

## Professional Gardeners' Trust Report

My name is Scarlett English and I'm an arborist. I've had quite a winding career path that began with studying art in Cornwall, where I was inspired by the gardens and landscapes that surrounded me so I chose to pursue horticulture. I studied and worked in Cornwall before beginning a botanical horticulture apprenticeship at RBG Kew, where I was inspired by the amazing tree collection. It was here that I decided I wanted to pursue a career in arboriculture to learn about and climb trees, so I took up a one year work placement, which became two years, in the arboriculture team at RHS Wisley, Surrey.

In my second year at Wisley I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to study a college course alongside my work experience placement, and so it is here that the Professional Gardener's Trust helped me to achieve my academic goals. I chose to study the ABC Level 4 Diploma in arboriculture with the learning provider The Training Tree. The course itself cost about £4000, and the PGT generously contributed £340 towards the payment of the course fees, for which I am hugely grateful for.

The diploma was an all-encompassing journey through the subject of arboriculture, covering a vast array of subjects with a sensational amount of coursework. In total I've submitted 36 (large) assignments in ten months. We've galloped through tree physiology and biomechanics, symbiotic and decay-causing fungi, pruning techniques, nursery stock production, planting and design, ecology and woodland management to name just some of the subjects covered.

The course was classroom based. I attended almost weekly classes each Friday in the learning centre at Painshill Park; a heritage landscape in Cobham which was a wonderful place to study both for the resources of fine tree specimens we could learn from and also as a calming environment in which to escape the mind-boggling lessons.

The course itself was well-structure and delivered. Weekly lectures and assignments given by our tutor Lisa Sanderson were punctuated with field trips to see remarkable trees and a tree nursery and guest lectures from industry organisations such as the Forestry Commission and Greenfix. We also had guest lectures by eminent arboriculture consultants such as Andrew Poynter, Jack Kenyon and Neville Fay.

The knowledge I've gained from completing the diploma has hugely informed my work as an arborist and the decisions I make when inspecting and carrying out tree work. I'm so grateful to Lisa Sanderson, my tutor at the Training Tree, for her inspiring and enlightening lessons and continual optimism for me in the face of tidal waves of coursework that I thought I'd never complete.

I am also hugely thankful to the RHS for allowing me a day off a week in my second year of working for them so that I could attend lessons and have extra time on coursework.

Furthermore I am unbelievably grateful to the PGT for generously granting me the PGT Award, allowing me to complete my studies. Without this financial support I would not have been able to do the diploma in the first place. I would also like to thank the Studley Trust who were also very generous and funded a large portion of the diploma.

Having finished the diploma and my work placement at RHS Wisley, I am looking to work as a freelance arborist, so that I can build up experience in commercial arboriculture. I hope that by doing this I will be able to develop my skills further and also gain more skills in management and organisation; areas that I have not had very much experience in as an apprentice or trainee.

I cannot thank the PGT enough for their contribution towards my learning and career development and look forward to forging my career path further with the tools and skills they helped me to acquire through studying for this diploma. Below are some photos of myself at work to prove that I've put the learning to good use!

