

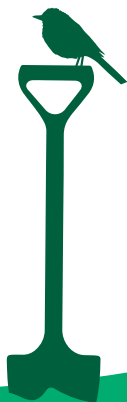
# Trainee Placements 2025-2026



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Trainees at Wrest Park  
Photo credit: Mike Harrington

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# About the HBGTP

The Historic and Botanic Garden Training Programme (HBGTP) is managed by English Heritage and supported by the National Garden Scheme.

The HBGTP is an unrivalled opportunity for passionate individuals committed to establishing a career in horticulture. You can earn a salary while developing your professional skills in some of the best historic and botanic gardens that the UK has to offer!

The programme has benefited over 300 trainees to date. Amazing historic gardens such as Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Trentham Estate join us for 2025 alongside notable 2024 placement gardens such as Walmer Castle and Gardens and Newby Hall.

## What's involved?

- 12 months full-time, paid practical placement in an historic or botanic garden.
- Work alongside the gardening team throughout the seasons.
- Learn about the key aspects of managing an historic garden.
- Develop practical skills and increase plant knowledge.
- Complete 3 projects, a daily technical journal and weekly plant identification tests.



Former trainee Hannah pruning in the sub-tropical conservatory at Wrest Park

# 2025 Applications

When applying, you will be asked to select your 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice of placement garden. Or for those who fancy an adventure, why not leave your choices open and select 'any'? With such a variety of gardens to choose from, we have keyed out some crucial information in this brochure to help guide you in the selection process.

Further information on the programme, application and selection process can be found by going to our website:

[www.hbgtp.org.uk](http://www.hbgtp.org.uk)



The best things about the HBGTP are:

"It gave me the chance to connect with a peer group who share my interest in horticulture. Completing the projects allowed me to work academically as well as practically, and I received considered, professional feedback on my work. HBGTP also offered me the opportunity to work in a wonderful location!"

– Genevieve Slater,  
Former trainee at Aldourie Castle

# Placement Gardens 2025

## Garden Name:

## Places available:

1. Aldourie Castle	1
2. Audley End House and Garden (English Heritage)	2
3. Birmingham Botanical Gardens	1
4. Fulham Palace House and Garden	1
5. Hatfield House	1
6. Helmingham Hall Gardens	1
7. Newby Hall	1
8. Osborne (English Heritage)	2
9. Picton Castle and Gardens	1
10. The Bishop's Palace and Gardens	1
11. Trentham Estate	1
12. Walmer Castle and Gardens (English Heritage)	1
13. Winterbourne House and Garden	1
14. Wrest Park (English Heritage)	2

## Placement Garden Key



– Nearest Public Transport (miles)



