

Learning Volunteer Role Description

What will I be doing?

The Learning Team works with community groups, families and schools visiting the Garden. Volunteers are welcome to support any of these areas, or you can choose to focus on one specific area if that suits you best.

Communities volunteering

- Help the Communities Coordinator with the Community Gardening sessions held here – this involves practical horticulture and assisting people who may be new to gardening themselves
- Assist with workshops for community groups in the Garden. Tasks range from helping with the smooth running of sessions to making cups of tea and ensuring people feel welcome
- Support groups on guided walks in the Garden

Families volunteering

- Assisting during our regular monthly family events – can include welcoming families, explaining the activities, engaging families about the topic, keeping tables tidy and ensuring materials are well stocked.
- Assist at our annual events such as Twilight, Cambridge Festival and Festival of Plants.

Schools volunteering

- Most of these visits are for ages 5-11, but we are increasing visits for pupils aged 12-16.
- Visits mainly cover topics within the science and geography curriculum, though we also have workshops incorporating English and art. You can see the workshops on offer [here](#).
- Following training, you would be leading small groups of up to 18 children on set activities planned by our Schools Learning Officers.

What skills do I need?

- An enthusiasm for plants and the work of the Botanic Garden (this is more important than in-depth knowledge of plants as training will be provided where needed)
- Some experience of working with children, families or community groups
- A friendly and approachable manner
- Good communication skills and the ability to speak with a wide range of ages and ability levels
- Reliable and punctual

How much time is involved?

The time involvement for our volunteers is variable.

School visits happen on weekdays, with the summer term (April – July) being particularly busy. Most school visits happen between the core hours of 10am and 12.30pm, though we do have some visits which take place in the afternoons, usually from 12.30-2.30pm.

Family activities take place monthly on the first Saturday, from 10am – 1pm and on some weekdays during the school holidays.

Community visits usually take place in the daytime on weekdays.

You do not have to commit to a regular schedule of volunteering. We circulate dates when help is needed and you can sign up or not, depending on your schedule.

Will training be available?

Induction training will be provided for all our new volunteers. You will also be invited to a trial day(s) to see for yourself what is involved.

If you volunteer with school visits there is a training programme to ensure you feel confident with the content of workshops before you lead them yourself. You will also initially shadow staff and established volunteers.

How does giving my time help the Garden?

Many of the activities run by the Learning Team would not be able to take place without our volunteer team. Demand for school visits is growing. Your help as a volunteer will help us reach more people in our local area and spread the word about the important work carried out at Cambridge University Botanic Garden, inspiring more people to learn about, and protect, plants.

Benefits for volunteers

- Volunteer card for free entry to the Garden
- Learn more about plants and the Botanic Garden
- Have fun with like-minded people
- Great experience for anyone looking to work in the field of environmental education, science communication or community engagement.

If you have any questions please contact education@botanic.cam.ac.uk