



PlantNetwork
Connecting gardens, sharing skills

How do you 'curate your career'?

There are a number of steps and measures you can adopt in your everyday working life that will help your career pathway – whether it is simply carrying on in your current role, applying for a promotion or looking for a new role. Not all will apply to you, but many are worth considering:

- **Ask for an annual review or appraisal.**
Many organisations already offer annual appraisals to staff and it is a good opportunity to find out what your colleagues and coworkers think of your working practices, what new skills you need to develop and what skills you can pass on to others. The process can help you develop your areas of interest with the full support of your employers: this might be through an accredited course, training on the use of specific equipment or new responsibilities in the garden. If you are a sole worker or self-employed, you can still talk to your employer/clients for feedback. Use the feedback constructively – it should not be considered as criticism of you or the work you do.
- **Record your achievements as you go along.**
Almost everyone carries a camera with them all the time – use your phone to record any work you undertake which will help demonstrate your experience and skills. Perhaps it is a before and after shot of some general maintenance or a newly designed and planted bed/border. Save these photographs (and/or video) to show at reviews or in interviews. Even consider a photo journal or portfolio, either digital or print, to take to reviews and interviews.
- **Ensure you take part in some form of recognised training every year.**
Not only does this top up your skills, it demonstrates your willingness to learn new approaches and techniques. Training need not be costly – it could be an organised visit to another garden, attending horticultural webinars, or demonstrating that you have accessed horticultural resources available through organisations such as BGCI, PlantNetwork, Bgen and many others. Record what you do – perhaps in a table at the end of your CV. Accredited courses will carry more weight but are likely to be more costly.
- **Get your name/work recognised – for the right reasons.**
We live in a connected world with access to many different social media platforms. Consider establishing professional social media profiles to showcase your work (photos or video), contribute to blogs or articles in the horticultural press, and/or speak at local gardening club events, to name just three profile-raising approaches. Record all your achievements and include links on your CV and/or include in a portfolio.
- **Get involved in additional activities.**
You might be offered opportunities to get involved in a project or take on an additional role that is beyond your usual working regime. Consider if this opportunity/role will help you develop new skills or will showcase your horticultural or even supervision/management abilities. The opportunity might be within your normal working hours or might be extracurricular so consider your availability as well as your willingness. If you are in a position to accept, there are many advantages to be gained for professional as well as personal development.
- **Keep your CV up-to-date.**
Even if you are very happy in your role and/or have no intention to move on, an up-to-date CV can be useful for annual appraisals, salary reviews/promotions, or applying for additional opportunities as they arise.