

Shirley Tucker Lichenologist

About Santa Barbara Botanic Garden:

Santa Barbara Botanic Garden's mission is to conserve California native plants and habitats for the health and well-being of people and our planet. Since 1926, Garden staff have developed and maintained an intimate knowledge of the California flora, with an emphasis on the plants, lichens, and vegetation communities of California's Central Coast and the offshore islands. Today, we take a comprehensive approach to its conservation from genes to ecosystems, with plant/lichen systematics, rare plant conservation, community ecology and habitat restoration functions. This allows us to more thoroughly tackle the conservation challenges of our day, such as habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive species, and climate change.

A Day in the Life:

The Tucker Lichenologist is an endowed research scientist and curatorial position primarily responsible for performing lichenological research and curation in support of the Garden's mission. With ca. 55,000 specimens, the lichenarium is the second largest in California and the fourth largest west of the Mississippi River. The Tucker Lichenologist will curate this important collection, serve as a regional lichen expert for western North America, and fund an independent research program focusing on lichen biodiversity, taxonomy, systematics, and/or ecology. This position will also partner with other scientists at the Garden on projects, and may assist with curatorial duties shared with the Clifton Smith Herbarium (SBBG). Comprising an estimated 165,000 specimens of bryophytes, ferns, and seed plants, the herbarium contains important regional collections centering on the Central Coast as well as the California Channel Islands. This full time (40 hours per week), exempt position reports to the Ken and Shirley Tucker Plant Systematist.

Applications should include a curriculum vitae, a cover letter detailing your interest in the position and relevant qualifications, and a writing sample (e.g., a peer reviewed publication, report or other product).

What You'll Do:

Office Duties

- Develop and maintain an externally funded research program focusing on the taxonomy, systematics, or ecology of lichens, as appropriate for the expertise of the lichenologist
- Develop and maintain a current and in-depth knowledge of the lichens of western North America, with an emphasis on California, serving as a lichenological resource for the Garden as well as for other organizations and individuals in the area
- Supervise staff and volunteers, as necessary

Laboratory Duties

- Conduct other original scientific research appropriate to the Garden's mission
- Curate the lichenarium by leading day-to-day operations, managing the lichen database, responding in a timely manner to lichen loan requests, interfacing with herbarium users to provide access, seeking funding for long-term collections-related development projects in collaboration with other Garden staff, coordinating with country-wide lichen herbarium planning efforts through the Consortium of North American Lichen Herbaria, and promoting the lichenarium as an invaluable resource to scientists and the local community

Education and Outreach

- Collaborate with other Garden staff and research associates on research projects, as necessary
- Disseminate original research findings through formal presentations at scientific conferences and papers in thematically appropriate peer-reviewed scientific journals
- Work collaboratively and build relationships with Garden staff, volunteers, and members of the public to enhance knowledge of California lichens and to foster an understanding of the value of the natural history collections at the Garden; activities may include leading appropriate training sessions, participating in education and public outreach programs, giving lectures, and teaching classes related to plant systematics and/or herbarium curation
- Disseminate timely information, in collaboration with Garden publicity staff as necessary, including professional meetings, website and social media postings, and news releases
- Participate in joint projects with others on the Conservation and Research team (in fee-based consulting projects)
- Provide periodic presentations to the general public in partnership with our education staff as well as other organizations

Field Work Duties

- Perform lichenological field work in across California, including but not limited to the Central Coast and California Channel Islands

You Must Be Able To:

- Perform occasional strenuous physical work including:
 - Sitting for up to 2.0 hours at a time and using computer and phone for lengthy periods
 - Standing/walking for extended periods of time
 - Lifting and carrying 50 lbs., bending, squatting and walking stairs and the SBBG trails
- Occasionally work weekends and evenings
- Work independently and as part of a team to further the goals of the organization
- Work comfortably in a fast-paced environment that requires quick turnaround and flexibility
- Have or be eligible for a valid California driver license and maintain an acceptable driving record

You Will Definitely Need:

- Ph.D. in biology with a demonstrated focus on lichenology preferred
- Expert knowledge of North American lichens; experience in western North America preferred
- Expert knowledge of one or more of the following areas: molecular phylogenetics, population genetics, lichen ecology, geographic information systems, species distribution modeling
- Working knowledge of lichen taxonomy and systematics
- Experience working with natural history collections
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite and expertise in database management
- Excellent organizational skills
- Excellent time management skills
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills

It Would be Nice if You Had:

- Demonstrated success in obtaining external research funding

- Experience teaching in academic and/or public settings preferred
- Experience managing staff and/or volunteers preferred

More About Us

The Garden is a beautiful place to work and your work will make a direct impact on biodiversity conservation in California. We offer a supportive work environment, including professional development opportunities, human resources services, and collaborative opportunities. In addition to beautiful views, birds, and fantastic flora, outdoor work environments also include exposure to extreme temperature fluctuations, rain, dust, allergens, poison oak, insects, small wild animals, and sun exposure.

Disclaimer:

The employee must be able to perform the essential functions of the position satisfactorily, and if requested, reasonable accommodations will be made to enable employees with disabilities to perform the essential functions of their job, absent undue hardship. Santa Barbara Botanic Garden retains the right to adjust priorities or assign other duties to this position.

Expected Timeline

The position could be filled as early as July 1, 2025, with the first round of application review on June 1, 2025. This position will remain open until filled.

Salary Range

\$68,640 to \$91,520 starting annual salary, commensurate with experience

For more information, and to apply, please visit <https://sbbotanicgarden.org/about/employment/>