



MEDIA RELEASE

WORKING IN GARDENING SURVEYS

The AGC conducted a series of four surveys over the latter part of 2023 and early 2024. There were around 1,000 respondents to the 4 different surveys, each targeting a different demographic group, as follows:

- Survey 1. People thinking about working in horticulture, but not yet in the industry
- Survey 2. People working in the industry for a few years only
- Survey 3. People who have worked in the industry for over 5 years
- Survey 4. People who worked in gardening, but have left the industry

Some interesting revelations are:

From Survey 1. People ***thinking about working in horticulture***, but not yet in the industry

Summary: The survey would suggest ...

- 60% of respondents are over 25 and 70% are female
- Overwhelming reasons generating interest in gardening – around 45% were motivated more by the outdoors, love nature & environmental concerns. A third motivated by gardening at home. 14% influenced by parents, teachers or friends. Other things including social media, TV, garden shows etc were negligible influences.
- The biggest thing that attracts people to a gardening career is working with plants, gardens, landscapes & the environment
- Only 20% are clear about how to move forward
- A broad spectrum of information sources have been helpful but no single source of advice dominated.

From Survey 2. People ***working in the industry for a few years*** only

Summary: The survey would suggest ...

- Most people who study horticulture only do so for at least 1 year, but only 15% for more than 2 years
- Roughly around half or more of those surveyed believed their current studies do not offer a range of options including choice of what is studied
- Around 50% believe the most useful way of learning is working alongside knowledgeable gardeners
- Formal studies are considered useful but less useful than working alongside gardeners, and not greatly more beneficial than doing short courses or a range of other ways of learning
- Only around 45% are confident about identifying 150 or more different plants
- 70+% are confident about routine gardeners tasks
- Confidence with soil management and chemical use is a little lower than other routine work

- The overwhelming reason for entering the garden industry was working with plants, the environment, out doors and in gardens. The only other reason of any significance (around 20%) was to change career.

From Survey 3. People who have ***worked in the industry for over 5 years***

Summary: The survey would suggest ...

- Most respondents work in a position of authority as an owner or manager
- Employees are less than a third
- Those working in the private sector are 50% higher than those in the public sector
- Around 20% consider themselves to be plantspersons doing jobs focussed on using their plant expertise
- Close to two thirds of respondents have worked in gardening for 10 years or more.
- Around one third are satisfied with their current job but another third have aspirations to either run their own business or move to a different area of work in horticulture. This suggests most are largely satisfied with their current career path
- Around 90% have good to excellent levels of job satisfaction
- Around one quarter are dissatisfied with salary/wages; while around half consider remuneration good or better than good
- Practical skills were learned through a variety of ways but the most significant through formal studies, followed by working alongside others

From Survey 4. People who worked in gardening, ***but have left the industry***

Summary: The survey would suggest ...

- Most people leave the industry to take up work in a different industry (over 50%); and apart from retirement no other single factor stands out
- More than half of those who leave the industry appear open to returning to the industry
- Around a quarter of those who left the industry did so because of change in financial needs, but another quarter because of an issue with management
- Around 50% considered limited financial reward as a barrier to success
- Around a third suggested management issues or interpersonal relationships were a factor in deciding to leave.
- Around a third suggested physical abilities had been a barrier to developing a successful career in gardening

Further Consideration

It might be suggested from several responses that around two thirds of people who are considering a gardening career are over the age of 25.