

Career Development Plan for a Horticulturalist

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Job Description

A horticulturalist is a person who establishes and maintains plants, constructs horticultural features and applies treatments to enhance plant growth and control pests.

Some of her key tasks demand knowledge of soils, plant diseases, chemicals, and plant types. Work on a daily basis may include constructing rockeries or ponds, maintaining gardens, pruning and fertilizing plants and operating irrigation systems. In developing a business, a horticulturalist needs to develop long-term plans, set budgets and manage the financial aspects of the organisation or business.

I have a strong interest in working outdoors as evidenced by the results of my Interests Profile. My personal interest in general gardening and landscaping means I could develop in skills I already possess.

Personal Requirements

A horticulturalist needs to enjoy practical and mechanical work, and be able to undertake manual and heavy work. She needs to be able to work for long hours, and able to work outdoors in all sorts of weather conditions.

My skills profile (attached) shows a fairly high level of practical and mechanical ability. I have a reference for working outdoors rather than in an office. I enjoy physical activity.

Education and Training

There are many qualifications one can achieve in horticulture, depending on what field one wishes to enter. There are general courses in agriculture, but also specific courses in arboriculture, turf culture, landscape and floriculture, but there are also general agriculture courses, which are good introductions to the industry.

While at school, it would be helpful to study Rural Studies, Biology and Botany. Hopefully, after completing Year 10 or 11, I could obtain an apprenticeship at a local business or golf club and achieve my basic qualifications - Certificate 111 and Certificate 1V in Horticulture. After working in the industry or after completing an apprenticeship, I could progress to a Diploma of Agriculture or an Advanced Diploma of Agriculture. Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE conduct such courses as part of apprenticeships.

Sixteen subjects in which I need to be competent include a core subject on workplace health and safety procedures. There are elective studies including:-

lay segmental/unit paving; erect timber structures and feature; control weeds; implement re-vegetation works; co-ordinate a crop regulation program; harvest horticultural crops mechanically; install irrigation systems; establish turf; implement a tree pruning program; maintain nursery plants; advise on products and services.

Refer to your skills and interests profile

Include specific details of courses

Give percentages, reasons, details

Employment Opportunities

Many horticulturalists work in private industries such as nurseries, turf farms and golf clubs (31%). A large number service the housing and domestic market. However many also work in areas such as construction services (31%) and government administration (10%)

20% of Australia's horticulturalists work in Queensland, which is the third highest area of employment after NSW and Victoria. This is a result of the strong growth in South-East Queensland in the past decade. Proposed further development will add to employment opportunities in the growth corridor from the NSW border north to the Sunshine Coast.

Working Conditions

Horticultural tradespersons usually work outdoors and in all kinds of weather. Some of the work is physically demanding as it involves bending, lifting and handling machinery such as tractors, rollers and edging machines. Protective clothing must be used when handling fertilisers and pesticides, and to prevent injury while using machinery.

Earnings

In 2001, the average weekly earnings were \$571, and the earnings for general horticulturalists were \$507 for 20-24 year olds. Wages in this industry fall under a State Award Guideline.

Although these wages are below the national average, many related industries pay higher wages. Many people with developed skills set up small businesses supplying and providing labour for the construction industry and the domestic market.

Insert a graph to show earnings

Include percentages and reasons

Job Outlook

The job prospects for landscape gardeners are good. Employment growth in the next five years is expected to be strong. In 2004 there were 53 000 people employed in this occupation. 74 % work full time, with average weekly hours of 38.7 hours. The vacancy level is average.

70% of workers in the field are full-time male workers, with only 4% full-time female workers. It is anticipated that in the future, more women will enter the occupation.

Other Related Occupations

Studying horticulture can lead to many other occupations and types of work. These include as a viticulturalist, botanist and nurseryperson. Some people move into work as landscape gardeners and tradespersons. Some work in rural areas in large-scale landcare projects in areas where regeneration of native species is an environmental issue. Many workers plan to establish businesses