

Professional Gardeners' Trust report – Bertie Swainston

RHS MHort first year 2020-21

I have been working in horticulture for nine years now at places such as Birmingham Botanic, Hidcote Manor, and more recently at William Shakespeare's gardens. I've long had a passion for gardening, sharing horticulture with others, and I am always keen to keep improving my knowledge. Therefore, I wanted to undertake the RHS Master of horticulture degree. I went to the PGTrust and they generously offered a £1600 award from the Mollie Salisbury Bequest, without whom I wouldn't have been able to undertake the first year which was £1950 in total.

The RHS MHort is a distance-learning degree which is designed for people in full-time work. During the first year, assignments in Unit 1 were set on the horticultural industry, benefits of horticulture, and factors affecting horticultural organisations. In Unit 2, we moved onto more specialised topics and had to compile a report and a journal article. I did my report on improving the yields in a commercial apple orchard, whilst my journal article was on *Hedera sp.* and its affect on buildings. Finally in Unit 3, we had to compile an operational management report – mine focussed on management in historical public horticulture.

Overall, I feel like I have gained useful research skills, specialised knowledge on the topics that I had written about, and the ability to produce a well-rounded report which will be helpful in my future career. My huge thank yous again to the PGTrust and to the Mollie Salisbury Bequest!