



SCHOOL OF HERITAGE GARDENING

Threave Garden & Estate
Prospectus



NATIONAL
TRUST *for*
SCOTLAND

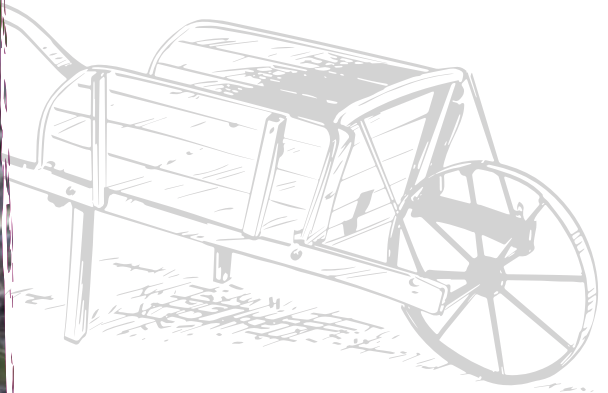


INTRODUCTION

The National Trust for Scotland's School of Heritage Gardening was established at Threave Garden in 1961 and is unique in Scotland. It's one of only a few centres of horticultural education in the United Kingdom to offer a firm grounding in both the theory and practice of gardening. The School aspires to train new generations of expert gardeners who feel confident in their craft and who'll be leaders in the field.

The Threave Certificate in Practical Heritage Gardening is particularly valuable to students who've achieved a Higher National Certificate (or equivalent) in horticulture and wish to develop their practical skills to support existing theoretical knowledge.

This brochure concerns our full-time horticultural training at Threave; information on other learning options in the Trust can be found on our website nts.org.uk





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ABOUT THREAVE



Threave Garden is located in south-west Scotland near to the town of Castle Douglas in Dumfries & Galloway. It holds a special place within our horticultural portfolio, as it has been developed for more than half a century by students *for* students. The School has transformed open parkland into splendid and varied gardens, enjoyed by 60,000 visitors each year.

Threave is magnificent in spring when the gardens are carpeted with over 300 varieties of daffodil, complementing the spring-flowering shrubs and trees. Summer is just as remarkable, when the herbaceous beds and borders are a feast for the eyes, filled with colour, fragrance and texture. Later, succulent fruit and vegetables abound in the walled garden and exotic wonders bloom in the glasshouses. There's also a rock garden, rose garden, heathers, conifers, ponds and water gardens, as well as beautiful specimen and champion trees in the grounds surrounding the Scottish Baronial-style Threave House.

Over the years, different areas in the garden have been developed so students can experience working with a broad range of growing conditions and plants. This variety in the garden ensures that our students have a good understanding of the requirements and challenges associated with such diverse locations. Our graduates leave with the broad horticultural knowledge that's expected from a professional in the industry.

Threave Garden is a Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) partner garden and an approved centre for the delivery of RHS qualifications, continually earning the highest rating as a training provider. Students work towards gaining the RHS Level 2 Certificate in Practical Horticulture alongside the Threave Certificate. The RHS written theory exams can also be taken here (fees apply).

Although the majority of the practical course is completed at Threave, there are several other Trust gardens and landscapes in the region at which training is occasionally held.

BROUGHTON HOUSE & GARDEN

At the centre of the nearby town of Kirkcudbright stands the former home of renowned Scottish artist E A Hornel. The garden at Broughton House was originally designed by Hornel and his sister, inspired by their travels in the Far East. This beautiful garden backs onto the River Dee and retains Hornel's love of oriental flora, with a fine plant collection and relaxed atmosphere.

ROCKCLIFFE

Rockcliffe is one of Scotland's most beautiful coastlines, stretching along the Rough Firth. Part of a National Scenic Area, this nature reserve is fringed with wildflowers and dotted with sailing villages. Further inland, the shells and shingle give way to patches of ancient broadleaved woodland and meadows, rich with flowers, butterflies and birds.



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WHAT WE OFFER

We take students with an academic horticultural qualification (or proven practical experience) and turn them into employable professionals!

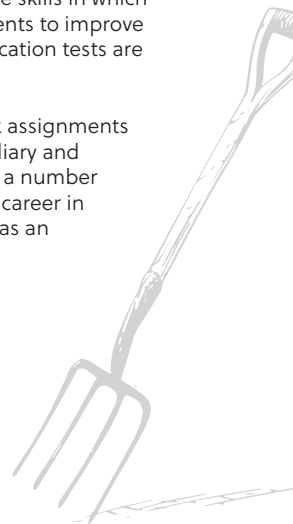
We design our course to ensure each student receives hands-on practical tuition and experience of working during the different seasons.

Our teaching staff are seasoned experts in their fields, who have worked in a wide range of gardens. Students will be overseen by our instructor gardeners, each of whom is responsible for a different area of the garden: the grounds, the walled garden and the glasshouses. Students will rotate through these areas on a rota system to ensure in-depth training all year round.

Throughout the course, students undertake practical assessments of the skills in which they've been trained. Threave's extensive plant collection enables students to improve their plant knowledge and identification skills. Fortnightly plant identification tests are an important part of the course.

In addition, students are required to complete a number of coursework assignments designed to support their practical training – these include keeping a diary and completing plant profiles. Students will also go on a study tour, visiting a number of gardens and nurseries to gain a greater appreciation of the variety a career in horticulture can provide. A report of the tour is required from students as an assessed assignment.

