

Role: Garden Trainee	Region / Department: South & West
Reports to: Head Gardener, Dumfries & Galloway	Pay Band: Grade 2 Lower, £24,960 per annum
Location: School of Heritage Gardening, Threave Garden, Castle Douglas, DG7 1RX	Type of Contract: Full time, Fixed term until 15 th August 2025.
COST CENTRE: 2207	ACTIVITY CODE: GAZ

JOB PURPOSE

The Garden Trainee role at Threave Garden will provide the post-holders with development in a broad range of work-based practical horticultural skills as part of the team there. Our aim is to take people who have undertaken a horticultural apprenticeship, an academic horticultural qualification or who have proven practical gardening experience and to develop them further into the rounded skilled, craft professional gardeners that the heritage garden sector, including the National Trust for Scotland, requires.

WHAT WE OFFER

The time at Threave comprises paid day-to-day work in the garden alongside practical training and assessment of skills, knowledge and behaviours, supplemented by coursework designed to enhance trainee learning. This includes fortnightly plant identification tests, completing plant profiles and writing reports for any garden visits.

The Garden Trainee will be overseen by our teaching staff of Gardener Instructors, seasoned experts in their fields who have worked in a wide range of gardens themselves. The garden has three department areas: the grounds (lawns, hedges, herbaceous borders, woody plants, alpines, hard landscapes, aquatic, and bog), the walled garden, and the glasshouses. The Garden Trainee will work in each of these areas across the seasons. The trainee will work alongside the Gardener Instructors, other garden staff, trainees and volunteers, receiving hands-on practical tuition. There will be some classroom time, however this is primarily a practical role where the trainee will spend the majority of the time working and learning in the garden. Study and assignments will be completed largely in their own time. Trainee only shared accommodation within easy walking distance is available for rent.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

While in the garden the Garden Trainee will be formally line managed by the Head Gardener and will have the support, guidance and direction from other members of staff they are allocated to work alongside. The employment is for a fixed period to 15th August 2025 subject to continued progression on the course with acceptable practical performance.

The Trainee will be expected to take responsibility for their learning which will include out of hours study and project work.

ABOUT THE GARDEN

The School of Heritage Gardening, based at Threave Garden was formed in 1960, shortly after the National Trust for Scotland took ownership of the property. For over 60 years we have been teaching horticultural skills and

techniques to aspiring professional gardeners. Former trainees have gone on to have successful careers in the industry, many choosing to stay with the Trust.

Threave Garden is perfectly suited for a range of training requirements, having been created over the years by students, for students, to accommodate a variety of horticultural situations. The garden has a large and diverse plant collection set within an extensive landscape and includes features such as a rock garden, fruit and vegetables, ponds, naturalised bulbs, woodland, orchard, nursery, lawns, herbaceous beds, mixed borders, and glasshouses. This purposefully broad array of garden landscapes, plants and features ensures that trainees are able to receive an extensive and well-rounded education, covering many aspects found in a career in horticulture.

Threave is an approved centre to deliver Royal Horticultural Society qualifications, one of only a handful across Scotland.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, EXPERIENCE & KNOWLEDGE

This is a development role intended to take the Garden Trainee to competent professional gardener level for the heritage garden sector. A horticultural apprenticeship at SVQ Level 2 or equivalent is preferred as a minimum, however places are also open to those with practical or academic horticultural qualifications or who have proven practical gardening experience. Prior achievement at SCQF Level 5 or above is required to underpin learning, as is a relevant level of computer literacy, ability to produce well-prepared diaries and reports and a good level of communication skills in order to converse clearly with colleagues and visitors. Proof of the right to work in the UK is required.

In addition, we are looking for the following:

- Able to follow clear instructions competently
- Willing to work outside in all weathers and undertake physically demanding tasks
- Prior knowledge of relevant Health and Safety procedures would be useful, as would prior experience of horticultural machinery
- Able to use tools and equipment as required for the role
- Good people skills enabling strong relationships both externally and internally, to be built and maintained
- Enthusiasm for horticulture and commitment to completing the training year
- Able to work flexibly as part of a team
- Commitments to our customer service standards – our gardens are open to the public almost every day!

DIMENSIONS AND SCOPE OF JOB

The Garden Trainee

- will work as part of the garden team increasing their knowledge and experience of duties such as soil cultivation, weeding, establishing and maintaining plants and displays, propagation, turf care, using tools equipment and machinery, and much more. This will include physically demanding activities in all weathers
- will take responsibility for their learning which will include significant out of hours study, skills practice and/or project work
- will be required to meet regularly with Trust staff to discuss progress, assessment of which is constantly monitored in order to provide developmental feedback
- will take part in additional training offered by the Trust
- will be based in Threave Garden but may be given opportunities to visit or work in other Trust gardens
- will work 5 days out of any 7, which may include weekends and evenings helping with events and other activities

- may, as confidence and skills develop over time, guide less-experienced volunteers or other Garden Trainees
- will work closely with rest of the property team, and the area Gardens & Designed Landscapes Manager
- will be expected to interact daily with other staff, volunteers and visitors and may be asked to meet donors who are supporting the Trust with finance
- will be expected to participate, contribute, and feature in promotional activities/material for the School and the Trust
- is not a budget holder but will be responsible for submitting any expense claims in good time and in line with allowances

The Key Responsibilities, Scope of Job, and Required Qualifications, Skills, Experience & Knowledge reflect the requirements of the job at the time of issue. The Trust reserves the right to amend these with appropriate consultation and/or request the post-holder to undertake any activities that it believes to be reasonable within the broad scope of the job or his/her general abilities.

OUR PACKAGE

Employee card – free entry for you, one other adult and any of your children to National Trust for Scotland and National trust properties as well as a 20% discount on most purchases in National Trust for Scotland retail outlets.

Pension scheme – auto-enrolment into the NEST pension scheme with option to join our group pension scheme to make a more substantial contribution to your retirement.

Holiday – we offer a generous annual holiday entitlement as soon as you join the Trust. For full time employees it's 30 days plus 7 ½ days around the festive period.

Offers and discounts –discounts through Reward Gateway and 20% discount on all National Trust for Scotland holiday cottages and 10% discount on all self-catering accommodation through Sykes Holiday Cottages.

Independent support services – Free and confidential **Employee Assistance Programme** giving unlimited access to a 24-hour helpline.

APPLICATIONS

Interested applicants should forward their Curriculum Vitae (CV) or an Application Form to the People Services Department (Applications) by email via workforus@nts.org.uk, by Sunday 19th January 2025.

Please ensure your CV includes your full name and contact details, the CV file sent to us should be titled your first initial and surname. When submitting your CV please state the position and job location of the vacancy you are applying for in the subject title or body of your email: For example "Gardener - Culzean"

Placement is likely to commence early 2025.