

A r c h i t e c t u r a l — PLANTS —

Head of Production and Pest & Disease Management

Company Profile & Person Specification

Architectural Plants is a nursery in West Sussex with a growth rate far out-pacing industry norms. As well as the nursery, we offer garden design, planting and maintenance services – we have big dreams and grand plans. Since the appointment of our Managing Director, Guy Watts, in 2016, turnover has doubled. We aim to make a similar impression on our homegrown production, and compete on a global level with the best nurseries and growers in the world. It's a non-negotiable goal. A positive attitude is everything.

We have a passionate team working with us. Sales, marketing and design drive the company forward from the ground, increasing sales with a combination of incredible customer service and after-sales skills, well-placed advertising, a strong and engaged online following, and designs that create client retention and referral stats that are the envy of our competitors. We have a production team out on the nursery in all weathers propagating and growing on our extensive range of stock, some of which is unique to us. They also support a planting and creative maintenance team that is second to none in terms of its grit and unrelenting insistence on doing things properly every time, constructing and creatively maintaining show quality gardens.

The Head of Production and Pest & Disease Management role is a new position, created to take the pressure off our nursery manager, enabling him to focus on the day-to-day care of the plants with his team on the ground. You need to be hands-on. You'll be outside in all weathers supporting and educating the nursery team when needed, but your main focus will be on ensuring that our plants have the best opportunity to grow to our specifications. You'll need to be able to integrate into the team but, having discussed and agreed production and pest and disease prevention strategies with management, you'll often be working alone to bring those plans to fruition. It's important that you're comfortable and confident in such a position. Of course, with our global mind set, you'll also need a good degree of business acumen and an eagerness to help drive the company towards its goals. But your management and leadership requirements will be limited to a small, established propagation team who are already trained and working effectively and largely autonomously.

We want you to be caring for, growing and training our plants meticulously, obsessively even. It's no ordinary job. You need to be a genuine plantsman – a real grower. You need to be passionate, exceptionally knowledgeable, creative and mechanically minded all at once. You get the idea. If it sounds like we're asking for a lot, it's because we are. This is a unique role that requires an exceptional individual. If you think that could be you, please do get in touch.

Salary entirely negotiable

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Responsibilities:

- take charge of growing on our extensive range of specialist and rare stock, ensuring it is grown to the quality and specification required
- lead and develop production of our home grown stock, working alongside the nursery manager and our MD, leading the propagation team
- manage all aspects of plant health on the nursery, valuing prevention over cure, with the knowledge to foresee potential issues and stop them occurring
- carry out weekly crop walks of the nursery, paying specific attention to key indicator plants and keeping up-to-date with current legislation
- use specialist spray/application equipment safely, maintain it and keep a meticulous log of what was used and when
- support the Nursery Manager when required, communicating clearly with and educating colleagues as necessary
- be proactive and adaptive, working autonomously and showing ingenuity and technical ability in your response to problems

You'll need:

- an exceptional amount of plant, propagation and horticultural production and P&D knowledge, experience in the field, and an understanding of current plant health legislation
- an understanding of and experience in plant and tree training techniques, including technical clipping and topiary work – both European and Japanese
- the self-motivation to increase current production rates at a rapid pace, supported by management
- an obsessive and ingenious approach to efficient working practices, with the audacity to challenge current practice
- sound written and verbal communication skills, allowing you to complete administrative duties relating to the role and educate the nursery and sales team in matters related to P&D
- a good level of fitness and stamina in order to carry out the role effectively
- PA1 & PA6 certificates

Application Process

In the first instance, please send a personal statement to guy@architecturalplants.com, outlining your experience and suitability for the role. If successful at this stage, you'll then be asked to provide your CV. Please do not send your CV with your initial email.

The application process will involve a short telephone interview and a formal, in person interview with the Managing Director and Founder. These will be followed by a trial day at the nursery, when your knowledge, technical abilities and suitability for the role will be tested in a practical setting.

Strictly no agencies