



Job Description

Head Gardener

Accountable to: The Domestic Bursar and the Head of Grounds Maintenance
Supervises: 3 Gardeners
Liaison with: Domestic Bursary managers

Overview of Role

University College gardens complement the historic nature of the site and are places intended for the enjoyment of the whole College community. They are places to rest and relax and also for the College to entertain and for students to use. All College grounds must be kept to a high standard and look neat and presentable at all times. Care must be taken to ensure that, in use, the College gardens are respected and not subjected to undue damage. The College Gardening team is responsible for ensuring that the gardens are presented to the highest standards for College and student lead events, paying particular attention to the College diary.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Staff Management

- To instruct a small team of committed gardeners, ensuring a positive and pro-active team culture, and harmonious working relationships with colleagues.
- To propose an annual Gardens budget for approval and to monitor income and expenditure against the budget.
- To produce work schedules and forward plan for seasonal activity. Carry out in-house training where required.
- To ensure that all statutory and mandatory training is carried out within relevant timescales.

Garden Planning and Design

- To make suggestions to the Head of Grounds Maintenance and Domestic Bursar on possible schemes and to keep both fully informed of the progress and developments in the garden.
- To draw up small designs for discrete areas and propose suitable planting plans to complement the designs.

Garden Development and Maintenance

- To maintain all hard surfaces within the Gardens, to include the maintenance of paths, weed control within the quads, spraying of herbicides, removal of litter and the application of rock salt during icy conditions.
- Ensure a daily inspection of the gardens, removing litter, emptying bins, and other debris, and reporting any maintenance or cleaning issues in a timely manner.
- To maintain College property including garden furniture, glasshouse, sheds, garden frames and polytunnels, with careful planning in terms of replacement and/or repair.
- To choose and source plants for all areas of the gardens, ensuring interest throughout the year.
- To design and implement vibrant and interesting seasonal plant displays for all areas of the gardens, and, in discussion with the Domestic Bursar, seeking the input of designers and landscape architects where appropriate. To plant up planting designs commissioned by the College in the most cost effective manner.
- To produce summer bedding plants for all containers and window boxes on site. Install, maintain, and take down all such containers.
- To ensure that all machinery is in good working order and arrange repairs and regular servicing by a horticultural engineer. Research and advise upon the purchase and hire of additional machinery.
- To choose and source all Christmas trees and decorations for the communal and private areas of College. Erect, maintain and dismantle all decorations. Make wreaths as required.

Major Projects

- To contribute to the successful delivery of any capital works in respect of gardens and landscaping as required. This includes the planting and landscaping of Univ North, due for completion in 2024/25
- Working closely with the Domestic Bursar in the successful planning, design, planting and maintenance of the Fellows Garden herbaceous borders.
- Supporting the Finance Bursar and Domestic Bursar with any future major projects as required.

College Events

- To represent the Gardens Department at internal, inter-Collegiate and external meetings such as Heads of Department, Health and Safety, Sustainability, and other appropriate governance forums.
- To contribute to the regular planning and delivery of “open house” events e.g. National Gardens Scheme, Open Doors Oxford, Oxford in Bloom etc.
- To liaise with stakeholders such American Summer Schools, Summer Ball Committees, Garden Play providers, public tour groups and other horticultural groups to ensure that their use of the Gardens is a positive experience.
- To engage with alumni and visitors to the Gardens and facilitate special requests such as planting memorial trees, scattering of ashes under instruction from Governing Body. Undertake tours of the gardens as required.

- To ensure the gardens are fit for purpose by all users and for all e.g. College Ball, commercial events and weddings, and make recommendations as to the implementation of periods of recovery and respite.

Health and Safety

- To ensure all risk assessments and method statements for use of equipment and relevant spaces are maintained on an annual basis
- To ensure that appropriate PPE is available and worn at all times as required.
- Ensure that all equipment is fully serviceable and has undergone all servicing and repairs required before use.
- Ensure a safe working environment for staff and for College Members during periods of garden maintenance
- To keep hand tools and small garden machinery in good clean condition (although this does not include carrying out work that demands the attention of a qualified mechanic)
- To oversee any 'winter weather' work including salting and gritting the paths as well as snow clearance where required.
- Attend the College's Health and Safety Committee.

COSHH

- To ensure that all garden chemicals are recorded and kept iaw the COSHH regulations
- To apply chemicals as required and within current legislation.
- To ensure that all departmental personnel are trained and experienced with the management of substances hazardous to health.

Any other duties commensurate with the area of responsibility and grade.

Person Specification

Qualifications, Skills and Experience

- A positive and pro-active approach with the ability to lead a team while also work actively as part of the gardening team.
- Detailed knowledge of plants, planting and cultivation of shrubs and flowering plants and hedges.
- Proven skills in ornamental horticulture, with a background which includes training in that area and experience of working in gardens of high professional standards.
- Knowledge of lawn care and maintenance appropriate to each season, including feeding treatments.
- Knowledge of soil management and plant propagation appropriate to the role.
- A strong interest in gardening for wildlife, sustainability, biodiversity and food production.
- Broad knowledge and experience of operating and maintaining garden machinery.
- Strong knowledge of COSHH, and H&S generally.
- Proven experience of successful project planning and management.
- Experience and a clear understanding of budgetary control.
- A strong communicator, who can effectively build relationships with a range of stakeholders.
- A pro-active approach and “can do” attitude.
- Significant people management experience, with the ability to build a positive working environment.