BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST

Future Gardeners Annual Report

April 2025–March 2026

the 10th year

FUTURE GARDENERS

grow your career!



Future Gardeners 23



Future Gardeners 24



Future Gardeners 25

Foreword



This year marks a very special milestone for Bankside Open Spaces Trust as we celebrate ten years of Future Gardeners. Since the programme began in 2016, it has supported hundreds of people facing barriers to opportunity, develop horticultural skills, confidence and experience, opening the door to rewarding careers in the industry.

Future Gardeners is about much more than learning to garden. It is about creating employment opportunities for individuals from a wide range of backgrounds to discover their potential. Watching students grow in confidence and develop the skills to take their next steps into a horticultural career is one of the most rewarding aspects of the programme.

Our success would not be possible without the incredible support of our funders, partners, gardens and horticultural organisations.

Their willingness to share knowledge, provide work experience and create employment opportunities has helped turn training into genuine career pathways. We are hugely grateful to everyone who has supported Future Gardeners over the past decade.

Our anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on how far the programme has developed over ten years. The horticultural sector needs skilled and enthusiastic new gardeners, and Future Gardeners continues to provide a valuable route into the profession.

I would like to thank every student, speaker, partner, funder and member of the Future Gardeners team who has contributed to the programme's success. A special thank you goes to Louisa Mansfield, our Programmes Manager, who has led Future Gardeners since its launch in 2016 and to her colleague, Shereen Chung-Blake. Their passion, commitment and belief in the potential of every student has been central to the programme's success. Most importantly, congratulations to all our students, who have made incredible achievements over the past ten years and we are very much looking forward to the next ten years of the programme.

Charlotte Gilsenan
CEO, Bankside Open Spaces Trust

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

What is Future Gardeners?

The course is delivered by Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST) and works in partnership with numerous other organisations to ensure its success. This year we have partnered with Morley College to deliver the City and Guilds Level 1 accredited qualifications across all the programmes which have been taught by Shereen Chung Blake, Future Gardeners Programme Coordinator.

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 the course is suited to a wide variety of people, it targets those who can gain the most from the programme, such as people not in education or training, the long-term unemployed, those who cannot afford other horticultural courses, and people who have additional needs.

The course is practically focused, and includes the following:

- A City and Guilds L1 Qualification in Practical Horticulture.
- Practical experience at BOST community parks and gardens.
- Work experience with horticultural industry leaders including The Royal Parks, Chelsea Physic Garden, Crown Estates Paving Commission, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Frognal Gardens, Royal College of Physicians, Victoria Park, Nurture Landscapes Bowles & Wyer and Blakedown Landscapes.
- Research visits and workdays with organisations in the horticultural sector: Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Garden Wisley, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, National Trust's The Red House, Inner Temple Garden, Charterhouse Gardens, Fulham Palace House & Garden, Chelsea Physic Garden, Yes Make Collective, Q&S Landscaping at Exchange Square, Burgess Park Nursery and The Royal Park's Kensington 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.

The ongoing need for Future Gardeners

The shortage of skilled professionals entering the horticultural industry, one of the original drivers behind the creation of Future Gardeners, remains a pressing issue. As demand for green spaces and green skills grows, so too does the need for a new generation of skilled horticultural professionals.

Horticulture is a significant and growing industry. Across the UK, environmental horticulture contributed £38 billion to GDP and supported 722,000 jobs in 2023. The sector has the potential to grow to £51.2 billion and support 763,000 jobs by 2030.

Yet this growth depends on having the skilled workforce to support it. The RHS 'State of Gardening Report 2025' identifies declining horticultural skills, recruitment challenges and limited routes for career progression as significant concerns. It highlights the need for greater investment in training and for horticulture to be recognised as an important green skill.

This need is particularly relevant in London. The capital's parks, gardens, trees and green spaces are essential to the city's health, environment and quality of life, while demand for green skills is increasing. Recent Greater London Authority research identifies gardeners, landscape gardeners and horticultural trades as occupations where demand is expected to increase, alongside wider growth in London's green economy.

Horticulture offers a powerful opportunity as it can provide an alternative pathway for people who may not have thrived in traditional education or who are looking for a career that is practical, outdoor and purposeful. Working with plants and green spaces can provide opportunities to develop practical skills, confidence and qualifications, while contributing to healthier and more sustainable communities.

