be integrated into teams working in their specialized focus areas. In addition to the practical work required, interns will be able to attend specialist lectures or workshops when offered in the gardens, attend field trips in the bioregion, as well as work on a personal project directly related to their field of specialization. The details of the program will be coordinated with their appointed supervisor at the Auroville Botanical Gardens. In addition to their supervisors, interns will be supported in their personal projects by a wide range of specialists who work in the gardens.

The following specialized fields will be offered in 2020: Botany, Forestry and Horticulture

Botany interns will be immersed in the scientific management of the living plant and herbarium collections. Practical work will include plant identification and profiling, preparing herbarium samples (both physical and virtual), mapping the plant collection, and updating the plant database. There will also be opportunities to attend specialized lectures and workshops offered in the gardens. Examples of personal projects could include developing

educational materials from the plant collections, conducting scientific research such as the biodiversity studies in the TDEF forest, herbarium projects, identifying and labelling plants, and developing the plant conservation program.

Forestry interns will be working in the Botanical Gardens Arboretum and TDEF forest, as well as in other Auroville forests. Practical work will include pruning specimen trees and shrubs, learning to manage water and soil within forest ecosystems, identification of common tropical trees, removing exotic species in the forests, and how to safely use and maintain forestry tools. There will also be opportunities to learn nursery techniques and propagation, forest surveying and the science of arboriculture through specialized lectures and workshops. Examples of personal projects could include the development of forestry management plans, the creation of educational materials, and the profiling of timber trees and their silvicultural practices – germination to plantation.

Horticultural interns will be immersed in the practical running of a botanical garden and work will include nursery management and propagation, pruning and plant care, landscape design, and the safe use of horticultural tools. There will also be opportunities to learn horticultural science (botany and plant science, nursery management, soil and water management, plant identification, etc.) through specialized lectures and workshops. Examples of personal projects could include working in the nursery, or a practical in one of the selected thematic gardens (cactus, orchid, ornamental, medicinal, etc.).

Duration

The internships will be for 6 months, starting on 1 September 2020, and ending on 26 February 2021. Interns will also be considered for a 3-month internship, starting either on the 1 September 2020 or 1 December 2020. However, preference will be given to interns who are able to commit to the full 6 months.

The internship will run five days a week (Monday to Friday) from 8:30 in the morning till 4:30 in the afternoon.

Application Process

There are two spots available for each internship, six in total. The internships are unpaid, but lunch will be provided on the workdays. Accommodation can be organized near to the Botanical Gardens if required.

Botanical Gardens will assist with the visa process for international interns, if needed.

The application form for this internship can be found on the Auroville Botanical Gardens website.