

# GARDEN MUSEUM

## Job Description

**HORTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINEESHIP  
(Landscape Architect Student)  
Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026 to Friday 11th September 2026**

### Background

The world's first museum dedicated to the art, design and history of gardens, The Garden Museum was re-opened in 2017 after an £8 million restoration, refurbishment and extension.

The Museum is housed in an ancient church beside the River Thames and next door to Lambeth Palace. In the churchyard and now the centrepiece of the new garden by Dan Pearson, is the famous tomb of John Tradescant who was the gardener to King Charles I and Britain's first celebrated horticultural champion.

The church has been rebuilt to insert five galleries of exhibits of garden history, and includes galleries for changing exhibitions. This also provides space for London's busiest programme of garden talks, with over fifty evening events each year, and weekend gatherings including a Spring Plant Fair and Houseplant Festival.

A new extension, The Sackler Garden, has been built around a new courtyard garden designed by Dan Pearson. This extension has been built to expand the learning programme for schools, families and the local community.

A new public park, Lambeth Green designed by Dan Pearson and Mary Duggan, has received planning permission and is on the doorstep of the Museum at the centre of the wider public realm project in partnership with Lambeth Council.

In addition, the museum has acquired Benton End in Hadleigh, Suffolk. This was the former home of artist and gardener Sir Cedric Morris (1889 – 1982) and artist, Arthur Lett-Haines (1894–1978). The walled garden is currently under restoration under the direction of the Head Gardener, James Horner.

The Museum is an independent charity, which receives no income from central or local government. The traineeship has been generously funded by The Dilip Lakhani Foundation.

## **The Museums Gardens**

Although the Garden Museum site is ancient the gardens are new, and comprised of the following:

- The centrepiece is The Sackler Garden, designed by Dan Pearson and planted in 2017. It is inspired by the continuing story of plant collecting – and will be added to with introductions by contemporary plant collectors – and as a collaboration with Dow Jones Architects in creating a horticultural oasis within a busy urban neighbourhood.
- At the front of the site, the museum has laid out a garden designed by Christopher Bradley-Hole in a contrasting formal style, and conceived as an urban piazza. The Bradley-Hole garden is set within a medieval churchyard, the tombs of which have been preserved; this shadier area of the garden has been planted by Matt Collins and is developing its own sense of horticultural place.

## **Description of the role**

The Garden Museum's Horticultural Development Traineeship has been designed to give a landscape architecture student from Greenwich University, of particular talent and ambition, a chance to gain practical planting and horticultural experience by placing them at the centre of a busy gardening and horticultural hub with new developments taking place. The particular appeal of this traineeship is that it provides the opportunity for aspirant landscape architects to bring both gardening and horticultural knowledge into their professional practice as designers of urban space.

This is important not only for their own professional future but for the future of our urban spaces. This traineeship is intended to help students gain new skills in designing these essential green spaces.

Traineeship at the Museum provides a diversity of experiences, facilitating introductions to the stars of the Landscape and Garden world and attendance at the Museum's engaging public programme. In addition to working within the gardens of the Garden Museum, the traineeship offers the opportunity to spend time gardening at Benton End in Suffolk, under the direction of head gardener, James Horner, and free attendance at the regular lectures held usually on Tuesday evenings. There will be also be a possibility of working at the Beth Chatto Gardens which is close to Benton End and at Shute House in Wiltshire, a garden and landscape designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe .

The Traineeship will run from Monday June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2026 to Friday 11th September 2026 (12 weeks in total). Dates to be confirmed with successful applicant and in line with their university submissions deadlines. It is expected that the successful applicant will have completed all their university submissions before commencing the placement.

