

Appointment of
Executive Director
August 2026



ST ANDREWS
BOTANIC
GARDEN

About us

Founded in 1889, St Andrews Botanic Garden is managed by an independent charitable Trust to address the most pressing environmental and social challenges of our time. Our mission of botanical conservation and education has seen us take transformational steps in recent years, including radical steps to achieving Net Zero, investment in building projects, establishment of international and regional partnerships, development of the Garden's habitats, and publication of research that establishes the Botanic Garden's expertise in urban ecology.

These steps have been critical to establishing strong institutional foundations, and our focus now is to consolidate this progress by preparing for ambitious capital investment and in turn, growth in turnover and expansion of our charitable activities. The success of these next steps will depend on developing partnerships that connect our mission and resources to deliver positive, long-term change.

Located in the historic town of St Andrews, the Botanic Garden is part of a thriving coastal community with links across Scotland and further afield.



The role

We are looking to recruit an Executive Director and establish the Botanic Garden as a leading site for ecological innovation through programmes that deliver a new business model for conservation and education.

The Executive Director will be a capable, organised and experienced individual with an outstanding professional background who shares our enthusiasm for plants and the ways they shape places and people. We expect that the incoming Executive Director will have demonstrated experience of managing competing strategic demands amidst dynamic policy and funding landscapes.

This is an exciting opportunity for someone who recognises the role that botanic gardens can play in bringing people together, wants to lead a vibrant and outward-looking organisation, and intends to continue and further the excellent work of the last few years.

The opportunities for the Executive Director are significant and wide-ranging, as befits a botanic garden at an inflection point. Significant progress has been made to safeguard the Trust as an independent charity and demonstrate capacity for innovation in a fast-moving landscape, and the incoming Executive Director will be working with a Board of Directors dedicated to supporting the Garden as it navigates new opportunities in a challenging and ever-changing environment.

Responsibilities and duties

Strategic Leadership

- Support the Garden's transformation and growth, including preparation for capital investment and expansion of commercial and engagement programmes.
- Develop and implement our strategic plan for biodiversity, [Plants on the Move](#).
- Enhance visitor experience and expand community engagement programmes.

Financial Management and Operations

- Oversee annual budgets of c. £650,000 and ensure financial sustainability.
- Direct operational efficiency, capital projects, and facility management.
- Develop the Trust's commercial operations, with a particular emphasis on the plant nursery.

Ambassadorship and Fundraising

- Act as an ambassador for the Garden, promoting its mission and objectives to stakeholders, partners, and the wider community.
- Build positive relationships with external partners across local to international communities.
- Build support from funders to secure significant grant and philanthropic support.
- Represent the Trust in the community and at national and international forums.

People and Organisational Development

- Day to day leadership of the senior management team and consultants.
- Indirect leadership of 20 staff across conservation, horticulture, education, and operations.
- Foster a culture of excellence, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Person specification

Candidates should be able to demonstrate the following skills and experience:

Knowledge and experience

- Demonstrable experience of progressive leadership in senior management positions, ideally within organisations that combine commercial and charitable objectives.
- Strategic foresight and planning in contexts involving organisational transformation, or where legacy operating models have needed to evolve.
- Understanding of the legal and regulatory environment for charities in Scotland.
- Strong leadership and communication skills, demonstrated through effective decision-making.
- Track record of working between public sector and industry sectors.
- Experience of partnership development, especially at national and international levels.
- Leadership of complex projects, from inception and financing through to delivery.
- Expertise in plant research, conservation and horticulture are desirable but not essential.

Skills, qualities and personal attributes

- Ability to inspire and motivate Trustees, staff, and volunteers, demonstrated through skills in communication, diplomacy, emotional intelligence and sound judgement.
- Ability to serve as an ambassador for the Garden, both to the public and other stakeholders.
- Commitment to the values and mission of the St Andrews Botanic Garden.
- Respectful and inclusive approach, with the ability to command trust and confidence of Trustees and stakeholders.
- A clear commitment to fairness, confidentiality and principles of good governance.

Our work

Our charitable mission drives our core programme across four strands:

Garden conservation and botanical research

- We take an ecologically-driven approach to curating the 18 acres of the Botanic Garden in the heart of St Andrews
- Our plantings include designed meadows, ponds, woodlands, sand dunes and a rock garden
- We take a partnership-based approach to leading and supporting research into how plants are responding to climate change

Community and education

- We welcome 25,000 visitors a year from around the world
- We host a vibrant, year-round events programme
- Our volunteer and Friends programme provide opportunities for well-being and supporting a wider conservation programme

Commercial operations and project delivery

- We have recently established a vibrant plant nursery with a unique range of plants that are selected for Fife's future climate
- We host a wide range of people and organisations for corporate events, weddings and celebrations
- We are proud work with a range of partners, including foundations, government agencies and grant-awarding bodies

Heritage and cultural programmes

- We maintain a globally-significant herbarium, currently the focus of renewed artistic and cultural research
- We offer a range of curriculum-linked educational programmes for all ages and interests that align with forward-thinking conservation

Although known for our historic plantings and community engagement, our recent work has included landmark developments:

- Establishing four Living Laboratories, with trials for leading edge green infrastructure trials and prototype building materials.
- Completion of Phase 1 our capital investment programme through establishing a new plant nursery and restoring the Boiler House as a new space for teaching and engagement, and decommissioning obsolete buildings and glasshouses.
- Publication of [Plants on the Move](#), our strategic plan for biodiversity research (2023-35).
- Publication of green infrastructure and biosecurity research for UK and Scottish Governments, supporting policy development and industry innovation.
- Agreement of a long term lease, reflecting the University of St Andrews' support for the Trust to develop a sustainable business model and be a responsible custodian of the plant collections.
- Development of new partnerships and collaborations based around research, teaching and knowledge exchange between industry, government and the higher education sector.
- Launch of two flagship programmes:
 - a) The Tangled Bank, an international research programme to understand the ecological drivers of evolution in novel ecosystems.
 - b) Rootstock, transforming work-based training and education in conservation and green infrastructure.



A window to a wilder world

A photograph of two women walking through a field. In the foreground, there is a rustic fence made of stacked logs and branches. The background is filled with lush green trees and foliage. The lighting suggests it might be late afternoon or early morning, with a soft glow filtering through the leaves. The women are walking towards the right side of the frame. One woman is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a colorful skirt, while the other is wearing a white cardigan over a blue top and jeans. Both have black bags slung across their shoulders.

Terms of appointment

Location St Andrews, Fife (hybrid working considered).

Time commitment Full time.

Remuneration Commensurate with experience, with associated benefits package and professional development.

This position is an exceptional opportunity to lead an institution with significant conservation and educational impact, supported by a Board of Trustees committed to your success.

How to apply

The stages of the application and selection process are:

Stage 1	Application deadline	Friday 11 th September, 3pm
Stage 2	Round 1 interviews	Mid September
Stage 3	Round 2 interviews	Late September

The following documentation will be made available on request:

- Articles of Association (these are also publicly available)
- Most recent annual accounts (these are also publicly available)
- Overview of structure of scheme of delegation (after Stage 2)
- Overview of organisational structure (after Stage 2)

We provide equal opportunities and are committed to the principle of equality regardless of race, colour, ethnic origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.

Please advise us in your notification of interest if there are any reasonable adjustments that would support your application, and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

If you are interested in considering this opportunity, please write to Tom Murray, Chair of the Board of Trustees to arrange a visit to the Garden at either jobs@standrewsbotanic.org or by post at St Andrews Botanic Garden Trust, Canongate, St Andrews, Fife KY16 8RT.



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