

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Position Description – Native Plant Nursery Technician

Rancho Sierra Vista Nursery (Newbury Park/ Ventura County)



Position and Program Introduction

Santa Monica Mountains Fund (SAMO Fund) is seeking a full-time, hourly Nursery Technician to join our Native Plant Nursery Team at Rancho Sierra Vista in Newbury Park, Ventura County. This position is in partnership with the National Park Service and is based out of the Rancho Sierra Vista Native Plant Nursery.

The team produces approximately 150,000 native plants annually, including Narrowleaf Milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) for community distribution and urban restoration, Black Walnut (*Juglans californica*) for regional restoration projects, Lyon's Pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta lyonii*) for rare plant seed bulking, and other restoration workhorse species. The nursery team is also involved in:

- various programs that introduce native plant conservation to local youth and community groups
- a significant number of workshops, classes and outreach events involving local community members

We are seeking an individual with a strong interest in working with local native plants in both field and nursery (horticultural) settings. The ideal candidate brings a positive attitude and a reliable work ethic.

This is a full-time position scheduled four days per week (Wednesday–Saturday), with 10-hour workdays totaling 40 hours per week. The hourly pay ranges from \$18.12 to \$22.76, depending on experience and/or education.

The position is a one-year term, with the possibility of extension based on funding. SAMO Fund offers group health insurance for eligible full-time employees after a 60-day waiting period.

Duties & Responsibilities

- Support daily nursery operations, including plant propagation (seed germination and cuttings), soil preparation, transplanting, fertilization, irrigation, weeding, and basic pest and disease management
- Collaborate with the Nursery Managers to plan and carry out weekly and monthly propagation and production goals
- Assist with fieldwork in the Santa Monica Mountains, including native plant identification, seed scouting, and collection
- Help lead and support volunteers and community groups; assist with workshops and outreach events across Southern California
- Maintain accurate records, including crop tracking, fertilizer and pesticide applications, and volunteer documentation

Required Qualifications

- Positive attitude, reliability, and willingness to learn and contribute to team goals
- Interest or experience in areas such as California native plants, restoration/conservation, botany, environmental horticulture, or related fields (e.g., community gardening, permaculture, traditional ecological knowledge)
- Commitment to workplace safety and adherence to safety protocols
- Strong attention to detail, problem-solving ability, and communication skills
- Basic math and computer proficiency
- Ability to work outdoors year-round in varying conditions

- Physical ability to stand, walk on uneven terrain, and lift up to 50 lbs.; capable of bending, stooping, and performing repetitive tasks
- Valid driver's license

Preferred Qualifications (applicants who do not have these are still encouraged to apply)

- Two (2) years of experience working with plants (horticulture, agriculture, restoration, or community gardening)
- Experience operating horticultural or agricultural equipment (e.g., tractors, sprayers, pumps, weed whackers)
- Public engagement skills, including leading workshops or working with groups
- Experience with outreach, communications, or basic graphic design (e.g., Canva, social media)
- Knowledge of plant propagation and seed collection/storage techniques
- Familiarity with plant identification resources (e.g., The Jepson Manual, dichotomous keys, regional plant databases)
- Experience with tools such as GPS units, ArcGIS Survey123, or iNaturalist
- Multilingual communication skills
- Basic mechanical skills (e.g., carpentry, irrigation systems, equipment maintenance)
- Possession of, or willingness to obtain, a driver's license with a "P" endorsement

Physical Demands & Work Environment

- Work involves extended periods of standing, bending, kneeling, and outdoor activity in varied weather conditions
- Fieldwork may include hiking (3+ miles) over uneven terrain while carrying equipment (up to 20 lbs.)
- Ability to lift up to 50 lbs. in nursery or field settings
- Exposure to environmental hazards such as insects, snakes, and poisonous plants
- Safety training will be provided for all tasks and field conditions

Training Provided

- Field safety and orientation (including extreme weather and hazardous plants/animals)
- Radio communications
- Driver training

Benefits

The Nursery Technician will gain hands-on experience in nursery operations, herbarium work, restoration projects, and seed program management. The role includes comprehensive safety training and orientation to ensure all duties are performed effectively and safely. Additional opportunities may include specialized trainings, wildlife encounters, park tours, and off-site field trips to further enhance learning and professional development.

Application Process

To apply, submit the following documents via email to paola@samofund.org:

- Cover letter
- Resume
- Three references

Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis, with interviews occurring in late May and early June. For additional questions contact paola@samofund.org.