The need extends beyond simply filling vacancies, London needs a skilled and diverse workforce capable of caring for its existing green infrastructure and responding to challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, urban heat and the increasing importance of access to green space.

With the horticulture sector already supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs and significant further growth predicted, investing in skills and the case for developing the next generation of horticultural professionals is both an economic and a social one and demonstrates the need for programmes such as Future Gardeners.

Success of Future Gardeners

During the 2025-2026 year, 39 students enrolled across five courses with 37 students completing, resulting in a graduation rate of 95% which has resulted in a 67% employment rate.

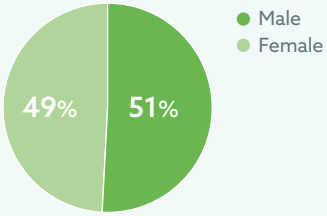
Students have gone into employment with companies such as:

- RHS Garden Wisley Internships
- The Nurture Group
- Cultivate London
- Grow to Know
- Frognal Gardens
- Q&S Landscaping
- Blakedown Landscapes
- Royal Parks Apprenticeships
- Restorative Justice for All
- Fulham Football Training Grounds
- Fresh Horticultural Careers temping opportunities
- London Wildlife Trust Traineeships
- Clarion Housing apprenticeships.

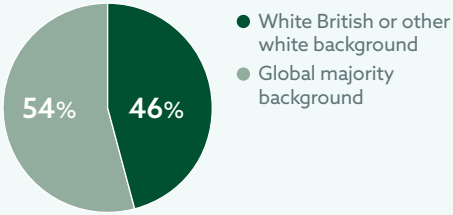
67%
employment rate

Demographics for the 10th year students

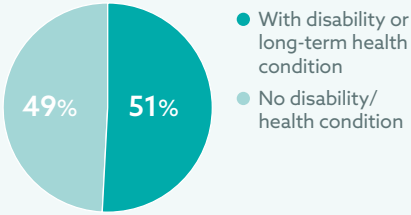
Gender



Nationality



With/without disability/health condition



Course outcomes

Outline of Future Gardeners
April 2025–March 2026

Future Gardeners 23
May to July 2025
12 participants
11 graduated

Sagal Hassan is now a horticultural apprentice with Clarion Housing.

Cian McNamara is studying for the RHS L2 Horticulture Qualification at Capel Manor.

David Wright is looking for employment.

Bella Belic is working for the horticultural set design company, Greens Team.

Angela Muir is working part-time with the charity Aspire running horticultural sessions.

Elissa Close secured the London Wildlife Trust's 'Keeping it Wild' paid internship.

Nasser Abyat is volunteering at Burgess Park Nursery & studying for a L2 City and Guilds qualification at Walworth Garden.

Chung Man Yue continues to volunteer at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew while also working for Fresh Horticultural Careers.

Audelia Salfati continues to volunteer while looking for paid positions.

Claudio Adamo continues to volunteer while looking for paid positions.

Laurence Beadeau is a full-time groundskeeper at Fulham Football Club Training ground.

One student didn't complete the course.

Future Gardeners 24

Sep to Dec 2025

14 participants

14 graduated

Ben Roe is working for Fresh Horticultural Careers on temporary contracts.

Finley North-Mckeown secured an apprenticeship with the Royal Parks.

Samir Menasra is continuing to volunteer at Kew Gardens and BOST whilst looking for work.

Chantelle Grace is working as a horticultural sessional worker for a charity in Croydon and studying for Forest Schooling qualifications.

James Wilson is working for Blakedown Landscapes on the new Queen Elizabeth Garden in Regents Park.

Franklin Ogoh-Maquis is working for Fresh Horticultural Careers on temporary contracts.

Evelyn Tamajo is working for Blakedown Landscapes on the new Queen Elizabeth Garden in Regents Park.

Nicola Herman is working for Fresh Horticultural Careers on temporary contracts.

Marcia Ambrosio started an apprenticeship with Q&S Landscaping in Central London.

Maki Ando is studying for a L2 qualification with Capel Manor.

Kamil Tkaczyk is working in garden maintenance for Frognal Gardens in NW London.

Guido Flores continues to volunteer and look for permanent work.

Amber Edirisinghe is working for social enterprise company Grow to Know in West London.

Ethan Thomas moved out of London.

