

Name: Emma Fox **Job:** Horticulturalist

Emma works as Manager of the Palm and Water-lily Houses at Kew Gardens – the world-famous horticultural research centre in London.

The job involves cultivating unusual varieties of plants from all over the world and – after careful propagation – taking seedlings back into the wild so that endangered species are not ultimately lost from their natural habitat or living space. A major part of Emma's job at Kew Gardens is to communicate with the public, increasing visitors' awareness about the variety of tropical palms and water-lilies.

Benefit of the work: A huge benefit is encouraging biodiversity through careful cultivation – helping to maintain the greatest possible number of living things on Earth.

Personal skills or aptitudes:

- A fascination for plants and gardening
- Stamina
- Keen powers of observation
- Perseverance.

Skills Build

First steps – moves you can take now

Get involved in gardening, practise with family and friends or help develop the school's wildlife reserve. You could join a local reserve or organisation where you'll get practical experience, perhaps as a volunteer with the Wildlife Trust or BTCV – the nature conservation trust for volunteers. Make sure you learn all you can about plants – try TV and radio programmes and the web Q&A sessions. Look at www.rbgkew.org.uk or www.rhs.org.uk for more information.

Third floor

Horticulturalists benefit from A levels in biology and chemistry. Of course, geography and maths are also useful. Another way in is through an Advanced Modern Apprenticeship in horticulture where you achieve NVQ level 3 while learning (and earning) on the job.



Think you might be interested? Here are some of the skills you might need.

Key skills:

- Teamwork – maintaining and developing the plant collection
- Problem solving – working out best conditions for cultivating different varieties/curing plant diseases
- Communication – written and verbal, for talking to the public and giving presentations to other horticulturalists.

On to the second level

Take GCSEs in double science, design technology and maths. You'll also need English. Modern languages can be a help when you're working abroad.

Fourth floor

If you take a degree in botany/plant science or horticultural techniques, you can follow it with specialist studies to become an expert in a particular area.