



Trainee Role Description - Grower (Horticulture with Fruit focus) – 1 or 2 posts

We grow organic produce at Hawkwood, our 12 acre community market garden and plant nursery, and distribute it to our own box scheme and other outlets. Our produce includes the fruit harvest from our apple orchard; peaches trained against our glasshouse; cordon-style apples and pears; we also grow soft fruits including blackcurrants, raspberries, mulberries, rhubarb and strawberries. In 2025 we produced over 1.3 tonnes of fruit.

This traineeship will suit someone looking to develop their skills within the market garden, and in particular someone looking to develop their skills as a fruit grower in a community setting. The trainee will learn the skills required to manage the fruit growing areas of Hawkwood, and take on responsibilities for the fruit. You will also take part in the weekly harvests of both fruit and salad leaves, and pick up skills associated with the growing of plants and vegetables across the season.

Details of the role

- Unpaid voluntary role
- Time commitment: 1 day/week for 9 months
- **Dates: Friday 10 April - Friday 18 December 2026**, but with an option to switch to some Tuesdays in June–August to maximise participation in the harvest
- Hours: Fridays from 9.00am - 5.00pm (or Tuesdays in summer)
- Based at: Hawkwood Community Plant Nursery
- We invite all trainees to help out at one of our seasonal plant sales and Open Sundays that take place in April, May and September.

Supported by:

- monthly check-ins with an OrganicLea mentor
- 4 Learning workshops with other trainees and mentors designed to achieve an AQA certificate 'Supporting Volunteers in a Community Setting'.
- a guided visit to another organic farm site or project.
- general volunteer monthly summer-time topic tutorials which happen over several months in the summer (Wednesday/Friday) at the end of the working day
- travel expenses, within London, when requested
- bicycle repairs and servicing while-you-work for cyclists
- a seasonal, vegan lunch on Wednesdays and Fridays
- fruit and veg box scheme membership at discount, farm stall discount

If you are unable to commit to the full placement it may be possible to create a shorter 3-6 month structured placement instead. This would need to be agreed at interview.

To apply please:

1. Complete and return the OrganicLea application form and monitoring form, available on our website. (Support available for people with additional needs is described at the beginning of the form.)
2. Indicate clearly which role(s) you are interested in (expressing preference for Wednesday or Friday with this role). If you would like to apply for more than one role please list your preferred 2 or 3 in order.

OrganicLea is a registered company limited by guarantee no. 5135926

Growing site: Hawkwood Plant Nursery, 115 Hawkwood Crescent, Chingford E4 7UH

Distribution hub/Registered office: Hornbeam Centre, 458 Hoe Street, Walthamstow, London E17 9AH

Web: www.organiclea.org.uk Email: info@organiclea.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8524 4994 (Hawkwood)

3. Send to: elise@organiclea.org.uk or post to the following address: Elise Yarde, OrganicLea, 115 Hawkwood Crescent, Chingford, E4 7UH.

If we ask you to join us for an interview to discuss your application, we'll provide information about what we'll talk about in advance of sitting down with you.

Deadline for applications: midnight on Monday 9 February 2026

Interview date: tbc Friday 27 February or Friday 6 March 2026

For more information about the role, start by contacting Elise at: elise@organiclea.org.uk (Tuesdays and Fridays are good contact days).

Come and find out more about all the traineeships: Some members of OrganicLea Coop will host an open afternoon from 4-6pm on Wednesday 4 February at the Hawkwood site. This is an opportunity for questions from anyone wishing to find out more about any of the traineeships and visit the site to understand transport links / viability. Email elise@organiclea.org.uk to let us know you plan to come to this. The event will start with a guided site tour and a more formal presentation at 5pm.

Main objectives

- To learn about and assist with all aspects of planting, preparation and maintenance of the soft and top fruit areas at Hawkwood
- To learn about and assist with harvesting and processing of fruit from Hawkwood and scrumped from trees in streets and gardens in the borough
- To assist with the vegetable and flower harvest and with the vegetable production
- To provide support for the volunteer programme

Main Activities

Fruit growing

- Planting trees and fruit bushes
- Pruning
- Training restricted forms
- Orchard management
- Propagation from cuttings
- Organic weed, pest and disease management
- Assisting with development and maintenance of the fruit infrastructure

Harvest and processing

- Assist with the harvest and packing of fruit and other produce to agreed methods, ensuring quality control, including weighing, packaging, labelling and record keeping
- Take part in fruit picking around the borough
- Assist with processing fruit into juice, cider, vinegar and preserves

Working with volunteers

- Work to ensure all volunteers on site are safe, welcomed, valued and supported
- Lead tasks with volunteers

- Undertake other activities in support of OrganicLea's Production, as appropriate. This might include formulating propagation media, raising plants from seed, planting, harvesting, weeding

Person Specification

Essential

- Interest in sustainable food production and the desire to put that interest into practice
- Interest in fruit preservation and processing methods including juice and vinegar making
- Interest in developing an ability to supervise and explain tasks to volunteers, other team members and trainees
- Happy to work mainly outdoors throughout the year
- Some experience of growing
- Ability to carry out shared tasks and work within a team
- Commitment to, and understanding of, the diverse communities of Waltham Forest/ London

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