

Whether you are about to graduate from high school or are already in college, you are likely in the process of trying to figure out what you want to do next. Some students know they want to continue going to school for another four years to pursue a college degree, while others know that they don't. There are even options in between, such as associate's degrees and trade school, which offer continuing education and job training outside of the traditional undergraduate model.

Students who are already in a higher education program may be undecided on a major or unsure of what career opportunities they can pursue with their degree. Fill out this worksheet to get a better idea of what careers in public gardening or working with plants might be a good fit for you. Finding a few career paths that interest you can help you plan for your future.

[The Smithsonian Gardens' Garden Gate Interview series](#) was designed to give insight into these careers and the different paths professionals have taken to work with plants. While you're listening to the Garden Gate Interviews, think about the kind of education that each person needed for their work. Was it a trade program, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or a PhD? What kind of educational resources outside of a traditional curriculum did this person put to use?

It may also be useful to consider where you may have seen the impact of someone in this role before, even if you didn't realize it at the time. Examples range from landscapers who have planted flowers around your school and urban planners who have designed green spaces in your city to farmers that grow the food you eat. How have the Garden Gate Interviews affected your perception of a career in public gardens or horticulture and did you know about these career fields before hearing these interviews?

Garden Gate Episode 1: Guest- Ryan Gooch (He/Him) Questions

If you are looking into a master's program like Ryan was, he suggests that you "make sure you're doing it for the right reasons." Ryan has always been passionate about working with children and about the environment, so he combined them to work in environmental education! What passions can you combine to find your plant-related career?

1. Finding yourself interested in environmental education? Do you want to work in an outdoor school like Ryan, or a public garden like the Smithsonian Gardens?
 - a. Research environmental education learning opportunities in your community and list them below. *Tip: Start with the [Smithsonian Gardens website!](#)

- b. Based on your research, note three things you would enjoy about teaching others about the environment in a public garden and three things you would enjoy about teaching in an outdoor school.

2. Are you interested in education and have a passion for the environment? Research the professional skills and educational requirements needed to work in environmental education. Write some of your findings below.

3. As Ryan explained in this episode, he participated in an internship that enabled him to be a leader with the help of experienced mentors and his fellow interns. In that program, two interns who showed great leadership potential were chosen to work with the Smithsonian Gardens and they then hired interns to work with them. Research Learning by Leading opportunities and mentorship programs near you.

Garden Gate Episode 2: Guest- Sydney Spencer (She/Her) Questions

Like one of our co-hosts, Caroline, said in this episode, “You never know what you are going to be passionate about until you go out and do it!” What will you go out and try?

1. Take a moment and think about what is important to you in your life. Use the questions below as a guide or create your own list.
 - a. Write down **three** things in your life that **inspire** you.

1)

2)

3)

b. Write down **three** things in your life that you are **passionate** about.

1)

2)

3)

c. Write down **three professional goals** you have for the future.

1)

2)

3)

2. Sydney combined her life experiences spending time on her family's prune farm in Northern California and her interest in agricultural policy to research what she loves under the guidance of her mentor, Dr. Hush. What steps can you take to find a mentor who works in the field you are interested in?
3. Sydney made lasting changes on her college campus by leading a gardening project with her fellow students. How can you create change in your community and how can that experience shape your future career exploration? To create sustainable or lasting change, Sydney suggests starting out by finding ways to strengthen and lengthen projects that are already in place. Research projects in your community and make a list of how you can help strengthen and lengthen them. When you are done, write an email to or call an organization you researched and ask how you can get involved! *Tip: Make sure to include any projects you participate in on your resume.

Garden Gate Episode 3: Guest- Philip Evich (He/Him) Questions

Like Philip said in this episode, “Plants don’t have the PR animals do... We lose plant species by the tens if not hundreds every single day.” Take it from Phil, our earth needs more people to care about plants! Will you be one of them?

