

Jo Hindl

Report to Professional Gardener's Trust

I was the grateful recipient of the Lironi Award in July 2015. This assisted in paying for the RHS Level 3 Practical Horticulture Course held at Craven College, Skipton for the academic year 2015 - 2016. The course cost £650 and the Lironi Award contributed £500 towards this.

The course consisted of continually assessed practical activities, regular plant identification tests and written assessments. Craven College is well equipped with an evolving Horticulture department. They offer a number of horticulture courses and have established links with RHS Harlow Carr. (Unfortunately our course wasn't operating from the RHS garden!) The trainer is highly qualified and was a great source of advice and information. It is a busy course covering extensive content, somewhat complicated to administer. Periodically an external invigilator attended to assess the training that was being provided.

I am a sole trader working half of the week in Harrogate maintaining large established private residential gardens alongside another gardener. I spend the other half of the week working alone for my own clients in North Leeds. My clients are predominantly garden lovers who have sought assistance in the continued maintenance and development of their plot. I actively encourage their involvement and have seen them enjoy numerous benefits from this scenario. A large proportion are older people reluctantly relinquishing their control of their garden and are who are grateful to have the opportunity to remain fully involved whilst no longer undertaking some of the more physical tasks. Alternatively I have a number of clients who are a similar age to me who wish to understand their plants better and want to learn horticultural techniques. I enjoy this variety.

I have other RHS qualifications; the first was completed in 2004. This training gives me confidence and undoubtedly provides evidence of professionalism. I have no doubt that I have secured numerous clients because I can prove an excellent level of knowledge. This has been invaluable as I am a career changer having spent 20 years in the public sector. I have been working at full capacity from very early on in my new career in horticulture and am fortunate enough to have quickly built up a good reputation and solid client base. I have turned away as much work as I currently manage. I am considering developing my business brand and becoming an employer. I am currently seeking advice with regards to this.

Obtaining qualifications undoubtedly increases prospects for success and I would not have been able to undertake the RHS Level 3 qualification without the financial support of the PGT.