



Volunteer Role Description: Arboretum Seasonal 'Weeding and Mulching' Volunteers



About the role

[Harcourt Arboretum](#) is a 130-acre site located a few miles south of Oxford in the village of Nuneham Courtenay. It includes semi-natural woodland, parkland meadows, and a formal tree collection. This year, the Tree Team is looking for a dedicated group of seasonal volunteers to help care for the collection and keep it looking its best for visitors by regularly weeding and mulching around the many young trees and shrubs. If you are someone who enjoys being outdoors in different seasons and would like to learn or practise some basic gardening skills, then this could be the role for you!

A member of the Tree Team will induct and train volunteers, and will be on hand to set tasks, offer guidance, and answer questions during volunteering sessions. We anticipate that volunteers will help in a group of 3, which we hope will bring a social element to the role. Lunchtimes are also often sociable at the Arboretum, with indoor and outdoor seating available – although volunteers are welcome to enjoy a walk or find somewhere to sit quietly if they prefer. We would like everyone to leave with a sense of improved wellbeing – whether that's through having a chat, learning something new, doing something useful, and/or simply being outside...

Timing and commitment

Volunteer support would be great **10 am - 3 pm** (with a lunch break) on **Tuesdays and/or Thursdays**, but **10 am - 1 pm** is also helpful, in case anyone needs or prefers a shorter session. We are looking for volunteers who can help **most weeks April - October** – ideally following a weekly or fortnightly pattern – although this is flexible. Volunteering will be cancelled when the weather is too hot, wet, or windy, but we are also looking for volunteers who don't mind getting a bit damp and muddy from time to time!

Who are we looking for?

Because this role is about helping with small-scale maintenance tasks in an outdoor setting, it would particularly suit volunteers who:

- are willing to get stuck in and 'get their hands dirty'
- can come appropriately dressed for the tasks and the weather, including wearing sturdy footwear – the Arboretum will provide tools and any necessary safety equipment



- will follow instructions with care and attention to detail, ask questions if they are unsure of anything, and understand that the Arboretum may follow methods that differ to those they might use at home
- are reasonably fit and agile, including comfortable standing, kneeling, bending, reaching, and using standard gardening tools
- would enjoy being part of a small team working towards a common goal
- have an up-to-date [Tetanus vaccination](#)

A prior interest in plants will likely make the tasks more interesting, but no particular expertise is required. The supervisor will provide ongoing training regarding standards of maintenance, best use of tools, and identification of plants (particularly weeds!), and we are happy to meet potential volunteers who would like to develop more skills and knowledge in these areas.

Why volunteers might enjoy this opportunity

We hope that volunteers will find the role satisfying! It's a chance to:

- spend time doing something active in nature
- get to know the Arboretum and meet staff and other volunteers
- gain an insight into how Arboretum staff care for the collection, whilst also contributing to that work
- develop or build upon plant and gardening knowledge, including learning about the wider significance of some of the Arboretum's plants

Other information

- Harcourt Arboretum is a large site of 130 acres, with a range of path types, including hard-surface, woodchip, and short grass. The ground is uneven in places.
- Risk assessments will be carried out for the tasks that volunteers will be doing. They will not lift heavy loads, use machinery, or use ladders.
- We will encourage volunteers to help in a comfortable way, including taking breaks as necessary. They are welcome to use the shared kitchen facilities.
- Although there is another, longstanding group of 'practical' volunteers, this is the first time that staff will be working with a team of seasonal volunteers at the Arboretum, and we will actively seek and welcome feedback about volunteers' experience.
- Volunteers can claim travel expenses of up to £5 per volunteering session. There are regular bus services that stop in Nuneham Courtenay and free parking is available onsite. However, there aren't any secure bike racks. For more information, see: <https://obga.ox.ac.uk/directions-to-harcourt-arboretum>.
- This role is open to volunteers aged 18+.



- Volunteers who are new to onsite GLAM volunteering will need to be registered on the Volunteer Service mailing list (MyImpactPage.com), and the Volunteer Service will need to have received two references and done an ID check before they can start in this role. This role does not require any additional checks.

Next steps...

We anticipate that this opportunity will attract more people than we can currently involve. However, we would like to invite as many potential volunteers as possible to an introductory session at the Arboretum at **10.30 am or 1.30 pm on Thursday 3rd April**. This will be a chance to find out more about the role and for both sides to decide if it would be a good fit.

If you are interested in getting involved, then please **complete a form by following this link**. It will ask you to:

- confirm which time(s) you could potentially come to the Arboretum on Thursday 3rd April
- confirm your general availability to help with a regular session between April and October and indicate a preference for Tuesdays and/or Thursdays, and longer or shorter timings
- briefly explain (max 150ish words) why you would like to be involved

If sending a video or voice recording would make it easier for you to apply, then you are welcome to email one to Caroline at volunteering@glam.ox.ac.uk – just make sure you include all of these points!

The deadline to apply is **Tuesday 25th March**. Caroline will then share expressions of interest with relevant Harcourt Arboretum staff, and someone will be in touch about attending a 'find out more' session on 3rd April by Tuesday 1st.

Information will be kept in accordance with the GLAM Volunteer Service's [Data Retention Schedule](#).