



THE EIGHTH YEAR



April 2023 - March 2024



**BANKSIDE
OPEN SPACES
TRUST**



FOREWORD



Nicholas Woolf
OBE KStJ
MASTER,
The Worshipful
Company of
Gardeners

Four courses ran in the eighth year of Future Gardeners. Courses 17, 18 and 19 in Waterloo and an additional course in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Future Gardeners continues to be successful in its objective of providing an entry level qualification to those seeking a career in horticulture. Its students are both those who have struggled to find their niche and those changing careers, everyone learns from each other.

The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, of which I was Master in 2023/24, is proud of this initiative and of its support for this well-recognised programme, which is being delivered so well by Bankside Open Spaces Trust. It has been a pleasure to present certificates to graduating students and experience the buzz of the important graduation events. While presenting, I 'interviewed' most of the students so they could share their stories with everyone present; each one positive and fascinating to us all. Every student also paid tribute to the staff involved, Louisa and Shereen, as well as the many partner organisations.

It is the mix of organisations and contacts that makes this such a successful programme, which will grow and develop in different ways in the future.

Nicholas Woolf

What is Future Gardeners?

Future Gardeners aims to provide horticultural training to people who are long-term unemployed or who have face challenges in their lives and would benefit from gaining confidence, skills and the opportunity of training and employment.

Developed by prominent organisations in the industry, including Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST), The Worshipful Company of Gardeners, The Royal Parks Guild and Walworth Garden, Future Gardeners is run by BOST working in partnership with numerous other organisations to ensure its success.

Participants are given the opportunity to gain the skills they need to be work-ready and get an entry level horticultural job or go onto further training in the industry.

Although Future Gardeners is suited to a wide variety of people, it targets those with the most need, such as people not in education or training, the long-term unemployed, those who cannot afford other horticultural courses, and people with learning needs or disabilities.



FG19 student on work
experience at Kew
Gardens

The course is practically focused, and includes the following:

- A City and Guilds qualification in Practical Horticulture Level 2 at Walworth Garden.
- Practical experience in BOST community parks and gardens.
- Work experience with horticultural industry leaders including Royal Parks Greenwich, Chelsea Physic Garden, Crown Estates Paving Commission, Kew Gardens, Frognaal Gardens, Maylim and Willerby Landscapes.
- Research visits and workdays with outside organisations in the horticultural sector: Chiswick House and Gardens, the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Garden Wisley, Kew Gardens, National Trust's Morden Hall, Fulham Palace House & Garden and Hampton Court Palace and Gardens.
- Horticultural industry expert talks to inspire students about their future careers.
- CV building, help with applying for jobs and interview techniques to ensure students are work-ready once they complete the course.
- One-to-one individually tailored mentoring and support aimed at building confidence.



FG17 students
learning at
Walworth Garden.

The need for Future Gardeners

The shortage of skilled professionals entering the horticultural industry in the UK has now been deemed 'critical' by the Royal Horticultural Society.

This is due to three factors:

- the current ageing workforce,
- lack of apprentices going into the industry at entry level,
- and difficulties in recruiting for skilled vacancies.

(The 2019 Horticulture Sector Skills Survey undertaken by Pye Tait for the Ornamental Horticultural Roundtable Group (OHRG)).

With the OHRG predicting that the skills shortage will seriously restrict future business growth and with horticulture contributing over £9 billion to the UK economy each year, **there are sound economic reasons to address this skills shortage.**

Unemployment can affect mental health, confidence and self-esteem as well as lead to debt and poor physical health. A 2017 study by the UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies showed that if you are young and unemployed, you are more than twice as likely to have mental health needs.

At the same time, there is a need for horticulture to be presented as an accessible (no barriers to entry), fulfilling career choice to many who may not have thought of it as being an option for them, especially those who have limited or no qualifications and who would prefer to have a career outdoors.

Future Gardeners is designed to give people the skills and knowledge they need to explore the horticultural industry with confidence.

Course Outcomes



Future Gardeners April 2023 - March 2024, three courses:

17

May 2023 to July 2023

14 participated

14 graduated

**79% in horticultural work,
education or volunteering**

Awarded Outstanding Student

Jane is volunteering at Kew Gardens one day a week and working with Fresh Horticultural Careers for the rest of the week.

Jessie secured a traineeship with the National Trust at Morden Hall.

George is now working at the Southwark Diocese.

Yago is working for Wilder, a local horticultural company.

Daniel secured a horticultural apprenticeship with Clarion Housing.

