

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Horticulture Internship Program



Program Overview

The Horticulture Internship Program (HIP) is a seasonal program that is unpaid, practical and 'hands on.' The internship is based at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne for a minimum of six to a maximum of eight weeks. The program is open to Australian and overseas applicants currently enrolled in trade or tertiary studies in horticulture or a similar landscape-related course, or students who have graduated from such studies within the last twelve months.

Melbourne Gardens

Located in the heart of Melbourne, Victoria, Melbourne Gardens is a lush and verdant 38-hectare landscape and home to about 48,000 plants, native and introduced. The incredible displays of flowers and foliage, changing from season to season, sustain the gardens' reputation as one of the world's finest botanic gardens. The 24 Living Collections provide initiatives and opportunities for science, research, education, and conservation. These living collections are geographical, taxonomic, cultural, evolutionary, and ecological in theme.

Each collection, each bed and each individual plant has a character of its own. The successful management of such diverse flora requires an equally diverse team; the horticulturists who steward the gardens have their own specialties and expertise that allow them to manage and maintain a heritage landscape ensuring that it continues to flourish in a busy urban environment.

Internship Overview

The internship program is based within the Horticulture Branch at Melbourne Gardens.

Internships are a minimum of 6 weeks and a maximum of 8 weeks. Interns work with the Horticulture teams four days per week (Tues-Fri) from 7.45am to 3.00pm.

Interns undertaking placements at Melbourne Gardens are expected to actively work as part of our horticulture teams and take part in all tasks assigned to them. These works will include weeding, mulching, pruning, planting, and other associated horticultural tasks as required. There may also be an opportunity to assist the horticulture team with plant collections and landscape projects.

Interns will gain practical, on-the-job training via demonstration and instruction whilst working alongside our qualified horticulturists. Please note that training with mechanical equipment is limited to brush cutters, leaf blowers and hand mowing, and is subject to seasonal requirements.

A maximum of two people will be selected for the internship per intake, and both interns will commence the program at the same time.

Interns will have daily monitoring and guidance by RBGV Horticulture staff and supervision by the Horticulture Team Leaders. A nominated staff member will be the primary contact for all interns.

At the conclusion of their placement, interns will be given the opportunity to provide feedback to the RBGV. Successful completion of the program requires that interns participate for the full duration. Upon successful completion, participants will receive a signed letter of completion from the Director Horticulture.

Overseas Applicants

Melbourne Gardens welcomes applications from overseas candidates for our internship program. All applicants are considered based on their skills, experience, and merits.

International applicants must hold an appropriate visa for the duration of their placement period and visit in Australia. For further information on visa requirements, visit www.immi.gov.au

Insurance

Interns enrolled in studies must be covered by their institution's insurance for their placement.

Interns who have graduated within the last twelve months are covered by RBGV Group insurance.

Overseas applicants are strongly encouraged to have travel insurance for their stay and will be responsible for medical bills arising from any work-related injuries.

Required Skills & Traits

- Basic knowledge of gardening and plants
- Knowledge of the role of botanic gardens
- Proficiency in English both spoken and written
- Positive attitude
- Excellent work ethic
- Passion for plants and the environment
- Ability to carry out tasks with minimal supervision
- Enjoy working in a team environment
- Willingness to learn and meet people
- Reliable and punctual.

Interns must be physically fit to undertake hands-on practical gardening work. Interns will work outdoors in a wide variety of weather conditions.

Fees

There are no fees associated with this program; however, students are responsible for financing themselves for the full duration of the program, including accommodation, meals, and any medical expenses.

Accommodation

Limited opportunities for accommodation on-site are available, dependent upon availability and applicants are encouraged to enquire as soon as possible. If the on-site accommodation is not available, interns are responsible for seeking alternative accommodation.

Whether on or off site, accommodation is at the expense of the intern.

Recruitment & Selection

A short list will be created of the applications received and these applicants will be invited to attend an informal interview; this may be in-person or online. Interns will undergo an orientation and the requisite induction processes on the first day of their placement.

Please see the end of the document for a timetable of future intakes.

Please note that all internships are subject to the receipt of a satisfactory Volunteer Working with Children Check (WWCC). The Volunteer WWCC is free to apply for.

Occupational Health & Safety

Interns will be inducted into RBGV OHS procedures as part of their orientation process and as part of their everyday tasks. Interns will be required to follow all OHS policies, procedures, safety management systems, direction, and documentation.

RBGV will provide all tools and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary to carry out the tasks assigned to them.

Uniform & Equipment

RBGV will provide:

- Shirt
- Jumper
- Rain jacket
- Hat
- PPE includes sunscreen, safety glasses, gloves and any other PPE deemed necessary for the tasks being undertaken.

The intern will provide:

- Work trousers
- Safety toe-capped work boots

Note that safety toe-capped work boots are mandatory, and interns will not be able to start their placement without them.

Timeline

Applications Open	Applications Close	Approximate Notification	Commencement
1 April 2026	1 May 2026	1 June 2026	First Tuesday July 2026
1 July 2026	1 August 2026	1 September 2026	First Tuesday October 2026
1 December 2026	1 January 2027	1 February 2027	First Tuesday March 2027

Information & Resources

Melbourne Gardens Master Plan 2020-2040

Landscape Succession Strategy

Living Collections Plan

Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens