



A career in Arboriculture



Arboriculture workers carry out a variety of jobs to care for and maintain trees, including cultivating, managing and studying individual trees. Arboriculture workers are employed by private contractors, local authorities, national parks, private estates and landscaping firms. Some choose to specialise in carrying out work to maintain trees for utility companies or railways. Work can be in urban or rural areas.



Why work in arboriculture?

- Every day provides a new challenge that requires skill and ability to find the solutions
- You get to work outdoors in varied environments
- There is opportunity for progression to more demanding and technical roles
- You get to shape and care for trees that make up a vital part of the green environment.

Types of jobs

Ground Worker

Ground Workers support a Climber who is working in the tree. The work includes chainsaw work, clearing of cut timber, operation of chippers and stump grinders. They may also be involved in planting and removal of trees and shrubs as well as their on-going maintenance. Experienced Ground Workers can progress to become Lead Ground Workers, Climbers, or Foreman/Supervisors.

Arboricultural Manager (Contracts Manager)

The Arboricultural Manager will plan the work, allocate labour and resources and oversee the completion of all activity for a contract. They are the main contact with the client and may be involved with bidding for work.

Key facts

- There are currently over 4,500 arboriculture businesses across the UK employing around 24,000 people
- Rates of pay may vary depending on where you are employed, but as a guide:
 - Starting salary for an Arboricultural Worker is usually from around £12,000
 - Skilled Climbers range from £24,000
 - Arboricultural Managers and Surveyors can expect to earn in excess of £25,000.

Team Leader (Charge Hand)

Team Leaders will either be an experienced Ground Worker or Climber who also manages the crew. They are responsible for managing the job, staff on the site and site safety. They deal with enquires from clients and members of the public.

Climber (Tree Surgeon; Arborist)

A Climber participates in all aspects of tree work but will specialise in off-ground work, typically climbing the tree using a rope and harness or working from a mobile elevated work platform. Experienced Climbers can progress to Lead Climber, Foreman/Supervisor or Arboricultural Surveyor.



Arboricultural Surveyor

An Arboriculture Surveyor will survey trees. They will carry out risk and hazard assessments, tree identification, vegetation assessments, visual tree assessments and tree health surveys. They liaise with clients, members of the public and other stakeholders.

Arboricultural Consultant

An Arboricultural Consultant is often self-employed and advises clients on all aspects of tree management. They may prepare tree management plans, specifications for tree work, planting projects, conduct tree surveys or inspect trees and shrubs to identify pests and diseases. They advise businesses, public and other stakeholders on tree issues, planting and safety.

Working life

Arboricultural workers typically work a standard full-time week. However the hours may vary and there may be some requirement for weekend and possibly bank holiday working. Some workers are self-employed and consultancy opportunities may be available.

The work can be physically hard and demanding and Arboriculture workers need to be prepared to work outdoors in all weathers. The work can be hazardous, requiring the use of power tools and machinery. There may be a significant amount of travelling between different sites.

Getting in

Apprenticeship and Modern Apprenticeship programmes are available in treework. Arboricultural apprentices undertake a period of paid employment alongside college-based learning to gain the skills required to enter the workforce. They are open to all age groups above 16 years.

It is also possible to enter the arboriculture industry by undertaking full or part-time qualifications at college.

Arboricultural workers will also need to obtain the required awards for aerial treework and operating equipment and machinery. You might also be required to hold or work towards a full driving licence.



Skills and personal qualities

It is important to have a genuine interest in working outdoors and be physically fit.

- Enjoy working outdoors
- Have a good head for heights
- Able to deal with the physical demands
- Practical with good hand skills
- Able to plan work
- Good communication skills
- Able to work with colleagues or alone
- Able to work safely and responsibly
- Working outdoors
- Using machinery.

Possible tasks

- Tree identification
- Chipping tree residues
- Inspecting and assessing trees
- Using and maintaining equipment
- Pruning
- Tree felling and dismantling
- Advising on health and maintenance of trees
- Site safety and hazard recognition
- Climbing trees
- Clearing vegetation from power lines
- Recognition and control of pests and diseases
- Planning and supervising work.

Further information

Lantra website:
lantra.co.uk/careers

