

Meet Tom, Ground Control's Horticulture Operative, Level 2 apprentice



What apprenticeship are you doing at Ground Control and what does this cover?

I'm doing the Horticulture Operative level 2 apprenticeship via Capel Manor college. It's a varied course. So far I've covered lots of Health and Safety including RIDDOR reporting and the Health and Safety at Work Act. We've looked at botany and the biology of a plant including fruits and seeds. Soil composition is also covered in the theory part as well.

On the manual side we have been taught how to use power tools safely like a strimmer, hedge cutter and that sort of thing as well as hand tools and the maintenance of them all. This has included considering all the risks when you are using them.

Most recently we've been looking at our knowledge of common pests in the garden and trying to avoid chemicals where possible to be as kind to the environment as we can.

What do you do on a day-to-day basis in your job within our Grounds Maintenance team at Ground Control?

So far I have been based on site at the Greenwich Maritime museum but I am soon moving to the Tower of London so I can experience the busy summer season there.

Day to day I work as part of a small team who are responsible for making the site look great and this includes grass cutting, redesigning a large herbaceous border, lots of planting, rotavating, digging in top soil and lots of weeding in the Summer!

I'm looking forward to experiencing a new site when I go to the The Tower to see how things are done in such a prestigious site.

What is the best part of your job?

The onsite buggy!! We have an electric buggy on site to help us get around.

More seriously, the best part of my role is my team. They have been fantastic. I couldn't have asked for anything more in terms of help and support as I didn't have any experience in Horticulture when I joined but I felt part of the team straight away which was great.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to get into a Horticulture Operative apprenticeship like yours?

Pack your long johns especially in the Winter! You have got to be prepared to work in all weathers.

Also show curiosity and use your initiative, I didn't know anything when I started so I just asked questions all the time and this is the way I built my knowledge. Remember there is no such thing as a silly question!

What do you enjoy outside of work?

As I start early in the morning, I finish earlier than most jobs, so this gives me plenty of time in the evening to do things which is great. I like socialising with friends and going to gigs.

I also make sure that my notes are up to date for college and that I understand everything that I have covered in the week before.