Jennifer secured a traineeship at Chelsea Physic Garden.

Mohammed is continuing to volunteer at Loughborough Farm.

Angie continued to volunteer with BOST while looking for work.

Natanya moved to Glasgow and is looking for a job in the community gardening sector.

Giulio secured an apprenticeship with idverde at Kensington Gardens.

Jaeson secured a traineeship with Fulham Palace Gardens.

Sharon has done some self-employed landscaping and is working on a community garden in Ealing.

Angel is working as a garden assistant at Beeching & Co and gained a place on a paid internship at RHS Wisley.

18

**September 2023 to
November 2023**

14 participated

13 graduated

**79% in horticultural work,
education or volunteering**



Cleo is now working for the Co-op New Housing Association in Waterloo.

Timothy is working as a horticulturalist at ZSL London Zoo.

Emma is working for Father Nature.

Khanyisile gained employment with Frognal Gardens.

Julius is continuing to volunteer.

Joel is working for The Prince's Trust.

Fahima continued her L2 studies at Walworth Garden.

Finley is looking for employment.

Angie is looking for employment.

Jordan left the course due to personal circumstances.

Millie is now a grower at Abbey Home Farm in the Cotswolds.

Awarded Outstanding Student

Wakano gained a place on a paid internship at RHS Wisley and also a part-time job at Kew Gardens.

Awarded Outstanding Student

Caroline is now working as a sessional gardener at BOST.

Awarded Outstanding Student

Zaida is working for Frognal Gardens and volunteering at Streatham Common Community Garden.

19

January 2024 to

March 2024

15 participated

13 graduated

80% in horticultural work,
education or volunteering



Awarded Outstanding Student

Deesh has a seasonal job at Kew Gardens.

Awarded Outstanding Student

Adien is an indoor plant technician with Mitie.

Veronica has a seasonal job at Kew Gardens.

Emma has a seasonal job at Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Association.

Nargiz is volunteering in local gardens after relocating out of London.

Alan is working part-time at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Samantha has a seasonal job at Kew Gardens.

Inder has a seasonal job at Kew Gardens.

Ingrid is applying for jobs.

Lucy has a seasonal job at Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Association.

Daniel is working for Willerby Landscapes at their Springfield site in Tooting.

Zhasmina is continuing to study her L2 at Walworth Gardens.

Katherine continues to volunteer at Sutton Community Farm.

Steven left the course due to personal circumstances.

Peter left the course due to personal circumstances.

Student feedback from our eighth year



"The teaching at Walworth is great! And also the access to employability resources and regular emails from Louisa with job adverts have been really useful."

"I've loved the course so much. I think it's really special and I value the fact that students are allowed to take part at their own pace and never forced to share if they don't feel able but still supported at every step."

"It was great :)"

"I enjoyed my time on the course, I learnt more about horticulture, met new people and developed a further understanding about the gardening industry."

"Really enjoyed the course and really appreciate the unique access to the horticulture industry as well as new horticultural and application / interview skills."

"It was a wonderful and helpful experience!"

"I am incredibly thankful to Louisa for giving me the opportunity and trust in securing the course."

"It has been a life changing experience, thank you so much for your help and support."

Student feedback from our eighth year

"I cannot sing the praises of this course highly enough. I've never felt so supported, encouraged and empowered. I almost cried walking in on the first day because the atmosphere was so warm, positive and welcoming. That atmosphere has continued throughout the course. I don't think I would've learnt so much as I feel I have without it."

"I really enjoyed this course, it was really fun and informative and I learnt lots about plants and horticulture. It's given me the encouragement to lead a community garden group where I live."

"Yes, it has been very enjoyable and helped me to understand horticulture."

"I am pleased to have been chosen to be on this course, really valuable."

"It has been a fantastic course, I have learnt so much from all of our visits as well as our regular learning and practical sessions at Walworth Garden, which is such a nourishing place to be. The course instructors have all been fantastic and it's been amazing learning alongside lovely people on the course. It has transformed my understanding of green spaces in London and beyond - plants, growing, identifying species and so much more. I feel empowered to be able to think of myself as a gardener... Thank you for everything. I would recommend to anyone considering a career change or who wants to get a foot in the door of an incredible world!"



