

JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION

1. Job title: Temporary Trials Assistant, Ornamental Crop Characterisation (OCC) **Grade:** B

Centre: Plant Varieties and Seeds

Location: Cambridge, HQ and MacLeod Complex, Park Farm, Impington

Reports to: Technical Manager Ornamentals

Line Manages : n/a

2. Main purpose of role:

Team focus

Within the Varieties and Seeds Centre at NIAB, there are two teams carrying out technical services and contract research relevant to the agricultural, horticultural and food industries, the Ornamentals Crops Characterisation Team (OCC) and the Agricultural Crops Characterisation Team (ACC). The main focus of these two teams is the delivery of regulatory services, primarily for government (APHA/Defra) or international governmental organisations/agencies such as CPVO.

The primary role of the Ornamental Crop Characterisation team is the testing of some 400 new varieties each year for the grant Plant Breeders' Rights (PBR). The work covers a wide range of glasshouse and nursery crops, with particular specialities being chrysanthemums, roses, dahlias, herbaceous perennials and shrubs. The team also carry out some small scale commercial trials.

The work is carried out at NIAB HQ in Huntingdon Road Cambridge, and at the glasshouse complex on the NIAB HQ trial ground. The complex consists of 3000m² of modern, high specification glasshouses, 3500m² of enclosed hard standing and 1 acre of dedicated field, as well as associated service buildings, office, labs and a conference facility.

Main function of the job

- To work as part of a team of 10 staff to deliver PBR trials on a wide range of ornamental crops to the standards required by Defra, CPVO and UPOV.
- To assist with the organisation of the trials, assessment and recording of varieties, and preparation of reports and variety descriptions.
- To work on practical plant husbandry aspects of trials in outdoor areas and glasshouses.
- To provide the general administrative support for the Ornamentals team

3. Financial authority/responsibility (e.g. delegated budget, authorisation level, approx value of contracts etc):

No direct budget responsibilities but required to make efficient use of consumables, and temporary labour when applicable. There will also be some requirement for annual sourcing and procurement of plant material of reference varieties for the trials, to instructions from the Technical Managers and within an agreed budget and time scale.

4. Key relationships (external and internal):

The post holder will be line managed by one of the Technical Managers, but will be functionally managed by the Technical Specialist in the team. They will work with all members of the team at different times.

The post holder will be expected to take an active part in team meetings, to organise work and provide feedback on progress. The post holder will be expected to work unsupervised at times and undertake individual responsibility for certain tasks.

Tasks/responsibilities (in order of priority)

Approx % of

Issue Date: 05.07.10

Version: 2

	time
Assisting with the set up and assessment of Plant Breeders Rights trials using predefined protocols to provide a detailed morphological description of new varieties. The work is on a range of ornamental species including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glasshouse crops, e.g. All Year Round Chrysanthemums, Natural Season Chrysanthemums, Campanula, pot Hibiscus, pot Dahlia Outdoor trials: e.g. Herbaceous perennials, woody plants, garden Dahlias, basket and container plants This work will be done in co-operation with the Technical Managers and the Technical Specialist	30%
Assisting with digital photography of varieties under trial: setting up, taking photographs, checking the quality, editing and categorising them, and storing them on the database, all according to protocol.	20%
Assisting Technical Managers with drafting and compilation of plant descriptions.	20%
In co-operation with others, receiving new plant samples for trial: checking them against accepted standards, documenting arrival, progress chasing, and liaison with the Technical Managers. Plant material to be handled ranges from cuttings to shrubs and small trees.	5%
Sourcing and procurement of plant material of reference varieties from reputable sources, to instructions from the Technical Specialist and within an agreed budget and time scale.	5%
Working with the team Technical Administrator in all area of the administration of the trials, including the processing of applications, crop paper work, crop labels and other associated tasks.	5%
Working with the Trials Manager on all aspects of plant care	10%
Other duties as required including general administration, archiving and deputizing for other members of the team when required.	5%

6. Working conditions :

Over winter (December, January and February) the post is mostly office or field lab based.

During the largest part of the year the job is very active and is split between NIAB HQ and the glasshouses and outdoor trial areas, which are on the NIAB site around 3 miles from the HQ building. The post holder must be willing to work outside in all weather conditions. The glasshouses may reach uncomfortably high temperatures in summer.

The post involves constant contact with plants throughout the year and sufferers from hay fever and/or other plant allergies could experience problems.

Due to peaks in workload it may not be possible to take holiday at certain times of the year.

7. PERSON SPECIFICATION

Education/Qualifications:

Essential:	Desirable:
A-level qualification or equivalent	A recognised first degree in a relevant biological science.
Current, clean UK driving licence and the willingness to drive to Park Farm site and, on occasion, away from NIAB.	

Experience:

Essential:	Desirable:
<p>Some practical experience relevant to the post, for example working with plant, or knowledge of plant varieties gained through working on a nursery or garden.</p> <p>Computer skills are essential: must be competent and confident user of standard Microsoft Office programs including Word, Excel and Outlook, and confident Internet user.</p>	

Specialist Training:

Essential:	Desirable:
	<p>Specialist training in DUS testing will be provided.</p> <p>The post holder will be expected to use digital SLR cameras to make photographic records; training will be provided but some prior experience is preferred.</p>

Personal Qualities (skills, behaviours and competencies)

Essential:	Desirable:
<p>An accurate, consistent and methodical approach, backed up by excellent record keeping skills.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to work to very specific protocols.</p> <p>Self motivated, flexible and proactive; able to work alone, as well as able to work effectively as part of a close team.</p> <p>A strong interest in plants and a proactive approach to learning is essential.</p> <p>Because of the nature of the work, normal colour vision is essential and this will be tested.</p> <p>Good organisational skills, ability to cope with high seasonal workload and conflicting requirements.</p>	

Date of description: 5th January 2018 **Compiled by:** Hilary Papworth