

Rare Plant Monitoring Program

Rare Care, UW Botanic Gardens, Box 354115, Seattle, WA 98195-4115
206-616-0780 - Fax 206-685-2692

Dear Plant Conservationist,

Thank you for your interest in the Rare Plant Monitoring Program. This letter is intended to give you some background information on Rare Care and some details on the monitoring program itself. If you are interested in applying for the program, please visit the UW Botanic Gardens website at <http://depts.washington.edu/uwbg/support/volunteer.php>, select the "Rare Care Rare Plant Monitor position" and fill out the online application. Training dates are listed on the Rare Care website at <http://depts.washington.edu/uwbg/rarecare/volmonitor.shtml>.

The Washington Rare Plant Care & Conservation Program (Rare Care) was established in 1998 to conserve Washington's rare plants. Our program started with research into propagated endangered, threatened, and sensitive species to better understand the plant's requirements for reproduction. Some of these plants have been experimentally out-planted to augment naturally-occurring populations.

In 2001 we expanded our program to include a rare plant monitoring component. The basic intent of the program is to gain an up-to-date assessment of species on the state's list of endangered, threatened, and sensitive vascular plants. The Washington Natural Heritage Program (WNHP) is the agency responsible for maintaining information on the state's rare plants; however, many rare plant populations have not been visited in a decade or more. The scarcity of updated information on these plants puts them at risk of extirpation as a result of development, invasive species competition, and other threats.

Rare plant monitoring volunteers are the first line of defense for Washington's rare plants. Volunteers visit the site and note the location and condition of the population. They provide a site evaluation and note whether there are any threats to the population. This evaluation includes filling out a Field Data Sheet, including the number of plants (if found), their reproductive condition, associated species, notes on soil, slope and moisture regime, and directions to the site. An important component to the project includes the observation and collection of the rare plant's pollinators. All of this information helps the WNHP determine the best strategies for protection. The information is not overly scientific or complex, but accuracy and thoroughness are essential.

What kind of qualifications do we seek in volunteers? We are looking for people with botanical training, a commitment to native plant conservation, good observation and navigation skills, a sense of adventure, and a few days over the course of the field season (March through October). Volunteers must provide their own transportation. Please see the **Volunteer Position Description** at <http://depts.washington.edu/uwbg/rarecare/volmonitor.shtml> for more information.

If you are interested in participating in the Rare Plant Monitoring Program, please submit an **on-line application** by the **application deadline** shown on the Rare Care website. If you are accepted into the program, you must attend the all-day training session. Training provides an overview of the Rare Care Program and its conservation goals, project ground rules, tips on how to find your population, and instruction on how to complete the Field Data Sheet.

Thanks again for your interest in the Rare Plant Monitoring Program. We look forward to receiving your application. Please contact us at 206-616-0780 or rarecare@uw.edu if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Rare Care Staff