

RHS SCHOOL OF HORTICULTURE

VOLUNTARY INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME



Work Experience is a scheme offered to *bona fide* students of horticulture with some previous practical experience, who seek a short-term placement and have the financial stability to work as a volunteer. Length of placements range from a minimum of 4 weeks up to a maximum of 3 months. If required, on-site accommodation is available at a subsidised rate. The number of internships available is limited, so early application is recommended. Although close to main commuter traffic routes Wisley is poorly served by public transport so you are strongly advised to bring a car.

Working Conditions -

- First Morning:** Report to main Staff Entrance in the Laboratory (main building) at 8.30 am.
- Hours:** 7.30 am to 4.00 pm* - normal working hours, but see note below.
- Travel:** Travelling to and from Wisley is difficult by public transport (Arriva bus 515 between Guildford and Kingston) and may not prove suitable in relation to work experience students. Cycling to Wisley is considered dangerous due to the high volume of fast traffic on the adjacent roads.
*Those who have difficulty in meeting the working times due to transport problems may make suitable arrangements for adjusted hours with the heads of their allocated departments.
- Mid-day Meals:** Lunch break - 12 noon to 1.00 pm.
There are several catering outlets at the Garden, or you are welcome to bring a packed lunch and eat in the department mess room or the picnic areas around the Garden, volunteers are entitled to a discount in any of the cafeterias in the Garden.
Mid-morning break - tea & coffee are provided, but please bring your own mug.

-
- Clothing:** Durable clothing is needed (jeans, jumper etc.); steel-toe capped safety boots are essential - not trainers / similar soft footwear. A pair of wellington boots is necessary in the glasshouses where watering and damping down takes place. Outside work is not normally carried out in heavy rain, but a waterproof coat is recommended in case of showers. During the summer months a sun hat and a supply of sunscreen should be brought. Gardening gloves should also be brought.
- Activities:** The work is general gardening. Placements are usually made in the Floral or Glasshouse Departments. Placements in other departments, such as the Rock Garden or Fruit section are available to students with specific interests in those areas, but requests need to be made clear on the application form. The attached descriptions of the departments detail the work covered in each section.
- Health & Safety:** The Society holds insurance cover and trained staff and first aid facilities are distributed around the Garden. No untrained workers will be involved in pest and disease control or the operation of machinery. Total observance is given to Health & Safety Regulations, FEPA & CoSHH. The Society has carried out risk assessments appropriate to work experience. Health & Safety is monitored by H & S representatives & external consultants.
- Other:** A programme of demonstrations and visits is given to our own Trainee Gardeners. Should any of these coincide with your time here at Wisley you may attend.

Wisley is a prestigious garden providing an opportunity for involvement in basic gardening skills and techniques. You will work alongside experienced gardeners. Our garden managers are very skilled and much can be gained by being observant and talking to garden staff or the trainee gardeners to learn more about horticulture as a career. You are most welcome to make an appointment if you would like some careers advice during your placement at Wisley.

The majority of plants at Wisley are labelled. We have to use proper botanical nomenclature, but don't let this put you off. This in itself offers a wonderful, albeit brief, insight into plants, their names and why they are given such names; to this end a small project or at least keeping a notebook is urged during your work experience.

The work experience scheme has been operating for several years now and we are finding that earlier participants are making their way into horticultural careers and some are even coming back to Wisley as fully fledged gardeners. We hope that your short time at Wisley will prove to be enjoyable and rewarding. Should we find however, that your work or behaviour are not deemed appropriate during your time at Wisley, you will be asked to leave after due warning.

For further information contact Stephen Colfer, Curatorial Administrator, Wisley on:

Tel: 01483 212342 Email: stephencolfer@rhs.org.uk
