



Volunteer Role Description: Oxford Botanic Garden Summer Guides

About Oxford Botanic Garden Tours

We are looking for friendly and enthusiastic volunteer guides to join the team offering free, drop-in guided tours of the Oxford Botanic Garden throughout the peak summer months. These tours aim to provide visitors with a warm welcome and an engaging introduction to one of the University of Oxford's most beautiful and scientifically important sites.

Tours will highlight the Garden's living plant collections, history, and seasonal displays, as well as the fascinating stories behind the plants, people, and science that have shaped it.

Free tours will be offered on weekends and selected weekdays (May–September). Each tour will last approximately one hour and will focus on different areas of the Garden and glasshouses, chosen by the volunteer team with guidance from staff.

Visitors are welcome to continue exploring the Garden after the tour. Tours are open to the general public and aimed at adult visitors. Group sizes may vary, with a recommended maximum of 15 people per volunteer, per tour.

The volunteer team will be coordinated by the Admin and Horticultural teams at the Oxford Botanic Garden. Tours may be delivered by one or two volunteers working together.

Timing and Commitment

Tours will run regularly throughout the summer season (May–September). Volunteer guides are required to undergo a training and induction programme over two full days, followed by a minimum of a month of shadowed tours. After completing your training, volunteer guides are expected to deliver tours once or twice a month. Weekend availability would be beneficial.

Training

All new volunteers will need to attend introductory training sessions led by Garden staff on **Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th of February** (exact timing to be confirmed). The sessions will include:

- Site induction and health and safety
- Tour planning and interpretation skills
- Practice in presentation and visitor engagement
- An introduction to the Garden's layout and history, plant collections, and learning approach

After training, volunteers will be supported by staff and shadow an experienced guide before leading their first tour.

Refresher training will be offered by garden staff on a seasonal basis.



Why you might enjoy this role

The opportunity to:

- Join a friendly, enthusiastic, and supportive volunteer team
- Support Oxford Botanic Garden's mission to inspire learning about plants, people, and the environment
- Help ensure that visitors feel welcome and engaged
- Develop and improve communication and presentation skills
- Share your curiosity and enthusiasm for nature and plant life
- Learn more about botany, conservation, and the Garden's heritage
- Interact with a diverse range of people from around the world

About you

You don't need to be a plant expert! Enthusiasm for sharing knowledge with others, confidence in managing and speaking to groups, and a willingness to learn are more important. Curiosity about plants, science, or history will be an advantage.

The role involves walking around the Garden and glasshouses, which may include uneven paths and warm conditions at times.

Other information

- The role is open to volunteers aged 18+
- This is an onsite opportunity and we anticipate that volunteers will live within easy commuting distance of the Oxford Botanic Garden (OX1 4AZ). Volunteers can claim reimbursement of travel expenses up to £5 per volunteering session.
- Please note that sadly there is no onsite parking for Garden volunteers, staff or visitors. Blue Badge parking map:
<https://www.accessguide.ox.ac.uk/files/oxfordparkingmappdf>
- Volunteers new to onsite GLAM volunteering will need to be registered on the Volunteer Service mailing list (through MyImpactPage.com), and the Volunteer Service will need to have received two references and done an ID check before volunteers can start in this role. The role does not currently require any additional checks

Interested? Next steps..

Depending on the level of interest, we hope to invite as many people as possible to an informal 'audition' at the Botanic Garden on either **Wednesday, 11th or Thursday, 12th of February**. This will be a chance for potential volunteers to ask questions and get a better sense of what the role involves. We will also ask potential volunteers to give a short presentation to a group. We will provide more details about what we need you to prepare when inviting people to attend.



If you are interested in getting involved, then **[please complete a form by following this link](#)**.

It will ask you to:

- confirm which times you could attend an audition on the dates listed above
- confirm your availability to attend training on **Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th of February**
- briefly explain (max 150ish words each):
 - why you would like to be a Botanic Garden Summer Guide
 - if you could be any plant in the world, what would you choose and why?

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

The deadline to apply is Sunday, 1st of February. Please then look out for an email from someone about this role by Thursday 5 February.

Information will be kept in accordance with our [Data Retention Schedule](#).