

Apprenticeships in Horticulture 2026 – Teagasc College, National Botanic Gardens



Apprenticeships offer 'earning while learning' to people who want to enter the workforce and gain valuable training while employed

John Mulhern
Principal of the Teagasc College at the National Botanic Gardens



Teagasc as an organisation is strongly invested in the training needs of the horticulture sector through the formal QQI courses that are offered in the National Botanic Gardens in Dublin and in the Teagasc College at Kildalton in Kilkenny.

The apprenticeship in horticulture is now up and running at the Teagasc College in the National Botanic Gardens. Sixty apprentices have registered since it started in 2023. They are working in all aspects of horticulture across all four provinces, including nurseries, landscapers, garden centres, parks and the food sector.

The apprenticeship model involves students, their employers and the Teagasc College in the National Botanic Gardens. Teagasc delivers and assesses the academic part of the

programme, which takes place over 50 block-release days in each year at the college in Dublin. Some of these days are delivered online to allow for remote engagement.

The following are some comments from the second year horticulture apprentices in the nursery production stream about their experiences.

1. What motivated you to pursue a professional career in horticulture?

Aisling O'Connell (Tully Nurseries):

“Working in horticulture allows me to connect with the natural world. In such a busy and sometimes stressful society, horticulture offers a chance to take a step back from that, but also to look at ways we can improve sustainability and the circular economy.”

Shannon Clancy (Tirlán):

“You'll never know everything about plants, there's always something to learn. You can be equally as surprised today as you were yesterday. Plants don't just look pretty, they provide health benefits too. I come from a farming background, so learning about soil, fertiliser and weeds is really beneficial for me.”

2. What has been the most significant challenge you have encountered during your studies?

Aisling O'Connell:

“The greatest challenge without ques-

tion has been juggling my studies and working at the same time. Managing my time has been a work in progress, but I'm better able to map out my time.”

Shannon Clancy:

“Trying to balance work, college and the farm can be difficult. I don't want my college work to be less than satisfactory, because of how busy I can be.”

3. What is the most valuable piece of advice you have received from a professional within the horticultural sector?

Aisling O'Connell:

“Someone once told me that you don't work in horticulture for the money, you do it for the love of it. I may not get rich, but I know that working in horticulture will make me happy, and that's ok with me.”

Shannon Clancy:

“Stick with everything, it'll always be worth it in the end.”

Pictured above is the present second year class with college teacher Shane Brett outside the curvilinear range of glasshouses beside the Teagasc College in the National Botanic Gardens.

All information on the Horticulture apprenticeship is available on the Teagasc website.

Next intake of apprentices is on August 24th 2026 at the Teagasc College in the National Botanic Gardens.