VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY #9

The Garden Apprentice Program (GAP) at Brooklyn Botanic Garden is a great way for teens to learn about urban agriculture and the environment while working in one of the most exciting public gardens in the world! Apprentices can work their way up the four-tier program, potentially earning a paid position as Senior Apprentice.

If you enjoy getting your hands dirty and want to work with other teens, GAP may be for you. You are the future—help make it greener! Apprentices make a nine-month commitment to GAP, from March to November, which includes spring training, summer programming, and a weekly commitment throughout the academic year. See the tier descriptions for more information and application links. For more information, and an application go to:
http://www.bbg.org/learn/gap#/tabs-4

Open House
November 10, 2012
Please join us at 1 p.m. in the BBG Auditorium to find out more about the Garden Apprentice Program and the application process. RSVP required to attend. Contact the GAP coordinator at 718-623-7252 or gap@bbg.org.

Garden Apprentice Program

- Overview
- Program Tiers
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Applications

Garden Apprentices in all tiers

- Work with children, behind-the-scenes with staff, or with Garden visitors
- Learn about botany, environmentalism, and protecting the earth
- Grow, harvest, and cook their own fruits, vegetables, and herbs in the Children's Garden
- Explore in depth Brooklyn Botanic Garden's amazing plant collections and greenhouses
- Develop job skills, including teamwork, communication, and responsibility

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Tier 1: Discovery Guide apprentices

Open to students in **8th or 9th grade**

- Discovery Guides work alongside an adult Instructor and a teen Senior Apprentice in the Children’s Garden, helping with garden-based activities for children ages 5–10 in our afterschool and weekend programs. Apprentices spend most of their time outdoors, working in the vegetable beds with children. They build skills in horticulture while learning how to be environmental educators. Gardening, nature explorations, and cooking with fresh ingredients are the main activities.

Tier 2: Garden Corps apprentices

Open to students in **10th grade** or to those who have successfully completed Tier 1

- Garden Corps apprentices work behind the scenes, experiencing the range of work we do here at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Apprentices are placed in different mentorships in the spring, summer, and fall, working with the curators of various gardens, helping manage our educational greenhouses, or running science research projects. Garden Corps apprentices also delve into current environmental issues through films, field trips, discussions, and debates.

- Earn a monetary stipend at the end of the apprenticeship

Tier 3: Junior Apprentices

Open to students in **11th grade** or to those who have successfully completed Tier 2 (10th-grade students are considered on a case-by-case basis; please contact the GAP coordinator).

- Junior Apprentices run our Discovery Carts—education stations that are wheeled out onto the grounds on weekends. Apprentices build public-speaking and interpretation skills as they engage with Garden visitors on nature-based topics such as kitchen botany, plant evolution, and bees in NYC and work in teams to research and create Discovery Cart topics of their own choosing. Junior Apprentices also delve into current environmental issues through films, field trips, discussions, and debates.

- Earn a monetary stipend at the end of the apprenticeship

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Tier 4: Senior Apprentices

Open to students who have successfully completed the Junior Apprenticeship, Tier 3

- Senior Apprentices work alongside an adult Instructor and a teen Discovery Guide in the Children’s Garden, helping lead garden-based activities for children ages 2–12 in our afterschool and weekend programs. Senior Apprentices spend most of their time outdoors, working in the vegetable beds with children. They build skills in horticulture while learning how to be environmental educators. Gardening, nature explorations, and cooking with fresh ingredients are the main activities. Senior Apprentices take a leadership role in mentoring other apprentices, particularly Discovery Guides, as well as teams of apprentices during horticulture time.

- Earn an hourly wage

All new, incoming apprentices are required to pay a one-time $50 uniform and materials fee.

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1. Do I have to reapply to the program every year?
Yes. Even if you were in the program previously, you must submit an application (with reference letters) and participate in a group interview every year. You are not guaranteed a position in the next tier of the program just because you participated before.

2. I am in the 12th grade now—can I apply to be an apprentice?
Unfortunately, students currently in the 12th grade are not eligible to apply for GAP. The only 12th graders in the program are returning Senior Apprentices completing Tier 4 from 11th grade. (Tier 4 is not open to new applicants.)

3. If I participated in the Children's Garden programs (Seeds, City Farmers, Junior Botanists, etc.), do I automatically get into GAP?
No, we do not automatically accept anyone into the program—all students must submit a full application. We have many apprentices who have participated in other BBG programs, and we encourage all former program participants to apply.

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4. How does GAP decide who is accepted into the program?
The staff panel reviews the applications and considers the applicant’s short-answer responses and the teacher’s comments about the applicant on the reference forms, as well as how the applicant represents him-/herself at the group interview. We are looking for enthusiasm, genuine interest in learning at BBG, and an open mind. Past performance in the Garden Apprentice Program is also taken into consideration for returning applicants.

5. Do I need to have gardening experience to be accepted as an apprentice?
No. We have some apprentices with years of experience in growing food and working with plants and many more apprentices who have never set foot in a vegetable garden. The apprenticeship is designed so that people from all knowledge levels have opportunities to learn and explore.

