

# Environmental **Horticulture** and Industry Insights 2024

#UKhort125



# The Horticultural Trades Association

## About Us

[hta.org.uk](http://hta.org.uk)

*The Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), founded in 1899, represents the entire environmental horticulture sector, counting 1,400 UK garden businesses among our membership — retailers, growers, manufacturers, and landscapers. As a member-centric organisation with no shareholders, our primary focus is to support our members. Operating within a group and committee structure, including the Association of Professional Landscapers and technical grower committees, we address critical industry issues and advocate for members. We also maintain international ties with our overseas counterparts.*

Our members benefit from tailored business support, encompassing training, eLearning, conferences, and market research, catering to businesses of all sizes.

Running the National Garden Gift Voucher programme, the UK's longest-standing garden consumer promotion, we drive around 2 million annual visits to garden centres. We also facilitate connections between garden centre and green space suppliers and customers through trade shows, advertising, and sponsorships.

Proud of our industry's contributions to the economy, environment, health, and wellbeing, we actively advocate for these interests with the government and policymakers across the four nations. As a core member of the Environmental Horticulture Group, we collaborate with partner associations and groups representing the diverse spectrum of environmental horticulture, from domestic gardeners to large landscaping and the tree and forestry sector.

# Environmental Horticulture

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**Environmental Horticulture** is the production and business of cultivating flora (plants, trees, seeds, bulbs, grass, etc.) for **commercial, environmental and health advancement**. This sector generally encompasses the following specific activities:

Supply of garden goods

Ornamental plant production

Landscape services

Retailing of garden products, plants and cut flowers

Wholesale of garden products and flowers

Arboriculture

Garden tourism

# Environmental Horticulture Economic Footprint

Environmental horticulture delivers **huge economic benefits** to the UK – from tax-take to GDP. It is the original green industry well-placed to **unlock green growth**.

**Worth**  
**£28.8 BILLION**  
**to UK GDP**  
**£6.3 BILLION**  
**tax revenue**

**2019**

If we unlock the potential of UK environmental horticulture the green growth potential is:

**£41.8 BILLION**  
**to UK GDP**  
**£8.7 BILLION**  
**tax revenue**

**2030**



2019 GDP footprint by UK nation - excludes GDP contributions from garden tourism

# Environmental Horticulture Economic Footprint

Subsectors within the industry support GDP contributions of:



GARDEN  
GOODS  
MANUFACTURING

**£1.3  
BILLION**



ORNAMENTAL  
PLANT  
PRODUCTION

**£1.6  
BILLION**



LANDSCAPE  
SERVICES

**£13.4  
BILLION**



ARBORICULTURE

**£2.1  
BILLION**



RETAIL

**£4.1  
BILLION**



WHOLESALE

**£1.4  
BILLION**



TOURISM

**£4.9  
BILLION\***

\*£1.2billion domestic, £3.7 billion international

# Environmental Horticulture Employment

In 2019, the environmental horticulture industry supported the employment of

**674,248**  
people in the UK

England – 456,198  
Wales – 31,168  
Scotland – 64,524  
Northern Ireland – 15,844

each of the subsectors directly employed:



**GARDEN  
GOODS  
MANUFACTURING**

**11,309**



**ORNAMENTAL  
PLANT  
PRODUCTION**

**17,798**



**LANDSCAPE  
SERVICES**

**238,114**



**ARBORICULTURE**

**18,529**



**RETAIL**

**86,850**



**WHOLESALE**

**9,556**



**TOURISM**

**37,883**

# Environmental Horticulture

Workforce Demographics within the Garden Retail and Growing Subsectors of the Industry

## Gender\*



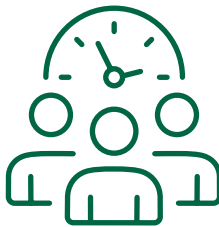
<b>56%</b>	<b>43%</b>
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## Age



55+	35-54	Under 35
<b>25%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>30%</b>

## Role

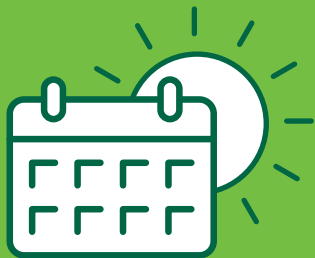


Part-time	Full-time	Apprentices
<b>47%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>1%</b>

\*The sector recognises that people identify differently, and we are working on ensuring future data provides these options

2023 saw the launch of the **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Charter for the Horticulture, Arboriculture, Landscaping & Garden Media profession**. The HTA and other signatories are **building on this commitment in 2024** through capturing data, and initiatives to progress the breaking down of barriers in the industry and increasing access and progression for all, as well as to **work openly and respectfully** with other chartered members.

