

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT
for
MAINTENANCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
at the
URBAN LEARNING GARDEN

Issuing Agency: LifeCycles Project Society
A-808 Viewfield Rd
Victoria, BC
V9A 4V1

Initial Period of Contract: Through until November 5, 2019 with potential for extension
Anticipated Compensation: \$20-23/hour (experience dependent), 4 hours/week

Those interested in this contract position are asked to send their expression of interest via email to Matthew Kemshaw at diggers@lifecyclesproject.ca.

Applications will be accepted until a suitable candidate is found.
Preference will be given to individuals with indigenous ancestry.

Job Description:

Plant Care

- Water, weed and care for plants in the Urban Learning Garden, in collaboration with LifeCycles Executive Director
- Support identification of suitable plants for the space, and help develop care plans for all plants in the Urban Learning Garden

Community Engagement

- Support engagement with local First Nations communities, supporting participation in teaching, learning and ongoing project design

Background:

The Urban Learning Garden is a collaborative project of the LifeCycles Project Society and Food Eco District (FED). It is a multi-garden experiment in urban placemaking taking place in the large public courtyard at 940 Blanshard Street and 735 Broughton Street, directly in-front of and adjacent to the Central Branch of the Greater Victoria Public Library.

The Urban Learning Garden is a food forward initiative. We are interested in bringing diverse plants into the city, to remind folks that food grows from the Earth. We want to celebrate this truth. So we are experimenting, hoping to find ways to bring our consumption back into balance.

Begun in June 2018, we plan to continue to develop mini-learning-lab and play spaces in this large public courtyard for the next three years. We describe the project as a “multi-garden experiment” and a collection of “mini-learning-lab and play spaces” for many reasons, including the following:

We are trying something new. We are community minded individuals, a few of us working for forward thinking organizations, who want to create a different way of growing in the city. We’re not satisfied with the status quo and we want to experiment with different ways of doing things. We are trying to learn how to do this work well, in this place, at this time.

We are learning as we go. Many of the species of plants we are planting are unaccustomed to such extreme urbanized environments. We are not playing with the usual, heavily domesticated, urban street plants you see in most downtown cores.

We are playing with plants. And we’re trying to learn which plants like playing with us in this bizarre anthropic landscape. We’re also really hoping to learn which plants attract the attention of people who have forgotten the joy of playing with plants.

We are trying to create together. We are experimenting with different ways to engage people in this work. We want diverse individuals and groups to come into this space. We want this to be more than a place to pass through, or to stop for a smoke. We’ll be offering workshops, events, tours and the like but we really hope people will come to spend time here in their own ways, and to find ways to make the space theirs. We want diverse people to become involved in helping us make this space.

We believe the learning is in the process. Each “zone” we create is unique, with its own set of challenges and possibilities.

In 2018 we: 1) refurbished the existing concrete planters in-front of the library and planted a collection of over 30 native plant species and 2) created a perennial herb garden and seating area with a collection of gentle medicinal and culinary herbs (as well as 2 kiwi vines).

In 2019 we plan to install two more spaces: 1) a pollinator garden with nesting habitat for native bees and other pollinators, and 2) an ‘outdoor living room’ play/learning space for families. In 2020, we will create another two spaces: 1) an urban agriculture demonstration zone and 2) expanded native plant gardens.

We are open to each evolving and changing as we go. We do not have a fixed end state in mind. We are more interested in the process.

Concrete cities are blossoming. Amid this jungle, we need solutions that work for many. Solutions that help us un-learn some things, and re-learn others.