The Programme

1 City and Guilds Level 2 Qualification in Practical Horticulture

The course at Walworth Garden covered the following:

- Plant nomenclature, terminology and identification
- Establishing propagation material
- Maintaining plants outdoors
- Monitoring and maintaining health and safety
- Maintaining and developing personal performance
- Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with others
- Preparing the ground for seeding and planting
- Establishing plants and seeds in soil
- Maintaining the appearance of decorative amenity areas
- Maintaining equipment and machines

With Project Manager Louisa Mansfield at Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST), the students learned the theory and practice of:

- General garden maintenance at local community gardens
- Working at local BOST sites
- Learning to identify weeds
- Identification of trees in the local area

FG19 student on work
experience at Kew
Gardens



2 Industry Expert Talks

A variety of speakers from the industry came and spoke to the students about their jobs and journeys into the industry, including:

Marian Barker, Fresh Horticultural Careers

Pauline Buchanan-Black, BOST Trustee

Simon and Andrew, Grosvenor Estates

Paul Rochford and Mike Fitt, Worshipful Company of Gardeners

Noel Brock and Dindy Thomas, Frognal Gardens

Barney Gilks, Bankside Open Spaces Trust

Jack Harrison, Bankside Open Spaces Trust

Richard Chokesy, Social Farms and Gardens

Hazel Gardiner, Floral Designer

Lewis George, Royal Horticultural Society



Noel Brock, Frognal Gardens



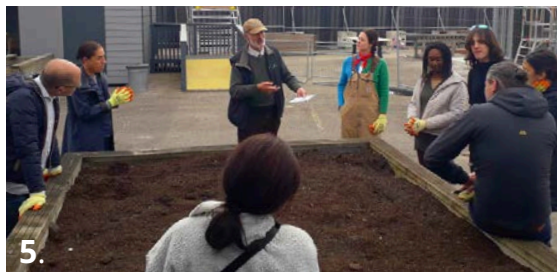
Hazel Gardiner, Floral Designer



Richard Chokesy, Social Farms and Gardens



Simon and Andrew from Grosvenor Estates



1. Mike Fitt OBE
2. Pauline Buchanan-Black
3. Lewis George
4. Jack Harrison
5. Paul Rochford

3 Employment mentoring

Future Gardeners Project Manager Louisa Mansfield supported students with careers advice and employability skills. The aim is that all students have an up-to-date gardening CV and are confident in both applying for jobs and attending interviews by the end of the course.



FG19 students practice interview techniques at BOST's Living Space.

The students were helped in their employment journey with a mixture of presentations, workshops and a weekly 'Job Club'. Held outside of course days, the club offers 1-2-1 help with whatever the students need in their job search. In the post-course survey carried out, 100% of respondents who had attended Job Club said it was useful for updating their CV.

All students were also introduced to Fresh Horticultural Careers - a specialist recruitment agency for the garden maintenance, landscaping and horticulture industries throughout the UK - and were assisted in registering for both permanent and temporary jobs.



4 Garden Research Visits

Visits were made to The Charterhouse, Morden Hall, Fulham Palace, Crossbones Garden, Lambeth Palace and RHS Wisley Gardens. Future Gardeners also attended the Royal Parks Guild 'Discovery Day' at Hampton Court and Community Week at Kew Gardens.

RHS Garden Wisley

Our trips to RHS Wisley funded by an RHS bursary continued with all three cohorts of students visiting the garden across the year.

"The trip to Wisley was ever so inspiring. Not only because it was a beautiful space but the staff who gave us the tour around the site and behind the scenes were incredibly lovely and supportive. I have learnt there are so many different job roles in horticulture. It has brought a smile on my face to know these amazing roles exist and also that hopefully one day I would really like to work at Wisley myself."



FG19 at RHS Garden Wisley

"The trip yesterday was a brilliant opportunity to visit RHS Wisley to experience the gardens and the amazing plants that feature in each border."



FG17 at
RHS Garden Wisley

2023 Royal Parks Guild Discovery Day

We were so pleased our Future Gardeners students were invited to the Royal Parks Guild Discovery Day in 2023, hosted by Historic Royal Palaces at Hampton Court.

There were lots of interactive moments during the day. Everyone was asked to discuss 80 (AI generated) roles associated with horticulture and park management, as well as the idea of a 'National Nature Service'. This idea would offer every child leaving school an opportunity to work in a nature related role for a year.

A panel discussion was held chaired by Ruth Lin Wong Holmes (Vice Chair of the Guild) with Emma McNamara (National Trust), Jane Pelly (Royal Parks), Billy Knowles (Director of YES, supporting New to Nature for the National Lottery Heritage Fund) and Tom Young (Nuffield Scholar for the Worshipful Company of Gardeners).

