

School of Horticulture,  
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew,  
Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB, UK  
Telephone +44 (0)20 8332 5545  
Facsimile +44 (0)20 8332 5574  
[www.kew.org/education/diploma](http://www.kew.org/education/diploma)

Dear Applicant

## Kew Diploma in Horticulture Application Pack

The following documents are included within this pack:

1. **Minimum Entry Requirements** – please read this document thoroughly, ensuring you are able to fulfil all of the minimum entry requirements before completing your application form
2. **Guidance Notes for Applicants** – for your information
3. **Horticulture & Public Experience** – Departmental Information
4. **Application Form** – This should be returned with your essay and photograph before the 31st January (see full instructions in Section 10 of the application form)
5. **Two reference forms** – in BLOCK CAPITALS please insert your name and the names of each referee as stated in Section 9 of the application form. Please send the completed forms to your referees and ask them to return the references to Kew before the 31st January.
6. **Equality & Diversity Questionnaire** – please complete and return with your application

**Please read through all the information provided before completing your application.** Further information about the Royal Botanic Gardens is available on the Kew website: [www.kew.org](http://www.kew.org)

**Completed application forms together with an essay of 250-500 words describing the career you would like to follow in horticulture, should be returned no later than 31 January in the year in which admission is desired.**

We will only contact those candidates selected for interview. Therefore, if you have not heard from us within 3 weeks of the closing date, you should presume that you will not be called for interview.

May we take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and wish you luck with your application.

School of Horticulture

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew  
E-mail: [kewdip@kew.org](mailto:kewdip@kew.org)

SAVING THE WORLD'S PLANTS FOR LIFE

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew has exempt charitable status.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



WORLD HERITAGE SITE



PLANTS PEOPLE  
POSSIBILITIES

## Minimum Requirements Kew Diploma in Horticulture

### Minimum Requirements for Kew Diploma in Horticulture

- Minimum of 2 years accrued practical, horticultural work experience
  
- Minimum of 5 GCSEs (or equivalent)
  
- Minimum of 2 A Levels (or equivalent)
  
- Horticultural qualification (to at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent)
  
- If you are an applicant for whom English is not your first language, you will need to provide evidence that you have obtained a standard in both written and spoken English, which is academically and internationally recognised, as the Kew Diploma is a rigorous academic course which requires a high level of both written and oral communication in the English language.

For independent advice and information, please see [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org), the International Language Testing System

# Guidance Notes for Applicants Kew Diploma in Horticulture

## The Application Form – Section 1 Personal Details

- The application form plays an important part in the selection process; decisions to shortlist candidates for interview are based solely upon the information you supply on your form and the form provides a basis for the interview itself.
- Curriculum Vitae (CVs) alone will not be accepted. However, CVs will be accepted in addition to a fully completed application form.
- **You may complete the form on a word-processor but please use the appropriate headings and format.**

## Sections 2 and 3 : Education and Horticultural Qualifications

- List membership of professional institutes, in-house courses and professional qualifications if applicable. Essential qualifications will be checked at interview. **Therefore, if you are selected for interview you should bring the original certificates with you or an officially certified copy from the academic establishment concerned.**
- If you are an applicant for whom English is not your first language, you will need to provide evidence that you have obtained a standard in both written and spoken English, which is academically and internationally recognised, as this is a rigorous academic course which requires a high level of both written and oral communication in the English language. For independent advice and information, please see [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org) The International Language Testing System

## Section 4: Horticultural Employment

- Do not simply list the duties of your horticultural jobs, please give a brief explanation of the main duties of your horticultural employment.
- It is essential that you account for any gaps in employment.

## Section 5: Non Horticultural Employment

- Please give a brief explanation of the main duties of your non-horticultural employment.
- It is essential that you account for any gaps in employment.

## Sections 6/7/8: Future Career, Community Involvement, Leisure interests/hobbies

- Future Career: Please mark two preferences (in order).
- Community Involvement (including voluntary public service) – please complete if applicable.
- Leisure interests/hobbies (including offices held in social/sports clubs etc. – please complete with relevant information.

## Section 9: References

We will require two references – one academic, and one for horticultural employment. Please insert your name and the names of each referee as detailed in Section 9 of the application form. Please send the completed forms to your referees and ask them to return the reference to us as soon as possible.

## Please return your Application Form to:

The School of Horticulture, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB



PLANTS PEOPLE  
POSSIBILITIES

## Departmental Information

### HORTICULTURE AND PUBLIC EXPERIENCE DEPARTMENT

The renowned gardens at Kew and Wakehurst Place are maintained and developed by a diverse and talented team of horticulturists, led by the Curator and his management team. More than just a beautiful collection of plants, the Gardens and estates have been part of English history for more than 400 years, and the historic landscapes and buildings are an important part of the nation's heritage. The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew were established in 1759, while the gardens at Wakehurst date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Nowhere else can such a diverse collection of plants from different parts of the world be seen. The visiting public has the opportunity to see the 33,000 taxa in imaginative and stimulating settings, with the many disciplines of plant science interpreted in the conservatories and garden features. Interpretation for the general visitor is delivered through trained volunteer guides, exhibitions, lectures, trails and leaflets as well as by site specific labelling on Kew related topics throughout the Gardens. Educational programmes are run for a number of different audiences, at Kew and Wakehurst Place.

