



Horticultural Apprenticeship Program

Because of the historical European background of Ontario's horticultural industry, the European apprenticeship model for all skilled trades, which places a great deal of emphasis on practical, on-the-job training, is highly respected within the industry. And yet, the Horticultural Apprenticeship Program continues to be one of the province's "best kept secrets." At a time when the shortage of skilled labour is considered to be one of the industry's most pressing issues, what could be better than having people work while they learn, with the government willing to provide free classroom training during the winter months? What better way to encourage young people to consider horticulture as a full-time career alternative than by being an active participant in the training process?

This article, part III of *Horticulture Review's* on-going series to inform employees and especially employers on the benefits of this program, outlines in an easy-to-read chart form the roles of the various players in the program and answers the mostly commonly asked questions about how the program works.

What is the Horticultural Apprenticeship Program and how does it work?

Apprenticeship is a provincial government training program designed for those people who want to work as a skilled tradesperson. Most of the training – up to 90 per cent – comes from on-the-job work experience. The remainder involves classroom training, usually at a local community college.

Are there any standards on what the apprenticeship trainee will learn?

Yes. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) prepares industry-specific training manuals in consultation with the industry itself. While the job experience of each trainee will vary from job-to-job and employer-to-employer, the employer must agree to provide training in a number of specific tasks in order to furnish the employee with all of the basic skills typically required by that particular trade. A sign-off system ensures that all of the required skills are taught.

How long does an apprenticeship training program last?

The Horticultural Apprenticeship Program requires a minimum of 4,000 hours to a maximum of 6,000 hours of on-the-job training over a period of three or more years. Additionally, the trainee must complete a basic eight-week classroom training program after year one, and an advanced 12-week classroom training program after year two.

Where and when does the classroom training take place?

Classroom training usually takes place at a designated Training Delivery Agent (TDA), which is usually a community college. Currently, Horticultural Apprenticeship Programs are taught at Humber, Sir Sanford Fleming, Cambrian, Algonquin and Lambton Colleges.

To meet the needs of the horticultural industry, classroom training is scheduled for the winter months, when many trainees can expect seasonal lay-offs.

Who can apply for the Apprenticeship Program?

Often it is the employer who encourages those employees who he/she would like to see achieve higher standards of competence, perhaps before promoting to a supervisory position, etc., to become an apprentice/trainee. Sometimes, persons wishing to apprentice in a specific trade will look for an employer/sponsor.

A grade 12 diploma is the usual pre-requisite, however the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program makes part-time apprenticeship possible for high school students who are at least 16 years old and have completed grade 10. Contact your local Apprenticeship office for more details.

Are there any tuition fees or costs?

No. The classroom training portion is subsidized by the MTCU.

Are there any subsidies available?

Yes. Some applicants are eligible for transporta-

tion subsidies for the classroom training portion of the apprenticeship program. Contact your local Apprenticeship office for more details. Also, apprentices who are seasonally laid off for the winter months are eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) premiums. Participation in the classroom training portion of the Apprenticeship Program does not affect eligibility.

Is there a standard wage paid to apprentices?

No. The employer establishes the hourly rate of pay. The only restriction is that the rate must meet government's minimum standards.

How does one begin the application process?

Once an employer and employee agree to participate in the Apprenticeship program, either one should contact their local Apprenticeship office. A training consultant will assess the employer's ability to train in accordance with the training standards manual and will set up a formal training contract between the employer, employee and the MTCU.

What happens when the apprenticeship training is completed?

The apprentice must successfully complete a written test at the completion of the training program. A minimum score of 60 per cent is required. Successful applicants receive a Certificate of Qualification, which recognizes their status as a qualified tradesperson.

What is the difference between a Certificate of Qualification (C of Q) and a Certificate of Apprenticeship (C of A)?

Some individuals are qualified to write the written apprenticeship test without first going through the apprenticeship training process as described above. This would apply, for instance, to persons with appropriate qualifications from another country. All persons who successfully complete the written test receive a Certificate of Qualification (C of Q).

Only those persons who have successfully completed the practical training component of the Apprenticeship Program and have successfully passed the written test (and have therefore obtained the C of Q) are eligible to receive a Certificate of Apprenticeship.



Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU)

- responsible for all post secondary education and training programs in the province of Ontario
- appoint Training Delivery Agents (Community Colleges)

Apprenticeship Offices

- interview employees and apprenticeship candidates

Horticultural Industry

- includes landscape and grounds maintenance contractors, and wholesale nursery growers.



Landscape Ontario HORTICULTURAL TRADES ASSOCIATION

- Industry association, provides support to the Apprenticeship program through ongoing involvement in the IAC.

Industry Advisory Council (IAC)

- includes representation from government, industry employers and industry employees
- primary function is to ensure that the Apprenticeship Program and the Training Standards Manual is relevant and meets the current needs of the industry. Advises minister of issues affecting program.

Training Delivery Agent (TDA) Community College/ classroom training

- spaces for the classroom training portion of the Apprenticeship Program are funded by the MTCU.
- the Horticultural Apprenticeship program is currently available at the Community Colleges listed below.

Employers on the job training

- agree to provide practical, on-the-job training, in accordance with the Training Standards Manual
- an employer can register any eligible employee, or can agree to hire an employee who wishes to apprentice in the trade.

Employees

- complete 6,000 hours of on-the-job training over a period of three or more years
- complete eight-week classroom training in year one and 12-week classroom training program in year two.
- are granted Certificate of Qualification after successful completion of a written test.
- are granted a Certificate of Apprenticeship after successful completion of all of above

Classroom Training

The Apprenticeship Program is currently offered at the following Community Colleges:

Algonquin College
David Goodfellow
613-727-4723, ext. 7088

Cambrian College
Helen Jerve
705-566-8101, ext. 4328

Humber College
Don Chase
416-675-6622, ext. 4728

Lambton College
Dave Chamberlain
519-542-7751

Sir Sandford Fleming College
705-324-9144

Apprenticeship Offices

Any employer or employee interested in learning more about the Horticultural Apprenticeship Program is encouraged to call one of the following Government of Ontario Apprenticeship offices:

Central District:

Toronto 416-326-5800
Pickering 905-837-7721
Mississauga 905-279-7333

Eastern District:

Ottawa 613-731-7100
Brockville 613-342-5481
Cornwall 613-938-9702
Kingston 613-545-4338
Pembroke 613-735-3911
Peterborough .. 705-745-1918
Belleville 613-968-5558

Western District:

Hamilton 905-521-7764
Brantford 519-756-5197
Thorold 905-988-5528
Owen Sound ... 519-376-5790
London 519-675-7788
Sarnia 519-542-7705
Waterloo 519-572-6009
Chatham 519-351-2859

Northern District:

Sault Ste. Marie 705-945-6815
North Bay 705-495-8515
Sudbury 705-564-3030
Timmins 705-235-1950
Thunder Bay ... 807-345-8888
Kenora 807-468-2879

Apprenticeship Web Site: www.edu.gov.on.ca
Training Hotline: 1-800-387-5656