



Trainee Role Description - Grower (Production and Biodiversity) 1 post

We grow Organic produce at Hawkwood, OrganicLea's 12 acre community market garden and plant nursery, and distribute to retail outlets, our own box scheme, CSA and local restaurants. In our ½ acre glasshouse we grow heritage tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, chillies and seedlings for sale to local people and community groups.

A placement within the Production team at Hawkwood: this traineeship will suit someone looking to develop their skills as a sustainable grower in a community market garden setting while developing skills to survey and support wildlife. This work supports production activity during and outside of busy and diverse volunteering and training tasks. The trainee will learn a variety of growing skills with focussed time on the management of our wildlife areas. You should be happy working independently, with the Production and Biodiversity worker, with the general production team and with volunteers.

This traineeship is linked to our WalthamWild project funded by Heritage Lottery. Particularly relevant to this role is our use of diverse cropping, companion flowers and wild spaces both for the benefit of our food production, and the wildlife we share our site with. The trainee will assist in monthly biodiversity group activities, while learning to conduct regular wildlife surveys and carrying out maintenance tasks on wildlife areas around the site.

Details of the role

- Unpaid voluntary role
- Time commitment: 1 day/week for 9 months
- **Dates: Friday 10th April - Friday 18th December 2026**
- Hours: Fridays from 9.00am –5.00pm
- Based at: Hawkwood Community Plant Nursery
- We invite all trainees to help out at one of our seasonal Open Sundays that take place throughout the year.

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 Monday 9th February 2026

Interview date: Friday 6th 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 propagation including in a glasshouse
- To learn about and assist with maintaining the wildlife focused areas of the Hawkwood site
- To gain a basic understanding in carrying out wildlife surveys including keeping records.
- To assist with harvesting and preparing produce in accordance with the needs of the OrganicLea stall, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) customers, box scheme or other independent outlets
- To provide support for the production at Hawkwood
- To provide support for the volunteer programme

Main Activities

Growing

- Joining the Friday morning harvest team in picking and packing a wide range of salad leaves, vegetables and fruit
- Raising plants from seed or division cuttings
- Irrigation
- Planting and maintaining crops
- Organic weed, pest and disease management

Biodiversity work

- Take part in monthly biodiversity focussed volunteer group tasks
- Work with the Production and biodiversity worker in carrying out survey and maintenance tasks on the wildlife areas
- Continue learnt biodiversity tasks independently, keeping records, with support available.

Working with volunteers

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

Person Specification

Essential

- Interest in sustainable food production and managing a site with a biodiversity focus
- The desire to put the afore mentioned interest into practice

- Some experience of growing
- Interest in developing an ability and the confidence to supervise and explain tasks to volunteers and other team members
- Happy to work mainly outdoors throughout the year
- Ability to carry out shared tasks and work within a team
- Experience or willingness to develop ability to use Microsoft – Excel or equivalent record keeping software
- Comfortable around bees and other wildlife
- Commitment to, and understanding of, the diverse communities of Waltham Forest/ London