The origins of the plants are documented and some can be traced back to the Gardens' inception, including the famous ginkgo planted by Princess Augusta. The policy is to seek maximum information relating to new accessions, and collection policies ensure that these are beneficial to the strategies and mission of the organisation.

In order to facilitate management, the Curator has a team of Heads of Section at Kew each with specific and specialised responsibilities.

There follows a brief overview of the main areas of work in HPE.

#### Arboretum and Horticultural Services

This section is responsible for the cultivation and maintenance of the hardy woody collections at Kew, including around 9,000 trees. In the main, the trees are arranged in their families, following the Bentham and Hooker system of plant classification, which was developed at Kew. Extensive shrub collections are found throughout the Arboretum. Features of particular note include the Bamboo Garden, the Azalea Garden, the Rhododendron Dell, the Pagoda, the Lily Pond and the Woodland Glade. In the south-western corner of the Gardens, a woodland is maintained for conservation purposes. It contains many native species and includes a stunning display of bluebells in the spring. This section also provides sward maintenance, machinery and recycling services, and maintains the Garden Stores, where protective clothing and other equipment are held centrally. A dedicated Health & Safety Officer is responsible for H&S and related training throughout the department.

Arboretum and Horticultural Services's staff are responsible for the safety and maintenance of the mature trees at Kew, provision and servicing of machinery, grass cutting, recycling and central purchasing of bulk materials for all sections.

#### Great Glasshouses and Training

This section is responsible for all the tropical and tender plant collections under glass: The Palm House, Water Lily House, Temperate House, The Princess of Wales Conservatory, with its ten climatic zones, and extensive associated nursery support areas. Three listed buildings (Palm House, Waterlily House and Temperate House) are of great historical importance. Of unique interest are the Marine Display, located in the basement of The Palm House, and the exhibits in the Evolution House, located behind the Temperate House.

The nursery areas propagate plant material and cultivate non-display research collections. Many of the non-display collections represent a very important reference and research tool. These include orchids, ferns and succulents, and geographic collections from the Canary Islands and Madagascar. The collections are increasingly used for conservation purposes.

This section also co-ordinates both academic and practical horticultural training across the whole department, and incorporates the School of Horticulture. A Practical Training Co-ordinator manages a rotational training scheme for Diploma students and Band A horticultural staff, who move from section to section on an annual basis. The School of Horticulture takes the leading role in the provision and co-ordination of the education and training of HPE personnel. Its premier course, the Kew Diploma, is available to national and international applicants, and provides an excellent grounding for students seeking a prestigious career in horticulture and related plant science disciplines. A variety of short-term courses provide essential training for staff development, relating to horticultural principles and practices, advances in technology and changes in legislation. Block training courses are also offered to individuals and institutes from time to time. The School produces a Student Handbook for the students during their time with RBG Kew and manages Horticultural Internships.

### **Hardy Display**

This section is responsible for amenity features at the north end of the Gardens, and the herbaceous and alpine plant collections. Alpine and herbaceous plants have minimal supplementary heat requirements. The section manages the Melon Yard nursery areas including the hardy element of science support. Major features within the gardens include the Alpine and Bulb Display House, the Order Beds (systematic plantings), the Rock Garden, the Grass Garden, the replica 17th century Queen's Garden, (Kew Palace) the walled Duke's Garden, the Secluded Garden, the Woodland Garden and innovative seasonal displays on the Palm House parterre, and the Broadwalk. These collections are of exceptional value for the interpretation of plant science, e.g. for phytogeography, taxonomy, conservation and ethnobotany. Research collections support Kew's Scientific work on Monocotyledons.

### **Public Programmes and Curatorial Support**

This section is responsible for plant health, CITES, CBD regulations and the quarantine houses. It provides I.T. and Plant Records support to the department, and manages the receipt and dispatch of collections etc. It incorporates the Micropropagation Laboratory and the Threatened Plants Unit. Interpretation and Public and Schools Education also come under this section to promote integration between horticulture and education. The Schools education programme provides training, activities and resources related to the National Curriculum through: in-service training for teachers and student teachers, teacher and student placements, children's activity sessions and topic packs. In the field of adult education, the section provides varied courses and study days on botany, botanical illustration, plant photography, papermaking and horticultural techniques

### **Plant Health Regulations**

Staff wishing to import or export living material (e.g. whole plants, roots/rhizomes, seeds, cuttings, etc.) into or out of the country, must only do so through the Kew Plant Quarantine Officer or Plant Reception personnel.

This is essential for the issuing of official plant import documentation, CITES and CBD documentation and advice, the issue of Phytosanitary certificates for Kew exports and to obtain information prior to departure on the Plant Health requirements of the exporting/importing country.

RBG Kew has a special importation license that enables us to import most plant species. However, due to the diverse nature of our collections and their origins, the Plant Health requirements are strict and are a legal obligation under Defra. Staff contravening these regulations could jeopardise future licenses and may be reported to Defra, the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate or Her Majesty's Customs & Excise as appropriate. It is vital therefore that staff contact the Kew Plant Quarantine Officer or Plant Reception Staff and discuss their requirements before exchanging any living materials.