

WRAGS Trainee Bursary

Subscription to 'Create Academy', an on-line learning platform - Lesley Sealey

After 30 years working as a textile designer and tutor I began my retraining in horticulture with a WRAGS placement at Ashburnham Place in East Sussex, nearly two years ago.

Alongside this practical retraining, I studied my Level 2 RHS theory and have now started working towards integrating my new horticultural knowledge with my background in design. The Merlin Trust Award has enabled me to fund an annual online subscription to 'Create Academy', a provider of high-quality creative courses delivered by leading practitioners.

The subscription has given me flexible access to a wide range of professionally produced, bite-sized video courses, allowing me to study at my own pace and fit lessons in around gardening jobs. The content has dovetailed neatly with some of the renovation projects we're undertaking at Ashburnham, so I'm able to start putting some of my learning straight into practice.

Though I only began the subscription in January I have already completed several of the short courses and already feel I have gained confidence. The content is presented by experts such as Dan Pearson, Troy Scott Smith and Jo Thompson who demonstrate skills and talk through their approach to private projects, giving valuable insight into their creative processes, decision-making, and practical approaches to delivering successful garden designs.

I am applying structured design approaches, improved plant selection strategies, and greater attention to visual cohesion in ongoing work. The lessons learned through Create Academy will continue to inform my practice, strengthening both my creative confidence and technical competence as I progress throughout my horticultural career and I'm really looking forward to being able to watch the remaining courses during the rest of the year!

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the 'Create Academy' website. The navigation bar is dark blue with the 'CA' logo on the left and the following links: HOME, COURSES (with a dropdown arrow), INSTRUCTORS, and GIFTS. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads 'ALL COURSES / GARDENING & FLORISTRY'. The main heading is 'Gardening courses'. Below the heading is a row of filter buttons: ALL (highlighted in dark blue), SMALL GARDENS (5), FOOD GROWING (4), FLORAL DESIGN (4), PHOTOGRAPHY (1), and FLOWER GROWING (6).

'Create Academy' on-line courses



'South Lodge', the entrance to Ashburnham place....in need of a rethink!



Plant selection and planting design for two new gravel beds for South Lodge