

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

TITLE: Gardener

GRADE: M-3.5

FUNCTIONS:

This position provides semi-skilled labor required to install, refurbish, and otherwise care for grounds, plantings, landscape forms and features. The incumbent prepares and hand grades terrain, applies fertilizers, seeds and sods lawns, and transplants flowers, shrubs and plants. This position plants and cultivates new and repairs established lawns, trims shrubs and cultivates flower beds and gardens. The incumbent installs major plantings and applies chemical herbicides/pesticides to designated areas to control weeds and infestations. The incumbent operates power grounds equipment and tools, instructs groundskeepers and students in the operation and maintenance of equipment and tools, as well as other landscape tasks. The incumbent may assist grounds construction crews and special project crews in grading and otherwise preparing sites for landscaping. The incumbent operates testing equipment such as pH meters, soil analysis devices, etc.

This position provides manual labor required to maintain grounds, trees, shrubs, flower beds, other plantings, landscape forms and vehicle and pedestrian access ways throughout the University. The incumbent removes trash, rubbish and detritus from grounds, walkways, parking lots and structures, external receptacles and other surfaces and structures in assigned areas/regions. This position maintains shrub beds and tree wells, removes leaves and other debris, turns dirt and/or mulch, and trimming edges. The incumbent weeds and waters flower beds, lawns and other grassy areas, as well as areas of groundcovers and other plantings. The incumbent assists senior gardeners and irrigation specialists in the operation, maintenance and repair of irrigation equipment. The incumbent mows and trims lawns and other grassy areas, and prepares plant beds for planting/installation of trees and shrubbery. During winter months, the incumbent may be required to operate light equipment for removing snow from streets, parking lots, and walkways, porches, steps and other structures.

In addition to performing daily maintenance of campus grounds, greenery and landscaping, the incumbent may set up indoor and outdoor facilities for University events. This position utilizes pointed and flat shovels, hoes, rakes and other small hand tools to prepare flower shrub beds for planting. The incumbent employs garden rakes, leaf rakes, brooms and other implements to remove debris from shrub beds, tree wells and lawn areas, and operates hand-held and lo-blow push blowers to remove leaves. This position operates push mowers, self-propelled walk-behind mowers, weed whips and sidewalk edgers to mow and trim lawns and edges of lawn areas. The incumbent also operates ride-on mowers and cultivators to mow and maintain large grassy areas and uses lawn sweepers to remove rocks, stones, twigs and other debris from lawns prior to mowing. This position uses snow shovels and snow blowers to remove snow. The incumbent may employ manual and hydraulic jacks, screwdrivers, wrenches and other implements.

The incumbent operates a motor vehicle to transport trailered equipment, such as the water wagon, from storage facilities to work sites in the field. This position maintains the work area, all tools, all equipment, all supplies and any assigned vehicles in a neat, dean and orderly condition and performs all work in accordance with established safety rules. The incumbent performs appropriate operational checks of all power tools and equipment before, during and after each use. The incumbent checks fuel, oil, hydraulic, transmission, coolant and other fluid levels; adds any required fluids to maintain/restore appropriate levels; inspects tires and tire pressure; checks lights, strobes, electrical connections and safety switches for proper operation; inspects hoses and hose connections; cleans air filters; greases all fittings; and checks other components and systems/relays specific to each piece of equipment/tool. The incumbent must wear OSHA-approved safety shoes at all times, and must wear a hard hat and safety glasses as required by MIOSHA rules when operating power equipment. Ear plugs are required when operating tools/equipment producing noise levels exceeding OSHA standards. The incumbent must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when operating tools and equipment. The incumbent must wear no loose fitting clothing which might pose a hazard to incumbent's safety. This position performs additional duties as requested by supervisory personnel, including, but not limited to, training and programs for staff and students.

QUALIFICATIONS:

The incumbent must be able to read and comprehend written instructions and safety regulations regarding the performance of job duties, and must be able to understand and comply with oral instructions. Sufficient writing ability to prepare any necessary documents or forms is required. Ability to identify, and knowledge of the growth habits of common plants found in southwest Lower Michigan are required; familiarity with annuals, perennials and bulbs common to the area is specifically required. Considerable knowledge of landscape maintenance practices, principles and techniques is required. This is typically obtained through formal landscape training; some examples are (but are not limited to): Master Gardener training, Arborist training, Associate's or technical degree in a horticulture-related field, certified grounds technician and others. Or, the incumbent must possess three years of proven grounds maintenance experience. Michigan Department of Agriculture Commercial Pesticide Applicator license in at least the right-of-way (category 6), turf (category 3a), and ornamental (category 3b) is required.

In order to perform the essential functions of the job, the incumbent must be able to raise 50 pounds dead weight to/from a height of 36 inches to load/unload power tools, air compressor attachments and apply bags of ice melt. The incumbent must be able to move bags and buckets of trash, weighing up to 30 pounds each, a distance up to 300 yards as often as 50 times per day to remove trash and debris to dumpsters. The incumbent must be able to transport items of equipment, weighing up to 50 pounds each, a distance up to 150 feet in order to load/unload equipment and move it to/from worksites in the field. The incumbent must be able to transport and operate hand-held power tools, including weed whips, hand blowers and sprayers, weighing from 10 pounds to 25 pounds each for up to two hours at a time for the entire length of the shift.

The incumbent must be able to transport and operate tools and equipment; manipulate tools, equipment, landscape materials, and plantings; and remove trash and debris from ground level up

to waist height and above. The incumbent must be able to raise to waist-height shovels loaded with dirt, mulch, other landscape materials and/or snow several hundred times per day, depending on seasonal work assignments. The incumbent must be able to descend to/rise from a kneeling position as often as 150 times per day or work at ground level for two hours at a time for the entire length of the shift. The incumbent must be able to pull-start walk-behind mowers, lo- blowers, push-mowers, and other equipment. The incumbent must be able to safely operate self- propelled walk-behind mowers weighing 350 pounds and operated with bi-lateral hand controls and to simultaneously steer and operate the blades of ride-on mowers. The incumbent must be able to attach trailered equipment to vehicles and to attach and properly secure hydraulic hoses and couplings. The incumbent must be able to operate ride-on mowers with manual clutches and foot-pedal controls.

In order to obtain a valid Michigan driver's license, the incumbent must possess 20/40 vision with or without corrective lenses. The incumbent must have sufficient visual acuity, with or without corrective lenses, to inspect equipment before operation and to identify trash, debris, and other foreign objects to be removed from flower and shrub beds, tree wells, walkways, and other paved areas. The incumbent must have sufficient auditory acuity; with or without audiological appliances, to hear warning sounds signaling that landscape and grounds equipment and vehicles are operating/moving in reverse.

The incumbent must be able to tolerate exposure to extreme temperatures ranging from -25°F to 120°F, depending on seasonal work assignments. The incumbent must be able to tolerate exposure to dirt, dust, pollen, grass clippings and other airborne debris, as well as weed killers, fertilizers and other lawn care chemicals. The incumbent must be able to tolerate prolonged exposure to sunlight.

A physical examination required by state and federal laws and administered by the employer's designated physician is required.