Future Gardeners 25

Jan to Mar 2026

13 participants

12 graduated

Isabella Woolston is working for garden maintenance company Bartholomew Landscapes.

Luis Fernandez secured an apprenticeship with the Royal Parks.

Salim Taylor is continuing to volunteer and look for work in the industry.

Emilia Trafalgar started a paid internship with RHS Garden Wisley.

Annabell Ndiwe is working for Wayward Plants.

Fred Kasiba is continuing to volunteer and look for work.

Anna Shivinskaia is working for The Nurture Group at their Thames City location in Vauxhall.

Roy Hannigan started a L2 course at OrganicLea.

Isla Dell'Armi secured an apprenticeship with the Royal Parks.

Marie-Lyss is continuing to volunteer and look for work.

Isaac Nathanson-Parry is continuing to volunteer and look for work.

Anders Lorenzen is working for the charity Restorative Justice 4 All.

One student didn't complete the course.

Student feedback from our 10th year

"I learnt a lot and got to see so many things I hadn't seen before on the trips in addition to the 2 weeks practical work experience which was wonderful."

"Provided me with the essential horticulture skills and I feel more included in the community."

"The various industry talks and garden trips have built a repertoire of talented professionals in the industry and their work, giving me a clearer idea of the roles I could work in and the career progression required to reach my goals. On a personal level, working and learning alongside people from a range of backgrounds and experiences has allayed my worries about entering a field I had no experience in and my course mates have been a source of support."

"A very amazing course I learnt a lot. I met some lovely people."

"I've felt really supported by the materials provided (boots gloves etc). But the biggest help has been the CV guidance and meeting all the different gardeners, as well as the work placement. I've found it really useful in gaining connections and showing me what it would be like to be a gardener full time. I've loved the experience and glad to have gained a qualification from it – it really leaves you ready to work."

"Got more experience and knowledge and experience and confident to work in horticulture."

"The practical learning. How very helpful and dedicated Shereen and Louisa have been throughout the course. Meeting and learning with a group of amazing fellow Future Gardeners. The beautiful and inspiring garden visits. I loved every part of this course and grateful for the opportunity to have learnt in such a supportive and encouraging environment."

"The learning experience and the knowledge I gained were truly invaluable. The environment was supportive, and the teachers were encouraging and dedicated."

"The course gave me hands on knowledge of horticulture and confidence."

"I feel like this course has been excellent and really changed my life for the best. I have learned so much the past few months, from theoretical to practical skills and I have been provided of boots, secateurs and gloves to start my career in horticulture."

"Shereen and Louisa are very supportive and inspiring and encouraging with their student group and really do want the best for their students! There is a strong ethos of learning and study both independently and as a group with the goal of finding a career in Horticulture!"

"This course has opened so many doors to me, it was a perfect introduction to the world of horticulture, which I previously knew very little about. I have been introduced to a range of paths and opportunities within the industry. It's been amazing and really helpful to work alongside professionals, hearing about their own experiences and journeys."

"Provides me with knowledge and expanded my passions to confidently pursue a career in horticulture."



Our student journey

The programme

City and Guilds Award in Practical Horticulture

The students gained their qualifications at Morley College, Stockwell site, taught by BOST's Future Gardeners Programme Coordinator, Shereen Chung Blake and covered the following topics:

- Plant nomenclature, terminology and identification
- Preparing the ground for sowing or planting
- Maintaining plants outdoors
- Monitoring and maintaining health and safety
- Maintaining the appearance of decorative amenity areas
- Maintaining tools and equipment
- Planting bulbs for naturalization or bedding
- Applying organic mulch



Students at Morley College, Stockwell Centre



Students at Morley College, Stockwell Centre

Industry expert talks

A variety of speakers from the industry came and spoke to the students about their jobs and journeys into the industry – these included:

- **Noel Brock** Owner, Frognal Gardens
- **Marian Fisher** Owner, Fresh Horticultural Careers
- **Imogen Bell** Plant Buyer, Thompsons Garden Centre
- **Helen John** Landscape Architect
- **Sara Barnes** Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Horticulturist
- **Lucy Attias** Community Gardener, Islington Council
- **Mark Gregory** Managing Director, Landform Consultants

Biodiversity workshop with Frognal Gardens



Mark Gregory Talk



Employment mentoring

As part of the Future Gardeners programme, Programmes Manager Louisa Mansfield played a key role in equipping students with vital employability skills and tailored careers advice. By the end of the course, every student is supported to have an up-to-date gardening CV and the confidence to apply for roles and perform well in interviews.

