

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Garden Trainee
HOURS:	Full time / 37 hours per week)
DURATION:	2 year fixed-term contract (September 2026 – August 2028)
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Cultural Gardener, The Hepworth Wakefield Ben Preston, Cliff Bank

1 ABOUT THE TRAINEESHIP

This new two-year Garden traineeship offers an exciting opportunity for a candidate starting out in professional horticulture, who is keen to gain exceptional practical training in two unique settings, alongside achieving their professional RHS or City & Guilds Level 2 or 3 Horticultural qualification.

The Hepworth Wakefield Garden is designed by internationally acclaimed landscape architect Tom Stuart-Smith. Here, the trainee will work alongside the Cultural Gardener to learn how to care for this one acre, living composition that is free for all to enjoy. This will include opportunities to be involved in visitor engagement, supporting volunteer sessions, and working with our public programme and learning teams to deliver outdoor creative activities.

To create an inspiring and comprehensive horticultural traineeship, The Hepworth Wakefield are partnering with Cliff Bank Nursery, a small specialist nursery in Huby, between Leeds and Harrogate, run by the knowledgeable plantsman Ben Preston and his team. Here the candidate will learn professional propagation skills and also help to grow a new Hepworth Wakefield range of plants for sale.

The two-year nature of the programme will allow the trainee to learn from the full annual cycle, seeing how the previous year's decisions impact the next and consolidating their learning ready for employment.

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The trainee will attend college one day per week during term time to gain an RHS or City & Guilds Level 2 or 3 Horticultural Qualification.

A typical term-time week will involve:

2 x days at The Hepworth Wakefield
2 x days at Cliff Bank
1 x day at college.

A typical non term-time week will involve:

3 x days at The Hepworth Wakefield
2 x days at Cliff Bank

This may shift flexibly at times according to workload and the changing seasons.
Both The Hepworth Wakefield and Cliff Bank are accessible by public transport.

2. TRAINEESHIP PURPOSE

- To work practically as a member of the teams at both The Hepworth Wakefield and Cliff Bank, learning to deliver high horticultural standards at a professional pace, with attention to detail while providing a professional welcome to visitors.
- To gain an RHS or City & Guilds Level 2 or 3 Horticultural Qualification.
- To develop hands-on skills specific to working in the context of a public garden within an arts setting, and within a plant nursery that sells directly to the public.
- To develop a network of contacts in the industry to take forward into a horticultural career.
- To research and undertake two separate week-long work experience placements each year, at other gardens in the UK, up to a total of 10 working days per year.
- To help support events, stalls, talks, tours and public programme events at both venues.

3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESULTS

THE HEPWORTH WAKEFIELD GARDEN

- Daily exterior garden tidying, including leaf blowing and litter-picking.
- Speaking to visitors in the garden, being a representative of the organisation and offering a warm welcome.
- Assisting with care and maintenance of hand tools.
- All horticultural tasks required to care for mixed herbaceous planting, shrubs and trees through the annual cycle - such as cutting back, lifting and dividing, weeding, pruning, mulching, staking, pest monitoring, dead-heading, bulb planting and seed collection.
- Irrigation with hoses, setting of sprinklers and use of the dosatron.
- Lawn care, including pedestrian mowing, scarifying, edging, leaf collection and fertilising.

- Learning to develop strong observation skills, becoming able to reassess priorities flexibly according to weather conditions and events.
- Hedge cutting and clipping collection.
- With time, learning to instruct the team of volunteers, guiding them in outside horticultural work and in the interior tasks we undertake, such as preparing garden related items for sale, such as printing seed packets.
- Supporting garden related events and activities such as learning activities, plant stalls, talks, tours and workshops.

