

# Garden Chef Given Green Thumbs Up



A green-fingered chef who specialises in bringing a taste of the garden into the kitchen has been shortlisted for a UK-wide award.

Ben Harrison is renowned for using fresh fruit, vegetables, herbs and other plants grown on site in his creations at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), where he is head chef with fine dining and hospitality specialists, Sodexo Prestige.

Now his work in the Gateway Restaurant and Terrace Café at RBGE has earned him a place on the shortlist for the Sports and Leisure FSM award, an industry accolade recognising the UK's top contract caterers.

Fraser Sharp at RBGE, who put the popular chef forward for the award, said: "Ben has displayed the traits and skills every successful chef should have.

"His role is highly demanding and requires great levels of adaptability and patience. He is also a perfectionist who sets the highest standards, all reasons why he is shortlisted.

"Over the past four years, Ben has built up a fantastic reputation at RBGE for his innovation and dedication. He is passionate about using fresh, local and sustainable produce to create menus and offers that are genuinely popular with customers.

"His work incorporating produce from our 'Edible Garden Project' matches and reflects our increasing demand for ethical and green credentials.

"We are extremely proud of the work Ben has done with the team

here at the Gateway and he richly deserves his place as a finalist. We wish him the best of luck on the night.”



Ben started his career as a sous chef with Sodexo Prestige in 2003 and worked his way up to become head chef and played a leading role in the 2009 opening of the Gateway Restaurant.

He has played an important part in every aspect of the planning and coordination of the award-winning venue, including setting out the highest standards and service levels.

He also helped with the design and operation of the kitchen and pulls together bespoke menus.

Those regularly include ingredients from the “Edible Garden Project”, which aims to help people grow their own fruit and veg and offers visitors’ advice on how to start their own garden at home.

It has enabled Ben and his team to incorporate fresh ingredients such as rainbow chard, rocket and purple sprouting broccoli into the dishes served in both the restaurant and cafe.

Ben said: “I am thrilled to have been shortlisted for this award as it’s really a reflection of all the hard work and dedication I’ve put in here at RBGE.

“I am passionate about using sustainable and fresh food in all my dishes when possible, so having the ‘Edible Garden Project’ so close to our kitchen is brilliant.

“Whatever is fresh and in-season in the garden we can use in our dishes and it makes a real difference to the quality and taste of all our food.

“It has been a real team effort to make the restaurant so

successful here at RBGE and I hope I can make them all proud by taking home something from the awards that we can celebrate together.”

The FMS awards are being held in London’s Grange Hotel at Tower Bridge on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November where three nominees from each of the 13 categories have been invited to attend to see each of the winners announced.

Sodexo Prestige is the corporate dining, hospitality and events division of Sodexo and partners with 17 top class venues in Scotland – and 50 across the UK – including the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Hampden Park Stadium and Perth Racecourse. It also provides catering hospitality for The Open Championship, one of the world’s biggest golfing events.