Fresh Horticultural Careers
A FRESH APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT

To support their career journey, students took part in a mix of interactive workshops, practical presentations, and a dedicated weekly Job Club. Held outside of class time, Job Club offers one-to-one guidance tailored to each student's job search—whether that's fine-tuning a CV, preparing for an interview, or exploring different roles in the sector.

The impact of this support was clear: in a post-course survey, 100% of students who attended Job Club said it was helpful in updating their CV.

Students were also introduced to Fresh Horticultural Careers, a specialist recruitment agency serving the UK's garden maintenance, landscaping, and horticulture sectors. With staff support, students were helped to register for both temporary and permanent job opportunities – taking an important step toward long-term employment in the industry.

Garden research visits

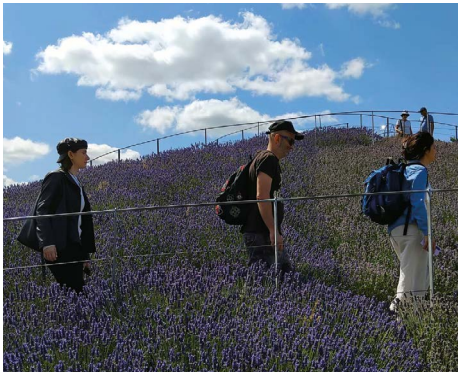
Garden research visits were made to RHS Garden Wisley, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, Chelsea Physic Garden, Inner Temple Gardens, Charterhouse Gardens, Burgess Park Nursery, Yes Make Collective and Exchange Square. We also had the opportunity to attend ClipFest thanks to a travel bursary from the RHS.



Tree planting at RHS Wisley

Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) Garden Wisley

Future Gardener's Programmes Manager Louisa Mansfield successfully applied for a bursary from the RHS to continue trips with each of the cohorts of students to RHS Garden Wisley. These trips were organised by Lewis George of the RHS's New Shoots team who welcomed each cohort of students to the garden and was our contact for the day.



Tour of RHS Wisley

"I really enjoyed spending the day talking to like-minded people about plants. I really enjoyed seeing the different cultivated plants at the site."

"There were so many highlights – dahlias, vegetables gardens, duck that joined me for lunch near pond."

"I really enjoyed seeing a different way to how a garden can be managed. It helped me identify my preferred plants. It helped show me more career pathways into horticulture."

Clipfest – A celebration of Cliptography – 22nd June 2025

CLIPFEST25 was a day-long celebration of Cliptomaniacs, practicing the creative art of shaping trees and shrubs by judicious clipping. It was a privileged opportunity for Future Gardener students past and present to visit the 16-acre, privately-owned, ICHI-COO PARK in Surrey, thanks to Robin Redmile-Gordon the organiser of the event and also to the RHS Bursaries for covering the cost of transport and refreshments for the students.

At the festival, the students got stuck into topiary across various activities on offer at the event. The students were able to network with stallholders, speakers and other attendees of the event further expanding their knowledge of the event and the industry. We were welcomed by the organiser of the event and there were lots for the students to get involved with as well as being able to explore the extensive grounds of the event. There were workshops for how to stretch for gardening to prevent injuries, how to make and look after bonsai trees, lots of pruning information and much more!



Student pruning at Clipfest

"The networking opportunities with other young professionals and touring the garden and seeing creative design ideas."



Students at Clipfest with organiser Robin Redmile-Gordon *(third from right)*

Work taster days

Students visited National Trust's The Red House and Fulham Palace House & Garden to work with the garden teams for a day.



Students weeding at The Red House



Students at Fulham Palace and Gardens



Students learning to coppice at Fulham Palace and Gardens

Work experience

Meaningful work experience is a key component to the Future Gardeners course and is fundamental in supporting our students into long-term careers in the industry.

Work experience placements this year included:

- Chelsea Physic Garden
- Crown Estates Paving Commission
- Willerby Landscapes
- Provender Nursery
- Bartholomew Landscapes
- Nurture Group
- Frognal Gardens
- Grosvenor Estates
- The Royal Parks
- Natural History Museum
- Hampton Court Palace
- Blakedown Landscapes
- Victoria Park
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
- Q & S Landscaping
- The Royal College of Physicians



Work Experience at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew



Work experience at Nurture Landscapes



Work experience at Willerby Landscapes



Work experience at Victoria Park



Work experience with Blakedown Landscapes



Work experience with Q&S Landscapes



Work experience with Bowles & Wyer



Work experience with Frognal Gardens

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.

