

CHISWICK HOUSE & GARDENS TRUST

Flower Gardener

Job Reference KG24

Responsible to: Head of Gardens

Responsible for: Volunteers

Contract: Permanent, 3-4 days per week (21-28 hours), including weekend working on rota basis (1 Saturday in 6)

Key relationships: Garden team and volunteers, CHGT staff, visitor and retail teams (produce sales).

Salary: £26250 (pro rata)

Role Summary

Chiswick House and Gardens Trust (CHGT) seeks a Flower Gardener to plan and manage our cut flowers for sale and donation: our commitment is to donate at least as much produce as we sell. Working with the garden team, including a Community Kitchen Gardener, Kitchen Gardener and Kitchen Garden Apprentice, you will focus on growing flowers, looking after the kitchen garden flower plots and borders, adding volume and diversity to what we are able to sell and donate locally. You will work with the team, leading cutting, conditioning, preparation, arranging and sales with a dedicated team of talented volunteers, using their knowledge and enthusiasm to improve and enhance what we are able to achieve. You will work in our historic, 2.5 acre walled kitchen garden contributing to its role as a well-loved community garden and visitor attraction and as needed, support our work in the Grade I Listed wider gardens.

Chiswick House and Gardens Trust

Chiswick House and Gardens Trust (CHGT) cares for 65-acre Grade-I registered gardens, a 2-acre Kitchen Garden and 1,800 trees, surrounding a 300-year-old Grade-I listed historic house, in the heart of London Borough of Hounslow (LBH), West London. The gardens are free to visit and open every day, welcoming more than 825,000 to 1 million visits annually. We play a vital role in the community.

The Kitchen Garden and the wider gardens

Our kitchen garden is the most active, productive space within the 65 acres of Chiswick House's gardens, open Thursdays-Sundays throughout the spring to autumn. It is our community hub where local groups meet, garden, and feel at ease. It is a rich, diverse growing area providing produce for sale and donation at least nine months of the year. It's a busy space – staff and volunteer gardeners, visitors, impromptu meetings, commercial events, painting, and picnics.

Our vision for the kitchen garden is to continue to evoke history and be inspired by it. This space, designed for productivity and for people to spend time in, remains fit for its original purpose. We are creating new memories and traditions, adapting to climate changes and our communities' needs, providing a beautiful, diverse, and changing walled haven. In Chiswick House Gardens and kitchen gardens, we have been standing on many shoulders, for almost 350 years. The next years will be about ensuring the future of these gardens by their usefulness, welcome, sustainability and beauty.

Chiswick House Gardens, one of the world's most important landscape gardens (Grade I listed) is open for everyone every day, from dawn until dusk. Chiswick's landscape tells the story of a key moment in garden history, when William Kent and the Earl of Burlington, began the English Landscape Movement.

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Chiswick House Gardens contains the first English rose garden, an early European-inspired nineteenth century formal garden and a thriving kitchen garden within seventeenth century walls. An ornamental lake fed by the Thames, a woodland garden, wooded walks and large sports areas complete the gardens.

What you will be doing:

- Planning and delivering the growing flowers and managing flower borders against targets, keeping records
- Working with the kitchen garden team to care for and improve our kitchen garden, increasing diversity and volume of produce, improving visitor experience and providing a safe, enjoyable space for community groups
- Managing and supporting a group of volunteers to enable the growing, cutting and preparation of flowers for sale and donation
- Working to deliver our community programme: leading tasks, demonstrating techniques, working with facilitators and group leaders
- Exploring opportunities to further engage our visitors with our growing spaces, including 'behind the scenes' areas
- Playing a key role on the garden team – supporting projects, encouraging new techniques, sharing ideas, delivering garden maintenance workload
- Working as one of the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust staff team to develop, improve, promote and conserve our property.

Who we are looking for

You will love growing flowers, making a beautiful, nature-rich garden, working as part of team and being part of a project to improve and enhance a community space in a historic setting.

You will:

- Have experience of growing flowers, providing volume and quality, maximising space and the growing season backed up by RHS Level 2 qualifications (or equivalent)
- Be committed to working organically, learning and trialling new techniques and sharing your experience easily
- Understand gardens as aesthetic spaces that provide beauty and a haven and want to increase your ability to enhance these growing areas for all those that visit them
- Have excellent organisation skills with attention to detail, able to prioritise and work under time pressure
- Be able to work effectively, adapt and use your initiative in response to the day-to-day operation and pre-empt and respond to the needs of your colleagues including volunteers, your community partners and visitors
- Have a 'can do attitude' and personal drive, with a willingness to 'go the extra mile' to exceed expectations
- Excellent presentation, communication, listening and interpersonal skills
- Good level of IT literacy.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, experience of working with diverse local audiences with varying learning and communications needs
- Knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm for historic gardens, community gardens, working as part of a visitor attraction.

Desirable Criteria

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- Volunteer management (and/or experience of being a volunteer yourself)
- Experience of retail, marketing, promotion
- First Aid training.

How to apply:

Application is by CV (no more than 2 pages) and a cover letter (no more than 1 page) outlining the reasons for your interest in the post and why you believe yourself to be suitable, and how you would propose working to fulfil this role. Applications should be sent to info@chgt.org.uk with the subject title KG24. Please include your full contact details including daytime and evening telephone numbers.

Please provide details of two referees who know your employment and your work. For shortlisted candidates, references will be taken up prior to interview unless you advise that you do not wish us to do so.

Deadline: Closing date for applications is 12pm Monday 5 February.

Interviews and shortlisting: It is anticipated that shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview, to meet the team and undertake practical tasks on 15th February.

Not sure you meet 100% of our qualifications? If you believe that you could excel in this role, we encourage you to apply. We are dedicated to considering a broad array of candidates, including those with diverse work experiences and backgrounds. Whether you're new to working in a historic garden, returning to work after a gap in employment, simply looking to transition, or taking the next step in your career path, we will be glad to have you on our radar. Please use your cover letter to tell us about your interest and what you hope to bring to this role.