



Trainee Role Description – Grower (Plants and Production) - 2 posts

We grow organic produce at Hawkwood, Organiclea's 12 acre community market garden and plant nursery, and distribute it mainly through our own Box Scheme, plus some independent outlets. In our ½ acre glasshouse we grow heritage tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, chillies and seedlings for sale to local people and community groups. In 2025 we produced over 11 tonnes of produce, including 1.5 tonnes of salad leaves, featuring 136 different varieties of leaf.

A placement within the production team at Hawkwood: this traineeship will suit someone looking to develop their skills as a market gardener in a community setting - supporting horticultural activity during and outside of busy and diverse volunteering and training tasks. The trainee will learn the skills required to the successful growing, from seed to crate, of the vegetables at Hawkwood, to integrate that with the needs of participants and take on responsibilities for growing plants and produce over the growing season.

Details of the role

- Unpaid voluntary role
- Time commitment: 1 (or 1.5 days) per week for 9 months

We are asking for a one day per week commitment, but different days at Hawkwood have a different flavour, structure and learning objectives, so it is **preferable** that the candidate's working day changes during the course of the traineeship.

Ideally, the trainee would be available to work on a Wednesday, and able to change days to a Tuesday for a three month "block". We realise this may not be possible/ practicable for every candidate, so the detail of the "day change" can be worked out prior to the role commencing. There is the option of doing a 1.5 day per week traineeship for candidates willing and able to work on Tuesday and Wednesday throughout or for part of, the traineeship.

- **Dates: Wednesday 8 April - Wednesday 16 December 2026**
- Hours: Wednesdays / Tuesdays 9.00am - 5.00pm (with later finish, 5:30 on the second Wednesday of each month for 'farm walk')
- Based at: Hawkwood Community Plant Nursery
- We invite all trainees to help out at one of our seasonal Open Sundays that take place on Sunday 26 April, Sunday 31 May and Sunday 27 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

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.
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 9th February 2026

Interview date: Tuesday 3 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.

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Main objectives

- To learn about and assist with all aspects of propagation in the glasshouses
- To learn about and assist with all aspects of planting and maintaining the vegetable growing areas of the Hawkwood site
- To assist with harvesting and preparing produce in accordance with the needs of the OrganicLea stall, box scheme or other independent outlet
- To provide support for the vegetable production at Hawkwood
- To provide support for the volunteer programme

Main Activities**Growing**

- Formulating propagation media to organic standards
- Raising plants from seed
- Watering crops to farm requirements and methods
- Planting and maintaining glasshouse crops, field vegetables, salad leaves, green manures and companion plants
- Organic weed, pest and disease management
- Undertake other activities in support of OrganicLea, as appropriate

Harvesting

- Cutting/picking produce to the agreed methods, ensuring quality control
- Preparing produce according to 'product descriptions'
- Weighing, packaging, sealing, labelling and organising dispatch

Working with volunteers

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

Person Specification

Essential

- Interest in organic/ agroecological food production and the desire to put that interest into practice
- Some experience of growing
- Ability to supervise and explain tasks to volunteers or others such as team members and other learners
- Happy to work mainly outdoors throughout the year
- Ability to carry out shared tasks and work within a team
- Ability to work on own initiative, prioritise tasks and work to deadlines
- Commitment to and understanding of the Aims of OrganicLea
- Commitment to, and understanding of, the diverse communities of Waltham Forest/ London
- A Level 1 Horticulture qualification