Nipissing University
Job Description

Job Title: Ethnobotany and Herbarium Research Intern

Department: Department of Biology, Chemistry and Geography

Length of Contract: Full-Time Contract (1 Year)

Supervisor: Dr. Peter Nosko

Summary of Functions:

The Nipissing University Herbarium, established in 2001, is a growing scientific collection dedicated to documenting the Flora of Central and Northern Ontario. Its holdings include preserved specimens of ferns, grasses, herbs, shrubs, and trees, providing a permanent record of regional plant biodiversity. The Herbarium is also expanding specialized collections of medicinal and edible plants to support research, teaching, and community engagement.

Working under the supervision of Dr. Peter Nosko, Associate Professor of Biology and Environmental Science and founding Curator of the Herbarium, the successful candidate will receive hands-on training in botanical fieldwork, plant identification, herbarium curation, biodiversity documentation, and ethnobotany. The internship provides an opportunity to develop specialized technical skills applicable to careers in environmental consulting, conservation, forestry, natural resource management, and Indigenous land stewardship.

This opportunity is proudly supported by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation and is funded through the Workforce Development Program.

Eligibility requirements of the program can be found here: https://nohfc.ca/en/pages/programs/people-talent-program/workforce-development-stream

Duties & Responsibilities

The successful candidate will:

- Conduct supervised field collection of native vascular plants throughout Central and Northern Ontario, with particular attention to medicinal and edible species.
- Identify plant specimens using regional floras, dichotomous keys, and other botanical references.
- Prepare herbarium specimens, including pressing, drying, mounting, labeling, cataloguing, and accessioning.
- Maintain and expand the Herbarium's digital database, including specimen imaging, georeferencing, and data verification.
- Assist in developing specialized collections of medicinal and edible plants and maintaining selected living specimens for research and educational purposes.
- Research and document traditional and contemporary uses of plants, including Indigenous ethnobotanical knowledge, using appropriate and respectful sources.
- Participate in educational and community outreach activities, including Herbarium tours, workshops, and guided plant identification and medicine walks.

- Prepare field records, specimen inventories, and reports documenting collection activities and project progress.

Qualifications:

Education:

Applicants should possess an undergraduate degree in Biology, Environmental Biology, Environmental Science, Ecology, Botany, Plant Science, Forestry, Natural Resource Management, Indigenous Environmental Studies, or a closely related discipline.

The following qualifications and experience are desirable:

- Academic background in plant biology, ecology, taxonomy, or conservation biology.
- Familiarity with the native flora of Central or Northern Ontario.
- Experience with botanical fieldwork, plant identification, or herbarium collections.
- Interest in medicinal and edible plants, ethnobotany, and Indigenous plant knowledge.
- Familiarity with digital databases, GIS, or biodiversity documentation.
- Strong organizational, communication, and record-keeping skills.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively in laboratory and outdoor field settings.
- Willingness and ability to undertake fieldwork in varied terrain and weather conditions.
- Previous herbarium experience is an asset but not a requirement. Training in specialized techniques will be provided throughout the internship.
- A valid Ontario Class G driver's licence is an asset.

To be eligible for an NOHFC internship, candidates must:

- Be a new entrant into the workforce, transitioning to a new career, or unemployed/underemployed and entering a new field;
- Have not previously participated in an NOHFC-funded internship;
- Be at least 18 years of age; and
- Reside, and be legally entitled to work, in Canada.