

Garden Centre Assistant

Garden centre assistants work in garden centres, selling plants and related products such as garden tools, furniture and machinery. Some centres may also grow their own plants. The work can be indoors or outdoors.

The Work

You could be:

- sowing seeds, planting bulbs or taking cuttings and watering, pruning, weeding and treating for pests and disease
- putting plants into pots and trays, ready to sell
- setting out displays of plants, pots and garden tools
- using a wheelbarrow or trolley to move heavy items such as trees or bags of soil
- helping to carry and load heavy items to customers' cars
- operating the till at the checkout, taking cash and card payments
- pricing stock and filling the shelves
- phoning to order new stock
- advising customers on plant choice and care.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- whether you are freelance
- the demand for the job.

Starting pay is often based on the National Minimum Wage (NMW) or the National Living Wage (NLW).

As of 1 April 2021 the National Minimum Wage is £4.62 an hour for workers aged 16 to 17, £6.56 an hour for workers aged 18 to 20 and £8.36 an hour for workers aged 21 to 22. The National Living Wage is £8.91 for workers aged 23 and over.

With experience, this may rise to around £10.00 an hour. There will often be overtime available, especially in summer. Garden centre managers normally earn in the region of £25,000 to £32,000 a year. Some managers working in larger centres may earn £35,000 or more.

Conditions

- You could be outdoors in all weathers, or in a glasshouse which can be hot and humid.
- You will probably work longer hours in summer, with weekend and evening shifts.
- You might be able to work part time.
- You will be bending, kneeling and carrying heavy things.

- The work can be dirty and you might have to wear protective clothing.

Getting In

- You do not need formal qualifications but a good general education is useful. Some employers may prefer you to have a group of subjects at National 4 or 5.
- You may be able to train through a Modern Apprenticeship leading to SVQs at SCQF Levels 5 or 6.
- Before entering a job, you may wish to take a full time course in horticulture at NC or NQ (SCQF Levels 2-6), or SVQ (SCQF Levels 5-11) level. Entry qualifications vary from no formal qualifications to 4-5 subjects at National 4 or 5.
- You should be fit enough to carry heavy loads.

You can find work in a small or large garden centre, or in large DIY stores that have a garden centre.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- an interest in plants and gardening
- a good knowledge of the plants and accessories that you stock
- good manual skills for handling seeds, bulbs and plants carefully
- money handling skills for working on the tills
- excellent customer service skills.

Training

- Training would be on the job, perhaps combined with part time study for relevant qualifications.
- You can study for SVQ Horticulture at SCQF Level 5.
- Some of the largest garden centre groups provide e-learning systems so that staff can complete modules in basic horticulture, customer service and health and safety.

Getting On

- In the larger garden centres you could get promotion to become a supervisor or assistant manager, and then perhaps a manager.
- You could become self-employed.

More Information

Large garden centre chains, like Dobbie's, Klondyke and Caulders, advertise vacancies on their websites. Vacancies also come up in large DIY superstores such as B&Q and Wickes.

Contacts

British Retail Consortium (BRC)

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Website: www.brc.org.uk

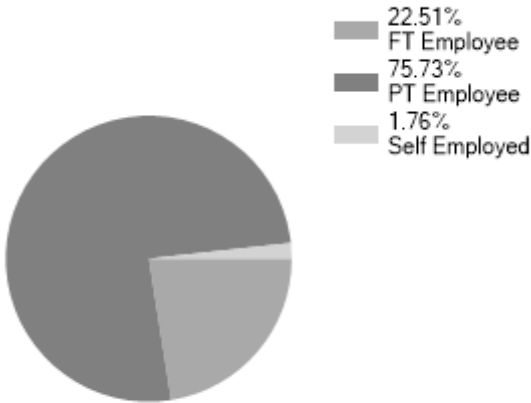
Website (2): www.rethinkretail.org.uk

Twitter: @the_brc

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thebrc

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



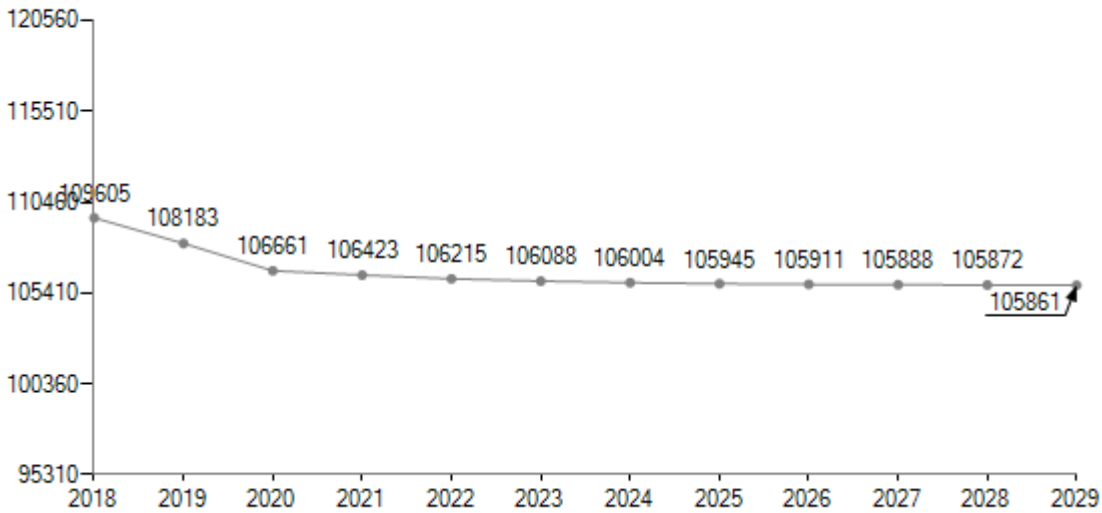
Past Unemployment - Scotland

Date	Unemployed
Dec 2018	12.17%

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Predicted Employment in Scotland



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