

New education options on the way

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Principal at the Teagasc College at the National Botanic Gardens

Teagasc is a leader in land-based training and the numbers progressing through our courses in colleges and regional management units are a testament to that.

Achieving a Green Cert to avail of young farmer advantages in EU and DAFM schemes is usually goal for new entrants to farming or horticulture.

Green certs can be achieved by following a two-year programme in agriculture in your local agricultural college or through the Teagasc regional office education structure. In March, all the Teagasc colleges will host open careers events (see panel with dates) where students and parents can see and learn about what courses are on offer.

Many young school leavers from commercial horticulture backgrounds in the Leinster area enrol to do a two-year programme in horticulture. The Teagasc college at the National Botanic Gardens offers full- and part-time courses in horticulture that can qualify a person with a Green Cert.

The college offers a one-year Level 5 certificate in horticulture leading to a one-year Level 6 advanced certificate in horticulture, which is a recognised Green Cert qualification. For individuals who want to learn about horticulture, this route is undoubtedly the one they should follow.

This course also allows progression to a degree programme in horticulture that is Level 7 accredited and would undoubtedly enhance employability. The demand for staff to work in horticulture currently outstrips supply. Companies involved in landscaping, garden maintenance, sportsturf are all actively looking for keen horticulturalists who have a strong work ethic and want to work in the outdoor space. We are inundated with requests weekly from companies who wish to hire our graduates into the amenity horticultural sector.

On the commercial horticulture



Graduates of horticultural courses currently enjoy excellent job prospects.

front the Level 6 stream on food production can be followed which also delivers a Green Cert to successful candidates. People from commercial vegetable production backgrounds would be suited to this stream. This two-year programme is available in both Teagasc horticultural colleges (National Botanic Gardens and Kildalton).

Apprenticeships

This year, Teagasc with stakeholders is pursuing a new initiative, the apprenticeship model. Work is ongoing in the development of five land-based apprenticeships across the areas of horticulture, agriculture and equine studies. Teagasc is working with SOLAS (the Further Education and Training Authority) to make this happen in 2019.

In horticulture, the Teagasc College at the National Botanic Gardens, in

collaboration with Teagasc Kildalton College, is building two apprenticeships with relevant stakeholders in turfgrass and in general horticulture. We envisage a two-year apprenticeship that will be equivalent to the current Level 6 in Horticulture that is available in both colleges.

The apprenticeship format will be work-based with apprentices trained through the employer for the majority of the duration, with the college delivering targeted academic training.

This format differs from the existing Level 6 route in that apprentices are directly employed by the company under contracts of employment and are bound by employment law. They are then released for academic courses in the college. This timeframe will follow an 80/20 work/college format. This route will also result in a Green Cert.

The apprenticeship model is a positive step in facilitating more people into work-based training in horticulture. Participants will have active employment with a designated trainer who will guide the development of the individual in the craft of horticulture. More information on apprenticeships will become available over the next six months so keep an eye on Teagasc website or contact me directly in the College of Amenity Horticulture in Glasnevin.

• **Friday 1 March 2019:** College Open Day, Teagasc, Kildalton Agricultural & Horticultural College, Piltown, Co Kilkenny, 10am and 11am.

• **Wednesday 6 March 2019:** College Open Day, Mountbellew Agricultural College, Mountbellew, Co Galway, 9.30am, 10.30am and 11.30am.

• **Thursday 7 March 2019:** College Open Day, Botanic Gardens, Teagasc College of Horticulture, National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin, Dublin 9, 2pm to 4pm.

• **Friday 8 March 2019:** College Open Day, Ballyhaise Agricultural College, Ballyhaise, Co Cavan, 10am to 1pm; college Open Day, Teagasc, Clonakilty Agricultural College, Darrara, Clonakilty, Co Cork, 11am and 12pm.

• **Wednesday 13 March 2019:** College Open Day, Gurteen College, Ballingarry, Roscrea, Co Tipperary, 10.30am to 12.30pm.