– Glasshouse



– National Plant Collection



– Productive Garden



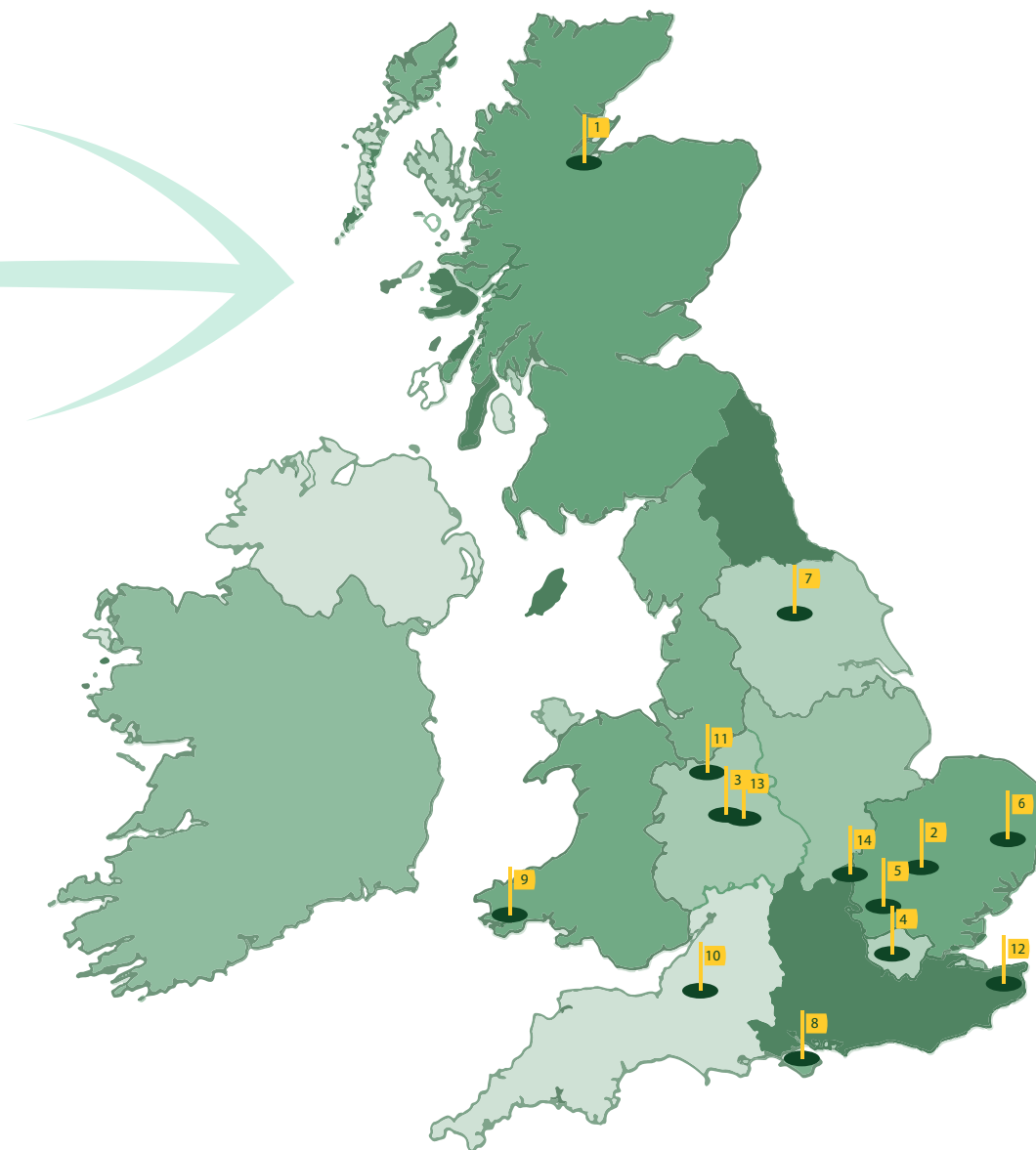
– Accommodation



– Woodland



– Walled Garden







## Aldourie Castle



Aldourie Castle garden has been redesigned by Tom Stuart-Smith, but contains historic elements such as the arboretum and glasshouses.

A trainee at Aldourie would gain experience working with fruit and vegetables, as well as ornamental plants and trees. They would be involved in regenerating the arboretum and would have the chance to use a range of garden machinery.



## Audley End House and Gardens



Audley End is an historic 100 acre site which comprises a wonderful selection of garden areas, including a beautifully restored parterre and a 2 acre organic Victorian walled kitchen garden.

Rotating around the different areas of the garden trainees will be given the opportunity to learn in an environment that offers a hugely varied range of skills and techniques.



## Birmingham Botanical Gardens



First opened in 1832, Birmingham Botanical Gardens (BBG) is an internationally accredited botanic garden. The 15-acre site houses an outstanding collection of over 10,000 documented taxa (30,000 plants), including some of unique scientific value.

A trainee at BBG will rotate through the different garden areas, attend on-site flower shows and gain insight into an exciting major glasshouse restoration project.



## Fulham Palace House and Garden



Fulham Palace garden is 13 acres including a 2.5 acre walled garden, which includes a parterre, orchard, vegetable beds and wall and arch trained fruit.

Fulham Palace garden provides a wide range of horticultural opportunities that trainees will be involved in throughout the 12-month placement. Seasonal tasks include propagation, plant production, vegetable growing and much more.





## Hatfield House



Hatfield House garden covers 42 acres and date from the early 17th century.

The gardens include orchards, fountains, water paterres, terraces, herb gardens and a foot maze.

A trainee will gain experience in a wide range of horticultural practices, across all areas of the garden, including the use of various machinery such as compact tractors and ride-on mowers.



## Helmingham Hall Gardens



The Grade I listed Helmingham Hall, built in 1510, is surrounded by 8.5 acres of traditionally styled gardens and a deer park. The grounds are composed of many garden areas, with the heart being the Walled Garden.