Upon successful completion of the practical assessments and assignments, students are awarded the Threave Certificate in Practical Heritage Gardening and the RHS Level 2 Certificate in Practical Horticulture.





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STUDENT LIFE

You'll make friends for life and join an inclusive and supportive family of staff and volunteers, all engaged with promoting the work of the National Trust for Scotland.

WHERE NEXT?

For many of our students, their time with the National Trust for Scotland does not end with graduation. We're always keen to retain and nurture talent, and many graduates have gone on to work in our wonderful places throughout Scotland. From small formal gardens to large estates, walled gardens to woodland: the diversity of Trust gardens caters for all interests and specialisms. Former students currently hold senior roles such as First Gardener at Pitmedden, Head Gardener at Culzean, and Gardens & Designed Landscapes Manager for Ayrshire & Arran.

Outside the Trust, recent graduates have undertaken further study programmes at Kew, Tresco Abbey Garden and Cambridge University Botanic Garden, as well as RHS training schemes at Wisley, Harlow Carr and Rosemoor. Those who have chosen to start their professional career have found employment at gardens such as Alnwick, Benmore and Windsor Great Park.

Thrive students will join alumni such as David Knott, Curator of the Living Collection at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and Donald Murray, former Head of Horticulture at the Eden Project.



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QUOTES FROM ALUMNI



“ Being a student at the School of Heritage Gardening was **MY FIRST EXPERIENCE** in a garden and I learnt so much. I was taught by highly competent and engaging instructors who gave me their knowledge and experience on how to maintain a garden, a Victorian walled garden and a glasshouse; moreover, I broadened my knowledge of plants and took my RHS Level 2 Practical Certificate. It has been intense, but with a bit of planning everything can be achieved. Everybody made me feel welcome at Threave Garden, especially important as I was new to the UK. The instructors were willing to help me with anything I found difficult due to the language barrier and as students, staff and volunteers together we created a truly supportive and encouraging environment.

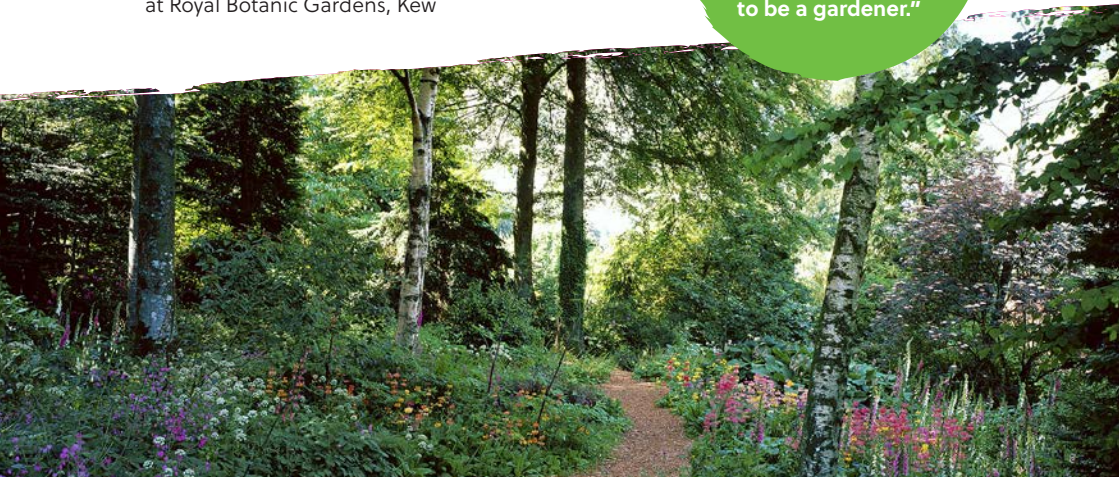
I improved my practical skills exponentially and, by the end of the year, I felt much more confident about how to be a gardener. The School of Heritage Gardening is held in high regard in Scotland and throughout the UK, and it has been a stepping stone to being accepted as an Assistant Technician at Cambridge University Botanic Garden and then as a Diploma Student at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Luigi Leoni (Class of 2017)
Diploma Student
at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

“ I think my time at Threave was **THE BEST START TO TRAINING IN HORTICULTURE** I could have possibly had. It is a very intense course where you learn huge amounts in just one year. As it's a small team, you quickly gain a real sense of responsibility in taking care of the garden. Several of the instructors really went above and beyond in helping me get the most out of my year and take my next steps in horticulture. I am so grateful for my time at Threave.

Naomi Trenier (Class of 2017)
Trainee at RHS Garden Wisley

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ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Although entry qualifications are flexible and depend on your individual circumstances, it's essential that you're currently taking (or have completed) a two-year horticultural apprenticeship:

OR

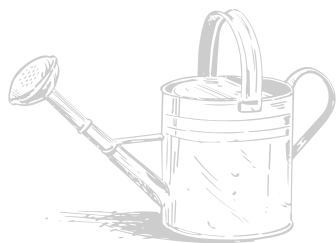
- A horticultural qualification such as Level 2 NC, HNC, RHS Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Horticulture, or similar

PLUS

- 6 months of practical experience in amenity gardening in a general context – this should be the total (not, for example, 1 day a week for 6 months)
- We also ask that you're computer literate, with the ability to produce well-written reports and diaries

Application forms are available in February, with completed applications due by 17 May. The course begins in late August. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend Threave for a panel interview and practical assessment.

Please contact us to discuss any of the information in this booklet by emailing shg@nts.org.uk or visit our website at nts.org.uk





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