# Environmental Horticulture Workforce Demographics



Alongside contracted employees, growers and plant producers also require access to seasonal labour

# 79%

growers require some seasonal labour, for an average of **25 weeks** of the calendar year



# Environmental Horticulture

## Market Size: Plant Production

In 2022,  
ornamental production  
was valued at

**£1.5  
BILLION**



Pot plants  
**£285 MILLION**



Flowers and bulbs  
**£165 MILLION**



Hardy ornamental  
nursery stock  
**£1.1 BILLION**

# Environmental Horticulture

## International Trade

**In 2022...**

Exports of plants and plant material were valued at

**£24.8 MILLION**

63% of these exports went to EU countries  
37% of these exports went to non EU countries

Imports of plants and plant material were valued at

**£758.6 MILLION**

99% of these exports came from EU countries  
1% of these exports came from non EU countries



# Environmental Horticulture

## Market Size: Garden Retail



UK consumers spend nearly **£3 billion per year** on plants and trees for their homes and gardens

There are an estimated **1,600** specialist garden centres and retail nurseries in the UK

Garden centres are the leading channel for plant purchases accounting for **51%** of outdoor plant sales by value in 2022, and **36%** of houseplant sales

In 2022, an estimated **£2.2 billion** was spent on plants for outdoors, and a further **£500 million** on houseplants

# Environmental Horticulture

## Garden Centre Visits

**214 million**  
estimated visits to  
garden centres in 2023

**69%**  
of UK adults said they  
visited a garden centre at  
least once in 2023

On average, each UK adult  
visited a garden centre  
**3.9**  
times throughout the year

UK adults that visited at least  
once visited on average  
**5.7**  
times throughout the year

# Environmental Horticulture

## UK Gardeners

**78%**

have access to a private garden, 9% a terrace or patio garden, 5% a window box/balcony, 2% an allotment and 6% have access to a communal garden

**62%**

use their private gardens to grow plants, trees or flowers and 34% use them to grow their own food

**26%**

of UK adults claim to do gardening regularly and a further 40% do so occasionally

**16M<sup>2</sup>**

The average size of private gardens

**7%**

of UK adults have no access to an outdoor space – this is equivalent to 4 million people

# Environmental Horticulture

## Ten Priorities for a future UK Government from the Horticultural Trades Association

- 1** Maximise the value of the UK's green spaces across key policy areas by delivering an Office for Green Spaces, a Horticulture Strategy and a health and wellbeing campaign.
- 2** A bold national programme of urban greening supported by reformed planning processes and guidelines setting out clear targets in relation to location, green space, garden size and biodiversity.
- 3** Build on the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement by negotiating an SPS agreement with the EU and delivering a functioning cross-border trade regime for plants.
- 4** Work with UK horticultural experts to deliver a world-class plant health regime in order to safeguard a thriving UK horticultural sector and the UK's natural landscape for future generations.
- 5** Commit to a sustainable transition and timeline to peat-free horticulture from 2030 with a support package that grows the industry, supporting SMEs and the UK's gardeners.

# Environmental Horticulture

## Ten Priorities for a future UK Government from the Horticultural Trades Association

- 6** Include environmental horticulture in the government's green jobs and skills definitions and recognise the value of sector careers and opportunities from early curriculum to apprenticeships and degree level.
- 7** Complete a review of and publish a strategy for the UK water sector, covering water resilience from flooding to drought, which recognises the importance of environmental horticulture growers and landscapers delivering and maintaining green spaces.
- 8** Undertake a consultative review of current and future UK environmental and business regulation to ensure proportionality, allowing UK businesses to transition to Net Zero, deliver on environmental and growth targets, whilst being competitive and viable.
- 9** Ensure UK Public Procurement rules, guidelines and approaches at all-levels of government can be met and delivered by UK growers, landscapers and horticultural businesses, providing confidence to invest and grow.
- 10** Make the UK a global leader in environmental horticulture through smart use of accessible R&D and grant support schemes for SME horticulture businesses, providing an economic and environmental return on investment.

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