A trainee will undertake a wide range of horticultural tasks such as propagation, developing borders and seasonal bed displays.



## Newby Hall



Newby Hall dates back to the 17th century. The garden extends to 25 acres and offers a wide-range of horticultural interests with both formal and informal areas, including a National Collection of Cornus.

A trainee will be exposed to a range of tasks and as a result will establish a broad horticultural skill base. Full training will be given on the use of various machinery such as compact tractors and ride-on mowers.



## Osborne



The garden at Osborne has been restored to its Victorian appearance. It is made up of formal terraces, woodland, wildflower meadows, an ornamental walled garden, as well as the Swiss Garden with its small productive plots.

Osborne offers trainees a bit of everything, from formal bedding and lawn care to fruit training and glasshouse work, all set in a magnificent landscape overlooking the Solent.



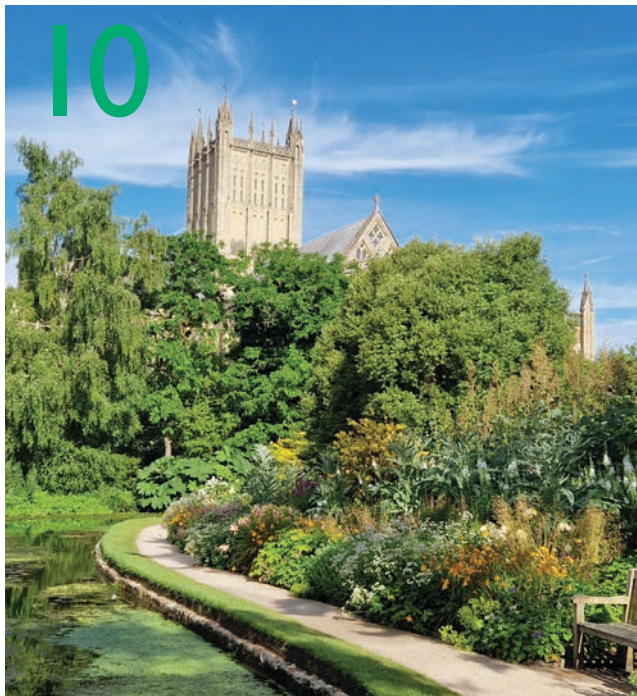


## Picton Castle and Gardens



Picton Castle dates back to the 13th century and is surrounded by 60 acres of extensive lawns, a recently restored Victorian Walled Garden, an newly created educational area and a 30-acre Woodland Garden.

A trainee at Picton will learn all aspects of maintaining and developing a large historic garden, including the use of a wide range of gardening equipment, of which full training is provided.



## The Bishop's Palace and Gardens



This 14-acre garden is nestled in the heart of Wells, and there is evidence it existed before the Palace itself. It features styles ranging from the gardenesque and English garden style to the more contemporary.

A trainee will gain experience in lawn care, propagation, border maintenance, and vegetable production.



## Trentham Estate



Trentham Estate is an award-winning gardens covering 725 acres with a 50-acre formal garden. It has a rich horticultural legacy, and is currently undergoing exciting, transformative projects with external designers.

A trainee at Trentham will gain experience working with new and historical planting schemes, as well as pest and disease management, border, path, lawn and hedge maintenance.



## Walmer Castle and Gardens



The gardens at Walmer date back to the 18th century. They include decorative shrub borders, a wildflower meadow, formal bedding, a kitchen, orchard and cutting garden, decorative glasshouses and a double herbaceous border flanked by a mature cloud hedge.

A trainee will be supported by an established team, and will work across all areas of the garden, gaining a wide variety of skills.



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## Winterbourne Botanic Garden



Winterbourne Garden is part of the University of Birmingham and contains rare plants from around the world, some housed in their range of glasshouses.

A trainee will have the opportunity to train on a wide variety of garden machinery. They will also acquire skills in glasshouse management, lawn care, fruit and vegetable production, propagation, and the use of a plant records system.

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## Wrest Park



The gardens of Wrest Park are unique, with a range of surviving garden layouts dating back to the late 17th century. The site comprises woodland areas, waterways, a walled garden and French and Italian parterres.

Trainees gain varied experience from the site, such as fruit pruning, bedding schemes, herbaceous borders, woodland and arboretum work, glasshouse maintenance as well as restoration work.

