

# GARDEN MUSEUM

## Job Description Horticultural Traineeship

### Background

The world's first Museum dedicated to the art, design and history of gardens was re-opened in 2017 after an £8 million restoration, refurbishment and extension.

The Museum is housed in an ancient church beside the River Thames and next door to Lambeth Palace; in the churchyard – and now the centrepiece of the new garden by Dan Pearson – is the famous tomb of John Tradescant, gardener to King Charles I, and Britain's first celebrated horticultural hero.

The church has been rebuilt to insert five galleries of exhibits of garden history, and with galleries for changing exhibitions. This also provides space for London's busiest programme of garden talks, with over fifty evening events each year, and weekend gatherings including a Spring Plant Fair and Houseplant Festival.

A new extension, The Sackler Garden, has been built around and within a new garden designed by Dan Pearson. This extension has been built to expand our learning programme for schools, families and the local community.

The Museum is an independent charity, which receives no income from central or local government. The traineeship has been generously funded by The National Gardens Scheme and the Museum's Friends group in Leicestershire and Rutland.

### Description of the role

The Garden Museum's Horticultural Traineeship has been designed to give a gardener of particular talent and ambition a chance to explore possibilities for their professional future by placing them at the centre of a busy gardening hub. The particular appeal of this traineeship is in its diversity of experiences, in facilitating introductions to the stars of the gardening world, and involvement in the Museum's engaging public programme. It also includes the rare opportunity to work in many of Britain's finest historic and contemporary designed gardens: past examples have included sponsored placements at Lowther Castle, Great Dixter, Gravetye Manor and Aberglasney Gardens in Wales, and 'shadowing' experiences with garden designers such as Tom Stuart Smith, Sarah Price and Andy Sturgeon. You will also have the opportunity to assist with the build of a show garden at the 2022 Chelsea Flower Show.

Previous Trainees have gone on to roles as independent garden professionals, in media, parks management and tree surgery, and include Matt Collins, our Head Gardener and garden writer for the Telegraph.

The Traineeship will run from April 2022 to April 2023.

### Reports to

Matt Collins (Head Gardener)

Matt is Head Gardener at the Museum, a garden writer (Daily Telegraph, Guardian, Gardens Illustrated) and author of *Forest*, *Walking Among Trees* and *My Tiny Flower Garden*.  
www.mattcollinsgarden.co.uk

## Person Specification

Applicants for the Traineeship should have:

- Recently graduated from a recognised horticultural course, with RHS Level 2 or equivalent
- Interest in garden history
- Interest in contemporary gardening issues
- Ability to communicate with professional colleagues, volunteers and members of the public visiting the garden
- Ability to work independently
- Willingness to attend occasional evening and weekend events
- Ability to work with a team of volunteers towards shared objectives
- Due to the nature of the role lone working is frequent, so the ability to perform demanding physical tasks unassisted is essential

## Main duties and responsibilities

The Trainee will work in the Museum gardens except during placements which take place once per month from between a day to a week (see below) and will add up to 18 days per year. Although the site is ancient the gardens are new, and comprised of the following:

The centrepiece is The Sackler Garden, designed by Dan Pearson and planted in 2017. It is inspired by the continuing story of plant collecting – and will be added to with introductions by contemporary plant collectors – and as a collaboration with Dow Jones Architects in creating a horticultural oasis within a busy urban neighbourhood.

At the front of the site we have laid out a garden designed by Christopher Bradley-Hole in a contrasting formal style, and conceived as an urban piazza. The Bradley-Hole garden is set within a medieval churchyard, the tombs of which have been preserved; this shadier area of the garden has been planted by Matt Collins and is developing its own sense of horticultural place.

Other activities will include:

- Continuing the development of horticultural projects within the museum's public surroundings and the adjacent parks named 'St Mary's Gardens' and 'Old Paradise Gardens', under the exciting 'Lambeth Green' initiative.
- The west side of the extension has been designed as an orangery, which is now used for an eye-catching display of potted and cut flowers, including bunches for sale.

The role includes basic garden maintenance but also encompasses the chance to learn through working in showpiece gardens by major designers. It will also develop people skills as responsibilities will include:

- Working with a team of volunteer gardeners and leading this team towards agreed objectives
- Communicating with visitors and Friends of the Museum (for example, by preparing information on the garden and participating in group tours)
- Supporting horticultural events e.g. the Spring Plant Fair, in which fifteen specialist nurseries exhibit at the Museum, and the exceedingly popular Houseplant Festival
- The opportunity for at least one eye-catching personal planting project to show the Trainee's talent and imagination

## **Placements**

The Traineeship has been designed to offer placements, 'shadowings' and introductions, and applicants should be determined to make the most of this opportunity.

The programme will be designed in discussion with the successful applicant and will range from a day in the offices of a horticultural magazine to site visits with designers and head gardeners, and as mentioned, participation in the build of a Chelsea Flower Show garden. These placements are expected to add up to 18 p.a., which are included in the 4 days per week of the role.

As said, the Trainee should make the most of being present at the events programme at the Museum, which draws together many within the horticultural world.

## **Contract**

The contract is four days per week, including occasional Saturdays

The bursary for the scheme is £18,600 pro rata (£14,880 for 4 days per week) per annum.

## **Benefits**

20% discount in the Museum gift shop. 25% discount in the Garden Café on days when the trainee is working.

## **Equal Opportunities**

The Garden Museum is working towards equal opportunities. The Garden Museum aims to be an inclusive organisation where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, and where there is equal opportunity for all. The Garden Museum respects and values the diversity of its staff and users. Valuing diversity means that we recognise that we all have complex identities made up of many strands. These can include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical and mental aptitudes, nationality, socio-economic status, and religious, political or other beliefs. This means we embrace and celebrate our differences in a positive environment, and are committed to engage with the needs of our diverse staff and users to enable us to achieve our aims.

## Application

Please send CV and a covering letter explaining why you believe you would be a good candidate for the Traineeship to [recruitment@gardenmuseum.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@gardenmuseum.org.uk) marking the subject box 'HORTICULTURAL TRAINEESHIP', by **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February**.

In addition we require a reference from a recent college tutor or similar mentor.

We regret that we are unable to respond to all applicants and you will only hear from us if we wish to invite you to interview.

Short-listed candidates will be interviewed the w/c **21<sup>st</sup> February**.

The Traineeship will run from **April 2022 to April 2023**.