

MEET BEN PATERSON

Ground Control Horticulture Operative Level 2 Apprentice



What apprenticeship are you doing at Ground Control and what does this cover?

I am doing the Level 2 Horticulture Operative apprenticeship. So far, I have covered a range of soft landscaping skills including digging and maintaining flower beds, returfing and planting shrubs. My tutor visits me once a month on site and then I go to college for any assessments. I have done my PA1 which covers the theory side and my PA6, which is the practical side of safe spraying including all risk assessments.

There is also the theory side of Horticulture as you learn 25 Latin names of different trees and plants. It's hard but my tutor gives me a few a month to learn to make it easier.

Every week I also take Friday afternoon off to do any written work for my apprenticeship and our tutor sets us work on what to do. I recently had an assessment on soil types to complete so it covers lots of different aspects of the industry.

What do you do on a day-to-day basis in your job within our maintenance team at Ground Control?

During the summer I did lots of grass cutting on the ride on mower across the site. As we approach winter, we have to start on leaf clearance and the hedge cutting side of things. Much of our time is dependent on the weather.

What is the best part of your job?

Being active! I like active jobs even if it's cold in the Winter. In the summer when not too hot it's lovely being outside.

It's also a good team and we have a joke as well as working well together. If you ever make a mistake as an apprentice you're not punished as you are learning. It's much better to be honest about what you can and can't do so people can help you.

What has been the hardest part of your apprenticeship so far?

Initially it was learning to drive the ride on mower but now it is second nature!

I don't mind getting up early.... but for some people it would be hard starting work at 6.30am in the summer months. You do get used to it though.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to get into an apprenticeship like yours?

Make sure you are confident when you are applying as well as being interested in the industry. If you are too quiet you may get overlooked. When you start if you make the effort to talk to people they will talk back and you can then get to know your team on a friendly level as well.

What do you enjoy outside of work?

I have set up my own small business doing landscaping jobs and laying turf for family and friends. One day I would love to have my own business and maybe subcontract to Ground Control as a field team when I am qualified.