Volunteer Trainee Orchard Origins Officer

**12-month placement available.**

**Role description**

Role title: Volunteer Trainee Orchard Origins Officer

Responsible to: Manager, Orchard Origins

Status: 3 days per week, to include Thursday & Friday

Expenses This is not a salaried role but out of pocket expenses and other reasonable expenses are paid as agreed with the Orchard Origins Manager.

Training: There is a budget associated with this role, based on the applicants need for externally accredited training (eg first aid, chainsaw)

Based: Queenswood Country Park & Arboretum, Dinmore Hill, Herefordshire, HR6 0PY

**Summary of Role**

This is a unique opportunity for an individual who is looking to start a career in Conservation. Naturally, being hosted by Orchard Origins (the part of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust specialising in all things orchard) training in traditional orchard management is offered, as is the opportunity to help us demonstrate our conservation impact. The successful candidate will also get practical experience in food production from field to final product. Within these contexts, we offer exposure to the requirements of grant funders and revenue generation within a registered Charity, which are vital skills for the sector. Training opportunities in field-based skills within Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and the opportunity to tailor the role by developing additional skills from among the range of the activities we undertake are also part of this training placement.

**Key elements**

1 Orchard design, planting and management

The Volunteer Trainee Orchard Origins Officer (V2) will assist the Orchard Origins Team with their work, which throughout the year will include pruning trees of all ages, sizes and styles and will also include elements of orchard design and tree planting. Work is carried out using handtools including polesaws, so a reasonable level of physical fitness and a willingness to work outside in all (safe) weathers is essential. Trees are located in large, traditional, mature orchards, in gardens – even containers in a Hereford entertainment venue. Consequently the V2 can expect to leave with an excellent practical and theoretical grounding in fruit tree management. Risk assessment and management sit hand in hand with these activities and are a key transferable skill, as is experience

of working with a range of volunteers. While experience in orchards and their management is not expected, a demonstrable interest is.

2 Fruit harvest and juice production

The autumn and early winter will be focussed on fruit harvest and juice production. In addition to the assessment and management of physical risk, food hygiene requirements through HACCP must also be met. Full training in the use of the equipment and in food safety will be given, and the V2 will be expected to gain a level 2 qualification in food safety and hygiene. Willingness to learn new skills is more important than experience in this area, but applicants who show some practical aptitude when using equipment will be preferred. Harvesting and juicing requires a reasonable level of fitness, and a willingness to work outside in all (safe) weathers and in a cold environment is essential.

3 Surveying and information processing

The V2 will also have a key role in gathering, storing and presenting evidence of the impact of our conservation efforts. Training will be offered in botanical field identification and assessment, but an interest in this area (and computing skills to aid recording and interrogating data) is preferred.

4 Other interests

In addition to these 3, key, functions, Orchard Origins offer opportunities to develop a range of other skills. Examples of areas which might be built into the role include; customer management including billing, customer record management, work scheduling, grant management, grant applications, online sales fulfilment, website development and sales. The V2 will agree which of these activities are buit into the role with the Manager.

Training may additionally include City & Guilds Land Based Services qualifications likely to be useful to the postholder, for instance chainsaw.

For maximum benefit to both the trainee and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, a consistent commitment to the programme is expected, and the trainee is required to adhere to the terms in the Trust’s volunteer policy as applicable.

NB. We work in privately owned orchards and gardens as well as those owned by the Trust, so some appreciation of customer service and a DBS check will be required – as it will in order to work on the farm where we have our juice production facility.

**General Requirements**

1.To undertake all duties in accordance with Health and Safety and other relevant legislation, as well as Trust policies, plans and procedures and recognised best practice.

2. To undertake duties and training as outlined in the trainee programme (to be agreed with the postholder) and to record training and experience gained.

3. To participate in practical activities required, working with Orchard Origins staff and other volunteers.

4. To help maintain vehicles, machinery, equipment and tools in a safe and effective condition and to ensure that they are used in an appropriate manner.

5. To help promote the Trust and its work by supporting the provision of guided walks, presentations, the preparation of interpretative materials, and through participation in events and activities.

6. To deal with enquiries from the public, members and other interested parties in a timely, polite and effective manner.

7. To carry out any other duties appropriate to the position as required by Orchard Origins staff.

**Personal Experience, Qualities and Skills**

1. Experience

* A formal qualification (degree or equivalent) in a biological/environmental science/countryside management discipline is desirable, but experience and commitment will be viewed favourably.
* A demonstrable commitment to a career in conservation is essential.
* Basic knowledge of habitat management principles and some experience of practical conservation is desirable but not essential (all necessary training will be given).
* A genuine enthusiasm for traditional orchards and some knowledge of their habitat value is essential
* Experience of working with people from a wide variety of backgrounds

2. Skills

* Good written and oral communication skills.
* Excellent interpersonal skills
* The ability to work on his/her own initiative as well as working as a member of a close-knit team.
* Literate with Microsoft based office software, web and email.
* A full UK-valid driving licence.

3. Personal qualities

* Demonstrable interest in UK wildlife and nature conservation.
* Willingness to learn and take responsibility for own professional development.
* Willingness to work outdoors in all weathers (and indoors in cold conditions).
* A reasonable level of fitness
* A positive “can do” attitude
* A desire to make a difference
* Willingness to share knowledge of wildlife with others, both informally and formally
* Excellent organisational and time-management skills.
* A commitment to equal opportunities.

This role profile is not intended to be legally binding between the Trust and the trainee, and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party