CLIFF BANK NURSERY

- Following propagation schedules to grow plants for the nursery and garden.
- Learning various propagation techniques including seed, cuttings, division, bulb chipping and grafting.
- Irrigation/watering duties, learning and implementing feeding schedules.
- Mixing compost and seed/cutting mixes for the different needs of the nursery.
- Helping to maintain the small formal garden areas of the nursery that display plants to the public.
- Replanting and maintaining seasonal pot displays.
- Helping to maintain herbaceous and grass stock beds for the nursery; weeding, cutting back, lifting and splitting stock and replanting.
- Nursery stock management and ensuring stock levels in the sales area are maintained when open to the public.
- Serving customers in the nursery when open to the public.
- Maintaining and cleaning equipment and helping to keep all areas tidy and orderly.
- Greenhouse and polytunnel management including use and maintenance of propagation units.
- Help with practical tasks and improvements to the site, including fencing, re-skinning polytunnels, minor building works, construction of nursery benches, irrigation equipment maintenance etc.

LEARNING RESPONSIBILITIES

- To attend college for 1 x day per week to study for and pass the exams and all coursework elements.
- To study for regular plant identification tests at both Cliff Bank and The Hepworth Wakefield.
- To fill in a garden log of all tasks for both years of the of traineeship.
- To research and undertake two separate week-long work experience placements each year, at other gardens in the UK. Up to a total of 10 working days per year.
- To be proactive in attending horticultural lectures and networking events locally.

OTHER

- To adhere to relevant health and safety legislation at all times. Taking care to encourage safety at all times for yourself, colleagues and visitors.
- To undertake relevant training as required.

- To undertake any other duties as reasonably requested by Cliff Bank's Ben Preston and The Hepworth Wakefield's Cultural Gardener.
- The traineeship will include occasional weekend work to assist with plant stalls and events, for which time off in lieu will be offered.

3 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

We are committed to improving diversity within our organisation and we expect all our employees to share this commitment and help us to achieve these goals.

All staff must carry out all duties in accordance with our policies, procedures, risk assessments and method statements.

4 KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

E = Essential D = Desirable

KNOWLEDGE

5 GCSEs (or equivalent) including English, Science and Mathematics to a minimum Grade C.	D
Basic IT Skills - use of email and word.	E

SKILLS

Able to undertake basic horticultural skills, such as use of hand tools	E
Basic plant identification skills and a desire to develop this	E
Able to manage time and tasks punctually	E
Able to communicate in a friendly, respectful manner to colleagues, volunteers and members of the public	E
Able to listen to, and follow, detailed instructions and ask questions when unsure	E
Able to receive feedback and learn through this process	E
Able to cope with repetitive tasks	E
Able to work in all weathers	E
Able to work on physical, strenuous tasks requiring strength and flexibility including the ability to safely lift heavy weights, handle tools, and work on tasks that may require being bent, stooped or crouched	E
Able to follow policies and procedures, abide by processes detailed in risk assessments and promote health and safety to others	E
Able to complete tasks successfully and in a timely manner when working alone, as well as when part of a team	E

EXPERIENCE

Practical experience working or volunteering in an exterior, well established, professional horticulture setting, such as a garden center, public or private garden, landscaping company or nursery	E
An enthusiasm for horticulture, with an aim to enter a career in the sector	E

5 BASIC TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- The salary offered for this position is £13.45 per hour
- This is a fixed-term trainee position for 24 months.
- 37 hours per week
- Probationary period of 6 months.
- Notice period 1 week during probation.
- The place of work is The Hepworth Wakefield, Gallery Walk, Wakefield, WF1 5AW and Cliff Bank Nursery, Harrogate Road, North Rigton, Leeds, LS17 0BZ.
- 25 days annual leave per annum plus bank holidays (pro rata), rising by a day each year of service up to a maximum of 28 days. The leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March.
- New employees meeting the criteria will be auto-enrolled into a pension scheme run by Royal London, including an employer contribution of up to 6%.
- Enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption entitlements.
- Enhanced sick pay entitlements.
- Employee Assistance Programme offering confidential support service.
- Free eye tests run by Specsavers.
- Staff discount in the shop and café.