

Royal Botanic Gardens

Kew

Inspiring futures



Richard Buggs

Tell us about your job

Senior Research Leader (Plant Health).

I lead a research group seeking to understand how the DNA of trees allows them to resist pathogens.

Why is science important in your career?

Science IS my career!

What is your average work day like?

Earlier in my career I spent a lot of time in the lab, on fieldwork and analysing data. Now my PhD students and postdoctoral researchers do most of that. I spend my time meeting with them, thinking about ideas, and writing papers and grant proposals.

Did you go to university? If so, what did you study? If not, what did you do after leaving school?

Yes, I read Natural Sciences at University of Cambridge, and after that did a doctorate at University of Oxford. I also did post-doctoral research at the University of Florida and Queen Mary University of London.

What sort of personality traits do you have that help you in your career?

To succeed in scientific research, you need lots of curiosity and creativity. You also need to work hard and be a bit of a perfectionist.

What helped you get your role at Kew?

I was doing research on trees at Queen Mary University of London that Kew were interested in, so they offered me a job.

What advice would you give to someone considering a career like yours?

Read books and magazines about science. Biology is far more exciting than many people realise. Most people have no idea how wonderfully complex living organisms are.

What do you want people to know about your work?

We are using methods developed for human medicine to understand plant health.

By searching the DNA of ash trees, we are finding genes that allow them to resist the fungus causing ash dieback.

We collaborate with other scientists all over the world.

Want a career that grows?

Build your skills in science, technology, engineering, art and maths to give yourself a chance to blossom in a career like one of these varied and exciting jobs at Kew.

You could make a real difference to the world.

For further information: www.kew.org

Engeavour



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