Venues were Morley College, Stockwell Centre for **Future Gardeners 23** where Lewis George, Horticultural Engagement Manager, RHS New Shoots was the guest speaker. Chelsea Physic Garden was the venue for **Future Gardeners 24** where Jennifer Pheasey, Director of Policy & Public Affairs was our speaker and **Future Gardeners 25** at the refurbished Emma Cons Hall, Morley College where Sheila, Head of Parks for the National Trust was the speaker.



Future Gardeners 23 graduation at Morley College, Stockwell Centre



Future Gardeners 24 graduation at Chelsea Physic Garden



Outstanding student award – Franklin Ogoh-Maquis



Future Gardeners 25 graduation at Morley College, Waterloo

Publicity

The Future Gardeners Programme was promoted at the following events:

- London Wildlife Trust, Green Jobs Fair at Walthamstow Wetlands Centre
- RHS Wisley Green Jobs Fair
- The Kings Trust 'Get Hired' Event
- Groundsfest Grounds Management Event
- TSS Careers Fair



Previous students promoting Future Gardeners at the Green Jobs Fair



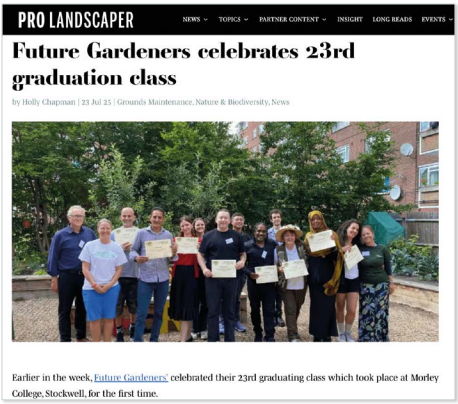
Louisa Mansfield panel talk at Groundsfest



The Kings Trust
'Get Hired' Event



Louisa and Shereen at The Kings Trust 'Get Hired' event



PRO LANDSCAPER

NEWS TOPICS PARTNER CONTENT INSIGHT LONG READS EVENTS

Future Gardeners celebrates 23rd graduation class

by Holly Chapman | 23 Jul 25 | Grounds Maintenance, Nature & Biodiversity, News

Earlier in the week, Future Gardeners' celebrated their 23rd graduating class which took place at Morley College, Stockwell, for the first time.

Pro Landscaper magazine
– published July 2025



PRO LANDSCAPER

NEWS TOPICS PARTNER CONTENT INSIGHT LONG READS EVENTS

"Life changing" Future Gardeners course celebrates 24th class

by Holly Chapman | 24 Nov 25 | Garden Design, News

Now in its ninth year, the Future Gardeners programme held a graduation ceremony for its 24th class at the Chelsea Physic Garden in London.

Pro Landscaper magazine
– published November 2025



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Future Gardeners Celebrates Graduation of 24th Cohort at Chelsea Physic Garden

The Future Gardeners programme, now in its ninth successful year, celebrated the achievements of its 24th graduating class with a special ceremony held at the Chelsea Physic Garden in November. The event honoured the hard work and dedication of 14 graduating students, all of whom completed the programme with a 100% graduation rate, marking another strong milestone for this growing pathway into the horticultural profession.

Latest posts:

The Big British Garden Survey
Reveal the hidden wildlife in your garden

Take part in the Big British Garden Survey before 30 September

Friday, August 28th, 2026

30 Years of Great Gardens and Great Cakes supporting

National Garden Scheme
– published November 2025

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FUTURE GARDENERS
grow your career!

CAN YOU HELP?

The project requires ongoing funding for future expansion plans. If you would like to help us raise funds for this deserving initiative, donate or can help in any other way, please contact **Louisa Mansfield**

louisa@bost.org.uk
or call **020 7403 3393**

BANKSIDE OPEN SPACES TRUST

Bankside Open Spaces Trust
Red Cross Garden
50 Redcross Way
London SE1 1HA

Charity reg: 1085454

www.bost.org.uk