

Merlin Trust Application Form Guidance Notes

1. Who can apply?

- **Horticulturists.** Both student horticulturists and employed horticulturists can apply.
- **British or Irish citizens** only. Unless you are currently studying on a full-time professional horticultural course.
- Aged between **18 and 34** (You can apply up to the date of your 35th birthday and must travel within one year of applying). Or, **if you are over 35**, but within the first 5 years of your horticultural career (including time spent training/studying) you may also apply.
- Have you been awarded a Merlin Trust grant before? We will award a maximum of two grants per individual.

2. When can you apply?

You are welcome to apply for a UK Study Travel Grant (including special award for a heather-related project), Green Recovery Award or Health & Wellbeing Award between 30 August and 30 September 2021.

Your project may take place from 01 October 2021 but we would prefer projects to commence in spring 2022. Please describe why your project needs to start before spring 2022 if applicable.

You must allow a minimum of four weeks from submission of your application to your project start date. As applications are only considered when references are received, please ensure these are sent with your submission or shortly thereafter – we will not chase references on your behalf.

3. Which projects can receive funding?

The Merlin Trust awards **Travel Grants to young horticulturists**. For 2021, this will include travel within the UK only, and can either be to see plants in the wild or collections held in gardens. For the first time, we are extending this grant to include conferences, study fees (short skill or competency based courses only), or purely conservation based projects. The grant will also permit work experience. A heather-related project special award is also available.

We are also launching two new awards: the Green Recovery Award and the Health & Wellbeing Award. The Green Recovery Award is aimed at young horticulturists interested in growing their practical experience in conservation horticulture, including the role of horticulture in UK habitat restoration, and sustainable horticulture. The Health & Wellbeing Award will allow award recipients to explore the impact of horticulture of society, particularly the links between gardening and health. Both are aimed at providing practical experience in two key areas of horticultural development in the UK.

For more in-depth advice about your project ideas you may contact the Merlin Trust Secretary for more information (info@merlin-trust.org.uk).

4. What is the maximum grant available?

The maximum grant that you may apply for is **£1,000**. We are more likely to support applicants who have sought funding from more than one source, and who intend to make a personal contribution to the project also; this criterion has been relaxed for the UK-only travel grants although a personal contribution will be viewed positively.

5. What can the grant be used for?

- Transport (Flights/Buses/Car hire etc) – we look more favourably on any efforts made to travel as sustainably as possible
- Accommodation
- Food
- Travel Insurance
- Hiring a local guide
- Fees – conferences and short courses or training: evidence of how this will support your career will be required

6. How do you apply?

Please submit a completed application form and **two references**. Send to: info@merlin-trust.org.uk (please include your name as the file name). You will need to complete all sections of the application form: incomplete forms will not be considered.

Submissions will only be considered when two references have been received. We will not chase references if they are not received on time. You need to instruct your referees to send their references as email attachments to info@merlin-trust.org.uk. File names should include the applicants name. It will make for a stronger application if your referees are in support of your project and explain why, not just that you work hard etc.

7. When will you hear if you have been awarded a grant?

Provided the application form has been completed in full, that both references were received and that submission is at least four weeks before the intended date of project commencement, applicants will be informed of the decision within three weeks of submission at the very latest. Please contact the Merlin Trust Secretary (info@merlin-trust.org.uk) to find out more. If successful, account information will be sought, and the grant will be paid out as soon as possible.

8. Are there any obligations on accepting a grant?

The grant is offered on condition that within three months of returning from the trip the applicant submit a report of their experiences and a separate breakdown of costs. This should be sent as one bound paper copy, and one electronic copy emailed to info@merlin-trust.org.uk. Guidance for the report is provided on the Merlin Trust website and is available from the Merlin Trust Secretary along with the postal address for the paper copy.

The electronic copy should have all images compressed and saved as a pdf file (max 30 MB). The file name should include Merlin number and name of applicant only. For example: **537 Sarah Carlton.pdf**

Any surplus grant money should be returned to The Merlin Trust within six weeks after returning from the trip. Details of how to do this can be obtained from the secretary.

Checklist:

- Completed application form.
- Obtained **two** professional references in support of your application.
- Evidence of correspondence with horticultural professionals in regard to your proposed project (any formal invitations for work/study placements or formal visits, programme information for tours etc).

If in any doubt, please contact the Merlin Trust Secretary to discuss your questions further:
info@merlin-trust.org.uk