

Curator – Benmore Botanic Garden

Recruitment Brochure - 2024

“All life depends on plants. They sustain whole ecosystems, feed us, keep us healthy, stimulate our minds, and nurture our wellbeing. And yet, the Earth’s rich diversity of plant life is rapidly disappearing. At a time when 40% of the world’s plant species are at risk from extinction our work is more important than ever.”

Simon Milne MBE FRSE

Regius Keeper, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

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Who we are

The vision of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) is to build a positive future for plants, people and the planet. Our mission is to explore, conserve and explain the world of plants. Our current priority is to tackle the biodiversity crisis and the climate emergency.

Established in 1670, RBGE is one of the world's leading botanic gardens, engaged in science, horticulture, learning and the arts. The four gardens across Scotland – Benmore, Logan, Dawyck and Edinburgh - attract more than 1 million visitors per year, and host approximately 13,500 species, outdoors and under glass. We cultivate plants from more than 150 countries and the impact of our work reaches more than 40 countries around the world, as well as local communities in Scotland. We help build conservation horticulture skills and capacity in many different countries.

Benmore Botanic Garden, near Dunoon, in Argyll, on the West Coast of Scotland, attracts an average of 40,000 visitors per year, and is one of the finest gardens in Britain, with stunning displays of rhododendrons and magnolias. The Garden has one of the finest avenues of Giant Redwoods in the country, and a fully restored Victorian fernery. There are important plant collections from China, Japan, Bhutan, North and South America, and spectacular views across the surrounding landscapes.

Collections management and horticulture is changing, as we embrace a more holistic attitude to our landscape management. This means being more attuned to benefitting biodiversity as a whole and being more reactive to the immediate impacts of our changing climate, adopting nature-based solutions and thinking. We adopt rigorous biosecurity protocols in our collections management, we are peat free, and our chemical use is minimal. At RBGE, the horticulture teams work closely and collaboratively with science, learning, estates and other teams.

As a registered Scottish charity, the RBGE is funded principally by the Scottish Government – but as an organisation, we are very much global in our reach. We are also accelerating our ability to scale our own income from activities, many of which are carried out in the gardens, as well as in locations across Scotland and beyond.

More details on our plans can be found at:

www.rbge.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/corporate-information/

Who you are



You will have a passion for horticulture and plant conservation, alongside broad and deep experience of working in a botanical collection or garden at leadership level. You will excel at maintaining and developing a living collection to meet the needs of conservation, research, and education programmes, for inspiring and delighting visitors, and developing income.

You are someone who embraces a holistic and flexible approach to horticulture and collections management, balancing the aims of biodiversity enrichment, climate change adaptation, threatened species conservation, biosecurity, and world-class presentation standards.

You are a great communicator, resilient and pragmatic, patient and skilled in relationship and team building, and able to juggle sometimes competing demands on the garden from different stakeholders across the organisation. You will lead and maintain a culture of excellence in current and future horticultural practices and customer service.

A team player and inspirational leader, you will be a champion for horticulture, as a subject and a career, taking pride in the welfare, inclusivity and development of your team and inspiring the next generation of potential leaders.



Job description

Purpose

The Curator of Benmore Garden gives visionary leadership for the Benmore Garden and reports to the Curator of the Living Collections. This includes the planning, management, development, and presentation of the garden to the highest horticultural standard, liaising with many internal and external stakeholders. Also, to lead and motivate the gardens team, working collaboratively across RBGE departments to develop and deliver RBGE strategy goals and a great visitor experience.

