

Gardening apprenticeships on offer

National Trust for Scotland announces its new garden apprentice scheme

By offering apprenticeships in its gardens the charity says it is investing in the future of Scotland's heritage gardens.

They have identified a shortage of people with the right skills and experience to look after its gardens



National Trust Scotland Falkland Palace.

Picture by Stewart Attwood

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So the National Trust for Scotland decided the best way would be to pilot its own apprenticeship scheme.

They will initially look for five apprentice gardeners, who will be based on the Modern Apprenticeship in Horticulture at SVQ Level 2 and will start in early September 2018.

Trainees will be part of the charity's gardening teams at Brodick, Crathes, Culzean, Greenbank, Hill of Tarvit and

Kellie Castle for the next two years.



National Trust Scotland Falkland Palace.

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The group will come together regularly throughout the two-year programme for formal training at Oatridge College in West Lothian.

Ann Steele, head of heritage gardening at the National Trust for Scotland is the brains behind the idea. She said: "Skills shortage is an issue affecting the whole of the horticulture industry, but it's particularly important for us to address because we love and care for so many of Scotland's most significant and important heritage gardens.

"I originally entered the world of professional gardening by volunteering at Inverewe Garden in Wester Ross but to gain a professional qualification I had to go south of the border. This is a brilliant opportunity for budding horticulturalists to be trained by some of the best in the industry and a chance I would've jumped at when I was first starting out."

The National Trust for Scotland has 70 gardeners at present

and has a history of developing gardening talent through its School of Heritage Gardening at Threave, which has been operational for the past 50 years.

But demand is outstripping supply and extra measures are now being put in place to safeguard the future of Scotland's heritage gardens.

Simon Skinner, chief executive of National Trust for Scotland said: "We're growing the next generation of gardeners, as part of our new five year strategy, so that our gorgeous gardens can flourish. This is just one of the ways the National Trust for Scotland is protecting Scotland's national and natural and built heritage and conserving it for generations to come, all for the love of Scotland."

You can find out more about the National Trust for Scotland's new gardening apprentice scheme at <https://www.nts.org.uk/charity/Vacancies/>