6. What is the time commitment for an apprentice?
The time commitment for GAP varies depending on the time of year and your tier in the program. Generally, the time commitment is as follows:

Tier 1: Fridays after school and/or Saturdays in the spring and fall; Tuesday through Friday for six weeks in the summer.
Tier 2: One day a week after school, Saturdays, and/or Sundays in the spring and fall; Tuesday through Friday for seven weeks in the summer.
Tier 3: Saturdays, and/or Sundays in the spring and fall; Tuesday through Friday for seven weeks in the summer.
Tier 4: Fridays after school and/or Saturdays in the spring and fall; Tuesday through Friday for eight weeks in the summer.

Apprentices typically work an average of five hours per week during the academic year. All apprentices have mandatory training for three full Saturdays in March. Meetings, training, and special events will be added periodically to the calendar. Check the applications for specific dates for each tier.

While many apprentices participate in sports, clubs, college prep, and other extracurricular activities, we do ask that those serious in applying prioritize GAP, after academics. We help apprentices develop the time management skills needed to juggle multiple responsibilities and are generally flexible regarding occasional, pre-arranged conflicts.

7. What are the dates for the 2013 program?
GAP runs from March through November 2013. Important dates are listed below:

Spring

March Saturdays: All-day trainings; March 2, 16, 23, 30
April–June: Spring placements

Summer

July 9–12: Tier 1 summer training
July 16–August 16: Tier 1 summer session

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2–5</td>
<td>Tier 2 summer training</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 9–August 16</td>
<td>Tier 2 summer session</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2–12</td>
<td>Tier 3 summer training</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 16–August 16</td>
<td>Tier 3 summer session</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 25–28</td>
<td>Tier 4 summer training</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2–August 16</td>
<td>Tier 4 summer session</td>
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**Fall**

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<th>Date Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>September–October</td>
<td>Fall placements</td>
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<td>November 2</td>
<td>Open house</td>
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<td>November 9</td>
<td>All-day final meeting</td>
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<td>November 16</td>
<td>Graduation</td>
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Special meetings, events, and trainings will be added to the calendar throughout the year.

8. **Can I miss the summer session and still participate in GAP?**
   No. Participation in the summer session of the program is required, no exceptions. Please schedule family vacations and other activities before or after the dates listed on the application.

9. **Can I participate only in the summer session?**
   No. We ask apprentices to make a full commitment to the program, March–November. If you are looking for a summer internship only, this is not the place for you!

10. **What if I want to go on vacation during the summer?**
    Please schedule family vacations and other activities before or after the dates listed on the application.

11. **Can I apply for SYEP in the summer and still participate in GAP?**
    No, only Senior Apprentices apply for SYEP funding in the summer. Due to scheduling constraints and other concerns, we are not able to have apprentices in Tiers 1, 2, or 3 apply for SYEP funding for the summer.

12. **Do I have to start at Tier 1, or can I join the program at another tier level?**
    You can apply to the Garden Apprentice Program at any tier—Discovery Guide, Garden Corps, or Junior Apprentice—except for Tier 4, Senior Apprentice. To apply to be a Senior Apprentice, you must have successfully completed the Junior Apprenticeship.

13. **Can I skip a tier?**
    No, we generally do not allow apprentices to skip tiers. There are opportunities and skills unique to each tier that we think are valuable as you move up through the program.

14. **Could participation in GAP count toward community service credit?**
    Absolutely! The hours you contribute to the garden as a Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 apprentice are considered volunteer hours. These hours can be used toward community service requirements from your school. Even though

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apprentices in Tiers 2 and 3 receive a stipend for their work (see #15, below), the hours contributed are still considered volunteer hours. Senior Apprentices cannot apply their work hours toward community service because they are being paid for their work.

15. Do I get paid? When?
Apprentices who successfully complete the program are given a nontaxable stipend (payment) in December, as follows:
Tier 2, Garden Corps: $200
Tier 3, Junior Apprentice: $500
Senior Apprentices (Tier 4) are paid every two weeks an hourly wage of $7.25 per hour.

16. Why is there a $50 fee for new apprentices?
All new apprentices are required to pay a one-time $50 fee to help offset the cost of uniforms and other materials provided to each apprentice. As the apprentice moves up the tiers in the program, he/she is not required to pay the fee again.

17. Do I have to send in all my application materials together, or can they be submitted separately?
No, you do not have to submit all your application materials at the same time. You can mail or drop off your application, and then ask your references to mail their forms directly to the GAP coordinator:

Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Attn: GAP
1000 Washington Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225

Make sure your references know that all application materials are due by December 5! That means that the forms must be received by GAP by December 5, not postmarked by December 5. We do not accept faxes.

18. How many apprentices are accepted into the program?
GAP accepts 10 to 12 apprentices per tier. In the past, we have received about three times that number of applications. Therefore, acceptance into the program is competitive but not impossible! Good luck!

More questions? Contact the GAP coordinator at 718-623-7252 or gap@bbg.org.

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