It was a lively discussion about tackling the climate change emergency, equity, equality, diversity, inclusion and justice alongside caring for historic landscapes.



FG students and graduates in attendance at the Discovery Day.

Garden tours enabled apprentices, trainees, school children and delegates to explore the gardens guided by Historic Royal Palaces gardeners. This included seeing a hedge planting demonstration, how shire horses help with landscape management, an archaeological investigation information stop, and many beautiful and fascinating features. The emerging talent section of the day brought to the microphone three brilliant people who gave us an insight into their journey into horticulture.

Back in the Garden Room the final part of the day included thanks to everyone, a special message from Chris Packham (organised by Richard Pollard of the Tree Council) and a song by the Tree Council Ambassador, Benjamin Haycock who took to the stage and pounded out his ‘Singing Force for Nature’ anthem.



Tours of Hampton Court Palace grounds.



Kew Gardens

Community Open Week visit

The FG17 students took part in the annual community open week held at Kew Gardens. This was a chance for the students to be able to find out more about the Community and Access Learning Programmes at Kew.

We attended two fascinating science lectures both of which were delivered by Kew scientists. The first was all about the *Ensete ventricosum* plant also known as the 'false banana', which is a staple crop in Ethiopia. The second talk was exploring the use of plants to protect against pests. It was so beneficial for the students to learn about this topic from Kew scientists. The rest of the day was spent taking part in workshops and exploring the garden.



Students enjoy a range of activities during Community Week.

Other garden research visits

Other research visits were to Lambeth Palace, Provender Nursery, Crossbones Graveyard and Garden of Remembrance and Kew Gardens.



FG18 on a trip to Kew Gardens.



FG18 at Crossbones Graveyard.



FG17 at Lambeth Palace.

5 Work Taster days

The students went to Morden Hall, Chiswick House & Gardens and Fulham Palace House & Gardens to work with the garden teams there for the day. There was also a working visit to Camberwell Triangle Community Garden where we helped plant a bed with Garden on a Roll and also build a pond and various other tasks in the pouring rain!



- 1.FG19 building a pond at Camberwell Triangle Community Garden.
- 2.FG17 student pruning roses at Morden Hall.
- 3.FG18 student at Chiswick House and Gardens.

6 Work Experience

Work experience placements this year included Royal Parks Greenwich, Chelsea Physic Garden, Crown Estates Paving Commission, Willerby Landscapes, Maylim, Royal College of Physicians, Grosvenor Estates, Kew Gardens, Frogna Gardens and Hampton Court Palace.



Future Gardeners students on work experience at Kew, Grosvenor Estates and Jubilee Gardens.

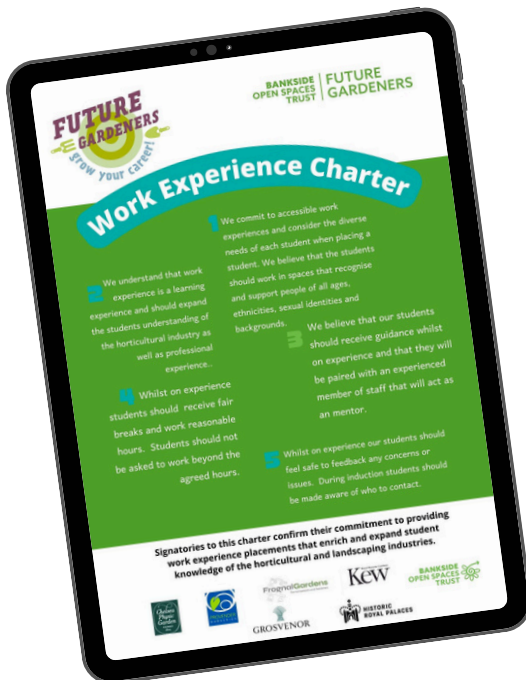


Future Gardeners students on work experience at Hampton Court, Chelsea Physic Gardens and Marlborough Sports Garden.

Work Experience Charter

Meaningful work experience is a key component of Future Gardeners and is fundamental to supporting our students into long-term careers in the industry. Understanding this, we have created the **Future Gardeners Work Placement Charter** that sets a benchmark for purposeful and supportive work experience opportunities in the horticultural industry.

We already have several organisations as signatories including Kew Gardens, Royal Historical Palaces (Hampton Court and Kensington Palace), Grosvenor Estates, Froggnal Gardens, Chelsea Physic Gardens and Provender Nurseries.