1. Like Philip did during his undergraduate studies, ask yourself, what are you genuinely curious about?
2. Philip reminds us that “food [are] plants in [their] purest form.” Are you interested in healthy eating and/or sharing your interest with others? What does the relationship between healthy eating and plants look like to you?
3. There are many different fields involved in plant science. Research some of them. What are some of their differences and similarities? Are you interested in any jobs within these fields?
4. Philip’s first job out of college saw him working in horticultural therapy in Hawaii to help children with issues like screen addictions. Research horticultural therapy. Write your findings below.
5. Philip uses social media to educate the public about horticultural topics. Marketing and public relations teams play important roles for many public gardens. What are some other innovative ways you can share information about gardening?
6. What professionals do you think would be beneficial to contact who might help guide your career journey?

Garden Gate Episode 4: Guest- Eboni Preston (She/Her) Questions

Eboni went from thinking she was going to be an orthopedic surgeon to pursuing environmental work and workforce development! In this episode, she said, “If it’s meant to be, it’s easy” and that is exactly what led her to her current position at Greening Youth Foundation.

1. Eboni has a master’s degree in Social Enterprise Administration (SEA) which she describes as “having a business and management mind but with the people in mind.” Interested in business, management, and helping others? Research ‘Social Enterprise Administration.’ Write your findings below.

2. Are there any businesses in your community that offer internship opportunities?

Garden Gate Episode 5: Guest- Zannah Porter (They/Them) Questions

Do you love solving problems? Working with your hands? Spending your days outside? Urban farming might be right for you!

1. In their daily work as the Director of Operations at Green City Growers, Zannah must collect data on diseases that infest plant life on farms and gardens. Zannah uses problem solving skills to interpret the data and when designing different gardens. Look up different types of farming layouts and list some of the factors that contribute to their structure and design.

2. Do you think farmers can be scientists? Research how farmers utilize science in their work and write down your findings below.

3. Are there any farms in your community? Research opportunities that local farms have for visiting, volunteering, research, internships, and work.

4. Think about what you want in a mentor. This should be someone who will provide you with the best resources and opportunities to explore possible career paths. Brainstorm some ideas down below.
 - A. Are there any people in your life who fit that description? If not, what steps can you take to find a mentor that does? Who in your life can help you find a mentor? Maybe a guidance counselor, coach or teacher?

Take a look at the answers you've compiled. What you enjoy doing in your spare time is often a good indicator of what kind of work you may become passionate about. Public gardens thrive with diverse teams! Using your answers, choose the category of work that most appeals to you and pick three career paths that seem interesting to you. Research and watch each relevant interview. Afterwards, explain which career you think you would enjoy the most and why.

To learn more about different jobs in public gardening, listen to the [interviews](#) with a variety of garden and horticulture professionals that Smithsonian Gardens has put together.

Hands-on Jobs:

1. Outdoor/Physically Demanding
 1. Arboretum/Botanical Garden//Public Garden Worker
 2. Arborist
 3. Urban Forester
 4. Tree Service Technician
 5. Floriculturist
 6. Grower/Plant Producer/Farmer
 7. Integrated Pest Management

8. Irrigation Specialist
 9. Landscape Construction
 10. Landscape Maintenance/Groundskeeper
 11. Lawn Care Specialist
 12. Nursery Worker
 13. Plant Inspector
 14. Turf Grass Management
2. Indoor
 1. Greenhouse or Conservatory Management
 2. Florist/Floral Designer
 3. Garden Center Worker
 4. Greenhouse Worker
 5. Interior Landscaping
3. Fields in Science
 1. Botanist/Plant Biologist
 2. Food Scientist/Technician
 3. Plant Breeder/Geneticist
 4. Plant Diagnostician
 5. Plant Pathologist
 6. Plant Propagator
 7. Pomologist
 8. Researcher
 9. Viticulturist
 10. Entomologist
 11. Horticulturist
4. Other Careers
 1. [Educator](#)
 2. Horticultural Therapist
 3. Landscape Architect
 4. Landscape Estimator
 5. Landscape or Garden Designer
 6. Librarian
 7. Living Collections Management/Plant Recorder
 8. Plant Curator
 9. Marketing
 10. Outreach Coordinator/Social Media
 11. Urban Planner
 12. Writer
 13. [Director of Operations/Management](#)

