

REF: Professional Gardeners' Trust Report

Suzie Irlam

Hello, Suze here, a horticulturalist based in Worcestershire. I work as a Soft Landscaper with the wonderful Creative Landscapes team, at the beautiful Whitlenge Gardens in Hartlebury.

I have been studying/working in horticulture for three years now. Starting in commercial production, propagating, working as an indoor plant technician, maintaining the gardens/grounds of Warwickshire Colleges and restoring Moreton Morrell Hall Estate gardens. My previous career was in the film/TV industry, long days in all weathers filming out on location. Working outdoors has always been my way of life and I absolutely love it. Constantly aiming to progress, gain knowledge and expand on my skills I required a chainsaw license to assist with my work and ambitions.



I was kindly awarded £300 towards my qualification from The Professional Gardeners' Trust and donation from the gardeners' livery company, the Worshipful Company of Gardeners. This allowed me to achieve a NPTC City and Guilds Level 2 award in; Unit 201 (CS30) Maintenance of the Chainsaw and Cutting System. Unit 202 (CS30) Cross-Cut Timber Using a Chainsaw. Unit 203 (CS31) Fell and Process Trees up to 380mm. The cost for the course and assessments was £850.00 (PPE and equipment are additional) The course was held and assessed at Warwickshire College, Moreton Morrell site.

During the training we spent a day focusing on the maintenance and safety features of the chainsaw. The following three days were out developing our practical skills on the saw, carrying out cross-cutting, felling and technical cuts in the trees.



Once we had mastered assessing the tree as to how it was leaning, safe places to fell, clearing vegetation and brush off the tree, a gob could then be inserted then deciding the best cut for that scenario. The cuts were quite intense as the percentage ratios for the gob, back cuts and parallel hinges all had to work in harmony to fell the tree as planned.

You also learn to deal with many situations e.g. a hung up and sat back tree, which can be exhausting but fun when you have the techniques, equipment and experience under your belt! Tension and compression for cross cutting was something that I had previously worked with using pruning saws whilst gardening and this was a great help.

I was particularly interested in the technical cuts such as a 'split level cut' and the 'dogs tooth cut', when the tree falls and you hear the cracking of the wood, you know that your cuts were on form and it feels great to watch as you exit the work area into your escape routes. Job done! As I was not blessed with most 'Hercules like' frame, I was a little nervous as to whether my lack of protein shakes would hinder my work, however once my technical ability progressed I felt confident and proud of what I had achieved. I am very much looking forward to continuing my practice with further 'on the job' experience.

Our instructor was very upbeat and informative. It made for a very enjoyable course and positive environment, a great way of learning. The training will allow my career to progress with advanced skills and save time using ergonomic methods and having the ability to now use mechanical assistance when necessary. Options are always great. I am also looking forward to carving my very own wooden mushroom one day soon! Thank you to the Professional Gardeners' Trust for helping to make my dream a reality, for allowing my skills to progress and career to grow.

