

# Tofino Botanical Gardens

Gateway to the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

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## **Please read this before you contact Tofino Botanical Gardens about WWOOFing or volunteering**

Thank you for enquiring about volunteering at the Tofino Botanical Gardens. We are a member of World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF), and we also accept volunteers and horticulture interns. Because we get so many enquiries about volunteering, we have drawn up this information sheet for you to determine if we (you and the Tofino Botanical Gardens) are a good fit! Please read this over and then contact George Patterson (Director) by phone (250-725-1220) or e-mail ([info@tofinobotanicalgardens.com](mailto:info@tofinobotanicalgardens.com)). If you are a horticulture student interested in a work practicum or internship, please contact us to discuss!

### **What are the Tofino Botanical Gardens?**

Tofino Botanical Gardens was established by George Patterson in 1997 to provide visitors to the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve with an introduction to the natural and cultural histories of the area. Our twelve acres of gardens, exhibits, forest boardwalk, and shoreline have been designed to encourage people to explore the relationship between culture and nature. Features include a kitchen garden; café; frog pond; children's garden; the Bernardo O'Higgins Garden; a comparative botany garden featuring plants from the temperate rainforests of Chile; a tropical garden; and the Evian, a fully restored salmon troller. In 2003, the *Tofino Botanical Gardens Foundation* was established to ensure that the Gardens will continue to be developed as a permanent not-for-profit institution serving both local communities and visitors to the Pacific Rim. For more information, please see [www.tofinobotanicalgardens.com](http://www.tofinobotanicalgardens.com).

### **What experience do I need to volunteer there?**

Experience in horticulture, landscaping, and/or carpentry is preferred but not always necessary. Essential experience and qualities include an interest in horticulture and/or public gardens, the ability to work independently, to relate with the public, and to live with other volunteers and maintain clean living quarters. We try very hard to match tasks with your abilities and interests, though some tasks are unavoidable (such as weeding!). You must be neat, clean and presentable to the public at all times.

### **Where will I sleep and eat?**

Most volunteers live in a caretaker's cottage at the entrance to the Gardens. The cottage is fully equipped with bathroom, laundry facilities, kitchen, living room, and shared bedrooms. You bring your sleeping bag, towel, rain gear, and work boots/shoes. We provide basic foods (staples such as flour, beans, sugar, rice, etc) which volunteers supplement from our vegetable garden and the local grocery store. Volunteers cook and clean for themselves. The kitchen is small so volunteers are expected to be prompt in tidying up! There are usually two or three volunteers/interns during the busy months (May-Sept).

### **What will I do and how long are the work days?**

For 2005, the general work schedule is three full days per week (usually 8-5 with breaks for tea and lunch, Monday to Wednesday, but this can change depending on what is going on in the Gardens at the time). During the spring, garden tasks include seeding and setting up the greenhouse, preparing beds, weeding, trail maintenance, and clearing for new garden areas. Summer tasks focus on weeding and watering, trail and bed maintenance, and interacting with the public. Fall tasks include mulching and preparing beds for winter, and the inevitable weeding. Carpentry projects occur year round. *Volunteering at Tofino Botanical Gardens does include hard physical labour. If you are not prepared for this then this opportunity is not for you.*

### **How long can I stay? Can I get a job while I am in Tofino?**

We ask a minimum two week commitment, but volunteers can longer depending on the season, the schedule and your capabilities. We will host horticulture interns for the full duration of your practicum.

We only accept volunteers who are genuinely interested in gardening and horticulture and are willing to make a volunteer commitment to the Gardens! We cannot accommodate people who are looking for jobs or a place to live in Tofino.

### **What can I do during my off hours?**

There are a lot of things to do here! We are a forty minute walk from downtown Tofino, where you can find coffee bars, galleries, restaurants, stores, internet, and a public library. We are a fifteen minute walk from the beach, where you can walk, swim, surf, boogie board, or have a sunset picnic. If you have a bicycle, we encourage you to bring it. All volunteers who stay for two weeks or more can go on a whale watching trip (for free, but as a stand-by). The Raincoast Interpretive Centre in downtown Tofino also offers all kinds of walks, slideshows, and interpretive events. They have a fantastic library of natural history guides and information.

### **Can I bring my dog? My kids? Can I smoke?**

Sorry, we are not prepared to accommodate dogs or children, and we do not allow any smoking on the property.

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We hope this answers some of the question you might have about volunteering here. If you think this sounds like the place for you, then please contact George by phone (250-725-1220) or e-mail ([info@tofinobotanicalgardens.com](mailto:info@tofinobotanicalgardens.com)).



Caretaker's cottage, iguana habitat, and greenhouse

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