“We have taken trainees at Osborne for more than 15 years. Following their time with us they have found employment in all areas of horticulture, from nursery work and landscaping to becoming head gardeners in this country and abroad. I’m sure our friendly and welcoming team helps trainees to get the most out of their time with us.”

– Toby Beasley  
Head Gardener, Osborne House



“I have valued the amount of input and energy from my Head Gardener and the support from those on the HBGTP. All of my learning and what I have achieved during my 12 month placement wouldn't have been possible without any of them.

Overall, the abundance and varied tasks throughout the year have given me plenty of skill sets and I feel more competent to take on any role.”

– Aaron Belcher  
Former HBGTP trainee at Tregothnan

For more information on our placement gardens and the trainee experience, visit our website:

[www.hbgtp.org.uk](http://www.hbgtp.org.uk)



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Am I eligible to apply?

Anyone over the age of 18 is eligible to apply, but must be able to demonstrate some prior paid or voluntary experience working in the horticulture sector.

## How many places are available in 2025?

There are 17 traineeships available in 2025, with some gardens hosting more than one placement.

## How do I apply?

Application is done online. From the start of March 2025 an 'apply now' button will appear on our website homepage. Click this button and you will be taken to an external job application page to complete an application form.

## Can I apply for more than one placement garden?

When applying, you will be asked to select your 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice of placement garden. You can also select 'any'.

## How do you select candidates?

Applications will be reviewed by HBGTP staff and gardeners at the chosen placement gardens. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to in-person interviews at their chosen placement gardens. These will take place during May and June, and will involve a practical and theory test.

## What if my application is unsuccessful?

Applications open every March so we would encourage you to reapply the following year. We also have a list of alternative schemes on our website: <http://hbgtp.org.uk/about-the-programme/alternative-schemes-and-careers>

## What do I get for completing a traineeship?

You will get an 'HBGTP Certificate of Completion' along with 12 months' experience in a prestigious garden, providing that first crucial step towards a career in horticulture.

## What does a traineeship involve?

You will experience a 12 month traineeship in an historic or botanic placement garden. You will be expected to work a standard working week alongside the garden team. You will also be given a half day per week for study.

You will complete 3 projects, maintain a daily technical journal and undertake weekly plant identification tests which you will submit to the programme for feedback.

As a trainee you will also be fully funded to attend an autumn trainee seminar and summer study tour. Further details can be found in the trainee handbook at: <http://hbgtp.org.uk/placements/trainee-handbook/>

## When does the placement start?

Trainees are usually required to commence work in the first working week of September 2025.

## What about funding?

Candidates are paid a salary of at least the National Living Wage.

## Does the HBGTP offer accommodation?

Some gardens offer accommodation (please see garden listings on pages 6-14). However, you must be prepared to meet the costs of your accommodation from your own salary.



## Trainee Thoughts



"I loved the emphasis on practical learning, balanced out with projects you could cater to your interests and the needs of the placement garden. It was a really good opportunity to reflect and develop horticultural skills! Meeting fellow trainees on trips was very fun, and a great way to make connections. I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the traineeship, and I would recommend it to anyone wanting to develop their practical skills."

– Emily Hough, Former trainee at University of Dundee Botanic Garden

I think from a practical perspective the programme really prepares you for a career in horticulture - I developed a range of horticultural skills, networks with fellow professionals and insight into the industry. Through completing the HBGTP, I feel that I'm aware of the opportunities and networks that are available which may help me navigate this career path.

– Madeleine Cummings,  
Former Trainee at Ness Botanic Gardens



"I really enjoyed the Trainee Seminar week and feel as though I have made some great connections. It has definitely broadened my network and boosted my confidence when talking to people about the horticulture industry."

– Aimee Copeland,  
Former Trainee at Mount Stewart

## What should I do next?

Apply online at  
[www.hbgtp.org.uk](http://www.hbgtp.org.uk)

Apply between 1st March and 23rd March 2025,  
for a September 2025 start!

If you would like to discuss a placement on the programme, please contact the Programme Training Manager, Elinor Davies, during working hours from Monday to Thursday on:

Tel: 07979 401784

Email: [Elinor.Davies@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:Elinor.Davies@english-heritage.org.uk)



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# Previous HBGTP trainees on their summer Study Tour



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