

Professional Gardeners Trust report.

Riyah Snow



I have recently completed an RHS Level 3 in practical horticulture, studying at The Duchy College Rosewarne in Cornwall starting in September 2016. The Professional gardeners trust awarded me the Linori award at a sum of £592 to contribute towards the course fee of £1246. The remainder of the fee was covered by my employers at The Eden Project, any additional costs such as travel and equipment was self-funded. Without the Professional Gardeners' trust I would not have been able to take part in this course which has given me the ability to go forward and progress in my career. For this I am extremely grateful.

I am currently employed as a skilled horticulturist at The Eden Project Cornwall. I am part of the horticultural seasonal displays team, working on plant displays across the garden, floristry for events and weddings, show gardens and running our own cut flower garden. Our team along with this year's horticultural apprentices created a show garden named 'Go against the tide' at the Cornwall Garden Society Spring Flower Show, which opened at the Boconnoc Estate Cornwall. We were awarded with a large gold medal alongside the prestigious Banham Cup for best in show.



The knowledge gained through completing RHS Level 3 practical course has already been very useful in many aspects of my working life. It has allowed me to progress within my role at The Eden Project, moving from a 'Horticulturist' level to a 'Skilled Horticulturist'. As well as inspiring me to be involved in other new horticultural projects.

'Collecting and testing soil samples and specifying adjustments for horticulture' was the module that I had the least experience in, when previously studying we had only covered the basics. Within this the science behind healthy soil/ growing medium and plant growth was covered in detail, the knowledge gained has increased my confidence when assessing soil related plant health. It has also enabled me to be confident when adjusting PH levels, choosing the correct soil type relevant to the plant and choosing the correct growing medium for containers.

Duchy College Rosewarne is a small college, under strain of financial cuts implemented by our government. However the lecturers I had the pleasure of working with put one hundred percent into ensuring we could all gain as much as possible from our time there. The RHS Level 3 practical I believe needed a little bit more of a practical element to it. Although we were assessed when completing physical tasks a lot of the time was spent on filling out folder work. This is beneficial as everything physical is backed up with written evidence. This could have been due to the structure of the course only running for half a day a week. I believe that if this was increased to one whole day a week then the written and physical work could be matched, therefore resulting in a lot more hands on learning. We were lucky enough to meet an RHS representative and give feedback as to how we found the course.

All in all I have really enjoyed my experience, I feel I have learnt a lot, gained a lot of new skills, confidence and ultimately qualifications. I cannot thank the Professional Gardeners Trust enough for their role in this and enabling me to better myself and my career in so many ways. Thank you!