## **Reports to**

Matt Collins (Head Gardener)

Matt is the Head Gardener at the Museum, a garden writer (Daily Telegraph, Guardian, Gardens Illustrated) and author of *Forest*, *Walking Among Trees* and *My Tiny Flower Garden*. [www.mattcollinsgarden.co.uk](http://www.mattcollinsgarden.co.uk)

## **Person Specification**

Applicants for the Traineeship should have:

- Completed either their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year BA Landscape Architecture undergraduate degree at Greenwich University or be currently studying for the MLA or MA in Landscape architecture
- Interest in garden history
- Interest in contemporary gardening and horticultural issues
- Ability to communicate with professional colleagues, volunteers and members of the public visiting the garden
- Ability to work independently
- Ability to work with a team of volunteers towards shared objectives
- Due to the nature of the role lone working is frequent, so the ability to perform demanding physical tasks unassisted is essential

## **Main duties and responsibilities**

The Trainee will work in the Museum gardens.

- Basic garden maintenance but also encompasses the chance to learn through working in showpiece gardens by major designers as described earlier.
- Continuing the development of horticultural projects within the museum's public surroundings and the adjacent parks named 'St Mary's Gardens' and 'Old Paradise Gardens', under the exciting 'Lambeth Green' initiative. Included is a new community garden designed by Dan Pearson.
- Working within the west side of the extension which has been designed as an orangery, which is now used for an eye-catching display of potted indoor plants and cut flowers.
- Keeping a diary of work and of one project of interest in particular. This could be Benton End or developments at the Garden Museum. An opportunity for writing an article for the LI Journal – Landscape is also possible. The diary will include a series of plant idents at the Garden Museum to aid learning about planting.
- A one week placement (five working days) including boarding and lodging at Benton End working together with the Head Gardener (Benton End). Other placements to be arranged and to include a study visit at Shute House.
- There are two meetings with The Dilip Lakhani Foundation. The first at the start of the programme and the second towards the end of the placement. The second meeting will include a short report on the traineeship to enable it to be evaluated and develop the programme.

## Contract

The contract is 3 days per week, including occasional Saturdays. The applicant will be expected to work on Tuesday at the Garden Museum which is when both Matt Collins and the trainee horticulturalist are also present.

The bursary for the scheme is currently based on the living wage (April 2026 National Living Wage Rates); for a three month contract, from Monday June 22nd 2026 to Friday 11th September 2026 (12 weeks in total).

	<b>Age 21 and over</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>age 18 to 20</b>
<b>per hour:</b>	£12.71		£10.85
<b>per payroll:</b>	£1067.64		£911.40 (monthly):
<b>The Traineeship will run</b>			

Holidays are 4.5 days plus 1 day public holiday (20 days per year pro rata) and agreed together with Matt Collins.

**Benefits:** 20% discount in the Museum gift shop. 25% discount in the Garden Café on days when the trainee is working. Free entry to the regular public events held at the museum is included.

When working at Benton End: a subsistence allowance of £52.00 pro rata per week is payable. Accommodation is possible at Benton End and can be arranged via Matt Collins and after discussion.

## Equal Opportunities

The Garden Museum aims to be an inclusive organisation where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, and where there is equal opportunity for all. The Garden Museum respects and values diverse characteristics. We are committed to positively engaging and celebrating the differences between our diverse staff and users, to enabling us to achieve our aims within the organisation and the external community.

## Application

Please submit your CV and a covering letter explaining why you believe you would be a good candidate for the Garden Museum Traineeship by Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 via the Garden Museum website: [www.gardenmuseum.org.uk/work-with-us/](http://www.gardenmuseum.org.uk/work-with-us/)

Please specify: HORTICULTURAL TRAINEESHIP

***In addition we require a reference from a current university tutor or similar mentor.***

NB: If you are applying for both The Garden Museum, in addition as well as the Great Dixter advertised positions, please indicate in your application, where you would be most interested/willing to work. This does not affect the shortlisting process but will help us in allocating places.

**We regret that we are unable to respond to all applicants and you will only hear from us if we wish to invite you to interview.**

(Short-listed candidates will be interviewed the w/c 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026)

