

# Head Gardener Job Description

The Gardener works to create and maintain a beautifully lush and rustic landscape that enhances the outdoor ambiance of Menla. Menla is set on 320 mostly-wooded acres. At its center are over a dozen buildings holding meeting spaces and housing. Many are embellished by flowerbeds and potted arrangements. We have a large organic garden which supplies the kitchen with fresh vegetables and herbs that are used for meals as well as flowers for decoration in the dining hall and main reception area.

The Gardener must have knowledge of common vegetable plants at all stages of development, be able to distinguish between weeds and plants at all stages of development, and be comfortable working outdoors in all temperatures and types of weather including cool, rainy days and occasional heat-waves. The candidate must also have a basic knowledge of perennial and annual flowering plants, as Menla's grounds contain beautiful ornamental flower beds managed by the Gardener. Familiarity with row covers, simple drip irrigation systems, composting, organic pest and disease management, and crop rotation is a plus. Since our gardening staff is limited and the campus is spread out, the successful candidate for this position must be familiar with various types of garden tools and possess sufficient physical fitness/strength to lift tools, bags of soil, planters, and more. The Gardener will work closely with the Head Chef to coordinate the harvesting of vegetables and herbs.

The resident Gardener should be a friendly and dependable person who can work well with others, manage time effectively and efficiently, oversee a garden assistant who manages the gardens on the Gardener's days off, and be able to work alone for long periods of time with little or no assistance. Experience with managing volunteers is a plus but not a requirement. Tractor experience is also beneficial but not a requirement.

We are a one-of-a-kind business, and we all go out of our way to ensure that at the end of the day the retreat participants' experience here is uniquely transformational and healing.

## Gardening Primary Duties

- Spring clean-up (raking, mulching, cutting back shrubs, grasses, and dead plants)
- Garden Prep (preparing flower and garden beds, adding compost, planting, mulching)
- Seeding/growing new plants, hardening off seedlings and transplanting them into garden beds
- Managing flower beds around the property – shaping beds, mulching, staking and dead-heading flowers,
- Weeding
- Insect and disease management of vegetables (i.e. cucumber beetles, downy mildew, etc).
- Occasional spraying of deer-off on ornamental flower beds to deter deer from eating the plants.
- Watering (sprinklers, drip irrigation, hand-watering)
- Staking and trellising of specific vegetables
- Preparing railing planters with flowers and arranging around property; watering and managing planters throughout season
- Manage composting program – bringing compost buckets from kitchen to compost area; turning compost; spreading compost on vegetable garden beds
- Harvest food and deliver to kitchen at appropriate times as coordinated with the Head Chef
- Oversee one garden assistant and occasional volunteers