Main Duties:

Collection curation, horticulture and visitor experience

- Care and cultivation of the Living Collection as set out in the RBGE Living Collection Policy and relevant management and strategic plans, including exemplary plant records management;
- Maintain the highest standards of presentation, horticulture, and biosecurity in the gardens, adapting to climate change, and driving sustainable garden management practices, including decarbonisation, zero peat use and chemical use reduction;
- Work collaboratively with science teams to deliver the ambitions of RBGE science and conservation programmes, such as the International Conifer Conservation Programme;
- Work collaboratively with the Visitor Welcome, Commercial, and Estates teams to deliver a great customer service culture;

- Work collaboratively with public engagement and arts teams to ensure interpretation and exhibitions are current and well-presented. Lead on delivery of gardens tours, talks and events on site.

Operational management, health, and safety

- Lead the over-all site operations, ensuring on-call cover is in place for when the site is closed to the public, including winter shutdown;
- Lead on recruitment, deployment, development and management of gardens staff, apprentices, students, and volunteers, including national and international fieldwork opportunities;
- Ensure health and safety compliance for visitors and staff on site. This includes implementing and updating RBGE safe working systems and ensuring staff training and health surveillance needs are met;
- Work closely and collaboratively with other teams, including estates, commercial, learning and engagement, development and communications, and science, to ensure that targets for maintenance, income generation and information provision are met;
- Project management of significant gardens projects, and/or inputting into larger project management processes;
- Management and oversight of contractors on site, ensuring compliance and visitor safety needs are met, and where possible ensuring quality and value of work;

Job description

Strategy, finance, and planning

- Budget holder with responsibility for creation and management of annual departmental budgets, including procurement compliance working with RBGE finance team;
- Lead on the ongoing development and delivery of gardens plans and policies, ensuring compatibility with our RBGE plans and strategies. Input into, and report on RBGE strategies and organisation delivery plans;
- Work collaboratively with the Younger Benmore Trust and supporter groups to maintain a good working relationship and ongoing support;
- Lead and contribute to the development, procurement, and delivery of capital projects within the garden.

Organisational leadership and representation

- Be an active member of the RBGE Senior Leadership Team, representing Benmore Garden and enabling cross divisional opportunities;
- Build and maintain good relationships with neighbours, supporter groups, and local stakeholders, including the Younger Benmore Trust;
- Represent RBGE on external stakeholder groups and to the media, acting as an ambassador for the organisation and the individual gardens in the UK and internationally.



Skills, knowledge and experience



- Proven management experience within a botanic garden, or equivalent, landscape including an excellent knowledge of curatorial policies and procedures, garden management plans, collection management systems and plant health biosecurity requirements. Excellent working plant knowledge;
- Excellent communication, project management and digital skills;
- Excellent relationship management skills, and experience in working a multi-site organisation;
- Excellent knowledge and understanding of health and safety legislation in the workplace particularly; Risk Assessment, COSHH assessment and accident recording systems;
- Ideally educated to degree level, or with equivalent experience.

Pay and benefits



We offer a generous employment package:

- Salary £45,712 to £50,980 (subject to skills and experience)
- Membership of the civil service defined benefit pension scheme
- 25 days holiday, increasing to 30 days after 5 years of service, with the option to buy additional holiday
- 11.5 days of public and privilege holidays annually
- Discounts in our shop, restaurants, and cafes
- A range of staff support mechanisms, including an Employee Assistance Scheme
- A range of family-friendly options to support work-life balance, including flexible working arrangements, enhanced contractual maternity, paternity, adoption, and shared parental leave, and career breaks.
- Relocation allowance available if required

Our [benefits brochure](#) gives much more information on the benefits available to colleagues

How to apply

To apply email recruitment@rbge.org.uk with:

- Your CV
- A covering letter outlining the skills, knowledge and experience you'd bring to the role
- A completed equal opportunities questionnaire: [EOQ form](#)

Closing date for applications is 12pm midday (GMT) on Tuesday 19 November 2024 and interviews will be held on Thursday 28 November 2024 at Benmore Botanic Garden, PA23 8QU

For an informal discussion about this role, please contact Gillian Williamson, Business Support Administrator at gwilliamson@rbge.org.uk

rbge.org.uk/about-us/working-with-us





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