

A possible pathway and costs for training a gardener

Costs are estimates – please check with a range of providers before making a decision. This is a collation of experiences rather than a road map. You may not wish to follow these options or they may not be available in your area, you may already have experience to transfer from a previous role(e.g. customer service). Again, check with providers to see what they can offer.

Gardener, Self-employed sole trader offering basic maintenance or employed at low grade employed gardener is expected to have

Description of training	Average cost	Time	Alternative route average cost	Alternative route time
<i>Initial experience</i> Domestic,/allotment gardening	N/a	Minimum 1 day a week for a year		
Or Volunteer gardening or weekend work in garden centre			n/a	1 day/week /year
<i>Basic theory training</i> RHS level 2, 2 certificates distance learning, external exam candidate	£800	1 day a week, 2 eves for academic year		
Or As above through college attendance, or City and Guilds or College Certificate			£1000+ £!50 travel	1 day a week for academic year
<i>Practical training</i> RHS level 2 practical by college attendance	£800	1 day a week for academic year		
Or Work and Retrain As a Gardener Scheme (WRAGS) trainee			£600 registration fee	2 days a week full year
Or one-year apprentice		Low wage for one yr		
<i>Generic work skills</i> Manual Handling course	£50	Half a day		
Health and safety at work course	£50	Half a day		
Customer service course	£50	Half a day		
Working with volunteers course	£100	A day		
In- service training generic work skills			Employer covers	2 days
<i>Equipment training</i> Safe application of pesticide certificates PA1/6	£500	2 and a half days		
Mower, Strimmer, leafblower, hedgecutter courses	£500	3 days		
In service equipment training			Employer covers	3 days

Total	£2760	1 day /wk unpaid practical +2 days training a week for year + 8 extra days	£1750	1 day/wk unpaid practical + 2days Min wage +1day/wk training
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Senior gardener. Self-employed craft gardener, or employed team leader/supervisor is expected to have:

Description of training	Average cost	Time	Alternative route average cost	Alternative route time
<i>Minimum Experience</i> Paid gardener at national living wage Or self-employed with set-up costs	Low income	2 years		
Or Trainee scheme HBGTP/botanic garden/NT Or 2 nd year apprentice			Low income	1 year
<i>Theory training</i> RHS level 3, 2 certificates through college attendance	£1400	1 day + 2 study evenings a week		
Or as above distance learning, external exam candidate			£800	3 evenings a week for 2 years
<i>Practical training</i> RHS level 3 practical through college attendance	£800	1 day a week academic year		
Or several specialist short trainings eg David Austin professional rose pruning			£70	1 day
Eg No dig gardening Charles Dowding			£330	2 days
Eg Lantra Basic tree inspection			£140	1 day
Eg Top fruit pruning Brogdale			£60	1 day
Eg Systematic botany Cambridge Botanic			£450	5 days
<i>Equipment training</i> NCPT Chainsaw maintenance and cross cutting	£450	3 days		
Or Lantra Basic Chainsaw			£350	2days
Chainsaw felling small trees	£550	3 days		
Or Tractor driving			£500	3 days
Elevated platform MEWP	£220	1 day		
Or Mini digger			£525	2 days
<i>Other CPD</i> Conference attendance	£80	1 day a year		

Work placement, visit			£100	2 days a year
Total	£3, 450	1 day + 2 eves a week for 2 years + 8 extra days	£2,875	3 eves a week for two years + 20 days

Head Gardener, garden contractor employing others

Description of training	Average cost	Time	Alternative route average cost	Alternative route time
<i>Experience</i> Minimum 3 years as senior gardener				
<i>Training</i> More years of experience				
other specialist training Distance learning garden design			£700	2 evenings a week for a year
Managing safely			£500	4 days
Managing as a Head Gardener-Alan Sargeant			£150 + £30 travel	1 day
Visit other gardens /trade shows			£150	2 days a year
			£1530	3 yrs experience +2 eves a week for 1 yr+ 3 extra days/yr
Or 2 more years' experience followed by RHS Masters	£5500	1 day+ 2 evenings a week for 3 years		
Or Kew Diploma	3 years low income in London	3 years full time + 4 evenings a week		
Or horticultural HND	£9250 x2 + loan	2 academic years,+ pt time work		
Or Hort degree	£9250 x3 + loan	3academic years + pt time work		

	£0- £27,750 fees	2-3yrs study		
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Note all training involves potential loss of earnings.

All gardeners are expected by the public to watch Gardeners World, and listen to Gardeners Question Time,

Attend at least one horticultural show a year,

Visit at least one public garden a year and one local garden a year

Also be members of NT and RHS, and other horticultural organisations.

And be active users of horticultural social media and on-line information

Summary

1. To become an employed gardener at low grade or self-employed general maintenance sole-trader, you need one years' experience of one day a week volunteering in a garden, working at a garden centre or gardening domestically, and 2 days a week theoretical and practical training (or a day and two evenings) plus an additional 5-8 days of training courses costing £1750-£2760
2. To become a senior employed gardener or team leader, or self-employed craft gardener, you need a further two years of experience as low paid gardener or a year on a fulltime training scheme on low pay. Also 1 day plus 1-2 evenings a week study for two years or equivalent over 1 year, and a further 9-20 days of training, costing £2875- £3450
3. To become a head gardener or manager or garden contractor employing others, you need a further 3 years or more experience as a senior gardener. Also further training of 3-5 training days for each of these years and 2 evenings a week study, or a higher education qualification taking 1-5 days and 2 -4 evenings a week study for 2-3 years, costing up to £27,750 in fees for a horticultural degree

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