Championing Horticultural Careers

In early 2024, the Future Gardeners project team submitted written evidence to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee's inquiry into Education and Careers in land-based sectors. The committee sees MPs look at career pathways into the sectors, which cover outdoor jobs like farming and horticulture, how the sector can attract and retain workers, and what its future workforce might look like.

Bankside Open Spaces Trust submitted written evidence to the committee from Louisa Mansfield and Shereen Chung-Blake. Our evidence focused on the value of environmental horticulture, its benefits to the economy, and proven track record of tackling inequalities in employment for minority groups and those with disabilities. We asked that environmental horticulture be included in the government's green jobs and skills definitions and that the value of this sector is recognised.



Future Gardeners at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

In May 2023, we launched a pilot project of Future Gardeners at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP). This programme was open to applicants from the neighbouring boroughs and is, as ever, designed to enable people to gain the core skills they need to access entry level jobs in the horticulture industry.

The course was run by Bankside Open Spaces Trust in partnership with the London Legacy Development Corporation, The Skills Centre and idverde.



The course consisted of visits to Victoria Park, West Ham Park, The Tree Musketeers and the Sky Garden and studying for a City and Guilds L1 Award with *idverde*. There were employability workshops and talks from those already in the industry along with a two week work experience placement with *idverde* in QEOP.

There is a full report on this course available, please email louisa@bost.org.uk for a copy.



QEOP FG students at Victoria Park, Garden On A Roll and studying for their qualification.

Student Achievements

A graduation event was held for each group of students at various venues across London with a variety of influential speakers from the industry to welcome and inspire the students into their horticultural journeys.

Venues were the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park for both FG17 and the inaugural QEOP students, The Hilton, Tower Bridge, for FG18 and The Borough Welsh Chapel for FG19. Speakers were Hazel Gardiner of Hazel Gardiner Designs, David Richardson, President of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture, and Flo Headlam, TV presenter and garden designer.



FG17 and QEOP 1 graduation event at the Olympic Park.



FG18 graduation
at The Hilton Tower
Bridge.



FG19 graduation at
The Borough Welsh Chapel.



FG17 graduate.

Publicity

Future Gardeners had a stand at two job fairs to promote the programme, one with our referral partner Single Homeless Project and one in collaboration with the London Wildlife Trust at their Green Jobs Fair.

We also promoted the course at Southwark Community volunteering fair, Southwark College Course Open Day and attended employment days at Peckham and Streatham Job Centres organised by Green Skills Hub.



Bankside Open Spaces Trust and Future Gardeners display stand at Southwark Community volunteering fair.



Shereen with former Minister of State for the Department for Work and Pensions Jo Churchill at The Green Skills Hub Employment day at Peckham Job Centre.

Publicity

HortWeek

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Questions with graduating Future Gardeners



The Future Gardeners shaping the future of horticulture

Future Gardeners is a training and skills programme with a difference. With inclusivity at the heart, it is more than just a chance to learn new skills.

Friday 2 February 2024



Unemployed people transform 'anti-social behaviour hotspot' into Camberwell community garden

Roughly 80 per cent of volunteers go on to secure jobs in horticulture

by [Herbie Russell](#) — 18th March 2024 in Camberwell, community, News



- Hort Week, July 2023 and Dec 2023.
- Roots To Work Blog, Feb 2024.
- Southwark News, March 2024.

Award-winning Programme

Also this year Future Gardeners obtained two awards. Project manager **Louisa Mansfield** received the **outstanding contribution award from the Royal Parks Guild**.

The Chartered Institute of Horticulture awarded Future Gardeners the **Norah Stucken Award** for projects which have made a significant impact within horticulture.



Louisa accepting the Norah Stucken Award from Richard Barley, Vice President of the CiH.



Future Gardener Myles also won the Royal Parks Guild award for outstanding student.

Success of the course

During the 2023-2024 year, 43 students enrolled and 40 completed the course, a completion rate of 93%.

73% of those who have completed the course have now gone into employment or further training in the industry.

Employers include Frogna! Gardens, Willerby Landscapes, Bankside Open Spaces Trust, Clarion Housing, Chelsea Physic Garden, Fulham Palace Garden and Kew Gardens.

In our eighth year:



53% of students were from global majority background.



47% were white British or other white background.

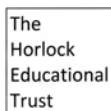


63% of students had a disability or long-term health condition, 37% had no disability.



58% of Future Gardeners students were female, 42% male.

WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS



WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

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OUR PARKLIFE
Love life. Love park.



St Mungo's
Ending homelessness
Rebuilding lives





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