

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN EDINBURGH



Appointment of

REGIUS KEEPER

March 2025 Ref Code: DBSGA

Saxton Bampfylde



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Thank you for considering the role of Regius Keeper (CEO) at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. As the Chair of the Board of Trustees, I am delighted to introduce you to our vibrant and esteemed organisation and share our vision for the future.

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a world leader: at our four Gardens across Scotland – Edinburgh, Benmore, Dawyck and Logan – we conserve one of the richest botanical collections on Earth. We deliver vital resources for scientific research, conservation horticulture, formal and informal education, and public engagement. Our Gardens are also leading visitor destinations, promoting health and wellbeing through engagement with nature, and are integral components of their local economies.

As Scotland's national plant biodiversity institute, we stand as a global ambassador for Scotland. Through strategic alliances with research, environment, education, and commercial partners worldwide, we are at the forefront of combating the catastrophic biodiversity crisis and addressing the climate emergency.

We now seek a dynamic visionary with a commercial head and social heart to lead us into our next chapter. You will shape a new strategy, forge partnerships, and ensure sustainability and growth. Your leadership will be crucial in advancing our mission to explore, conserve, and explain the world of plants and our vision to create a positive future for plants, people and planet.

This recruitment pack offers an in-depth look at our organisation, our core values, and the exciting opportunities that await you. We hope it will inspire you with a clear vision of what it means to join us and the profound impact you can make as our next Regius Keeper (CEO).

We look forward to discovering how your expertise and passion will drive our continued success.

Warm regards,

Dominic Fry
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh





ABOUT US

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a world-renowned centre for plant study, conservation, and biodiversity innovation as well as a hugely popular tourist attraction. Founded in 1670 as a physic garden for growing medicinal plants, it has evolved into a global leader in plant science, conservation, and education.

Key features include:

Globally important Living Collection: We hold one of the world's largest and richest plant collections, with over 13,300 plant species, many of which are under threat, economically or ethnobotanically important, or still to be scientifically described.

Global Conservation: We inspire and participate in global conservation projects, aiming to protect plant biodiversity and address environmental challenges.

Herbarium: The Herbarium contains over three million preserved specimens, making it a valuable resource for scientific research and education.

Education: We offer a range of educational programmes and courses for all ages; promoting plant science, horticulture and conservation.

Visitor Attraction: Together, our four Gardens constitute one of Scotland's premier visitor attractions, offering beautiful landscapes, engagement with nature, public programmes and seasonal events.

Four Gardens: Our four distinct Gardens - Edinburgh, Benmore, Dawyck and Logan - each feature their own unique plant collections and specialties, adapted to their microclimates.

Edinburgh: Behind the science, conservation and education facilities, is a tranquil oasis in the heart of the city. Across 72 acres, the Garden showcases nearly 60,000 plants from around the world in themed plantings. Features such as the Rock Garden and Chinese Hillside, with their known wild origin material, are internationally renowned. The public Glasshouses, including the iconic A-Listed Palm Houses, are currently closed for major restoration as part of the [Edinburgh Biomes Project](#).

Benmore: On a mountainside in Argyll, Benmore is celebrated for its magnificent and scientifically significant collection of rhododendrons and conifers. Its stunning setting features collections from Chile, Bhutan and Japan.

Dawyck: Situated in the Scottish Borders, Dawyck Botanic Garden is famous for its heritage and conservation of trees and shrubs, particularly those from the mountainous regions of Nepal, China, and North America.

Logan: On the south-western tip of Scotland, Logan enjoys a mild climate influenced by the Gulf Stream, allowing it to cultivate a variety of exotic plants from the Southern Hemisphere not usually seen this far north.

As a popular destination for both tourists and locals, the Royal Botanic Garden of Edinburgh attracts over one million visitors annually across its four Gardens.

The Edinburgh Garden offers free admission to the outdoor areas, making it an accessible and enriching experience for all.

The organisation's international profile is bolstered by extensive collaborations with partners worldwide, including the Kunming Institute of Botany in China. These relationships enhance research capabilities and conservation initiatives, making us a pivotal player in addressing global environmental challenges.

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a charity, and a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored and supported through Grant-in-Aid by the Scottish Government's Environment and Forestry Directorate. It is governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by Scottish Ministers. The Botanics Trading Company Limited, established in 1992, is our commercial arm, generating funds through various business ventures to support our mission.

The organisation comprises over 320 staff drawn from a variety of disciplines, contributing in many ways to its overall objectives and functions.

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh also has a legal status as an academic institution.

rbge.org.uk



OUR PRIORITIES

To deliver our mission '**to explore, conserve and explain the world of plants**', our work is guided by three strategic priorities:

- **Unlocking knowledge and understanding of plants and fungi for the benefit of society:** Our scientific research will focus on understanding the threats to species and biomes and their likely responses to environmental change. We are developing enhanced strategies and actions for conserving biodiversity at home and around the world.
- **Conserving and developing botanical collections as a global resource:** We curate and enhance the National Botanical Collection of Scotland as a scientific and cultural heritage resource and support the wider development of botanical collections, particularly in countries in the Global South.
- **Enriching and empowering individuals and communities through learning and engagement with plants and fungi:** Our work builds global capacity to respond to the biodiversity crisis and climate emergency by developing and sharing scientific, conservation and horticultural knowledge through education and engagement with the public.

We are now approaching the final stages of our 2021 – 2026 strategy [Responding to the Biodiversity Crisis and Climate Emergency](#).

The Regius Keeper (CEO) will lead a new five-year Corporate Strategy in partnership with the Board of Trustees, Executive Team, and key stakeholders.

OUR VALUES

We work collaboratively

We value evidence

We cultivate curiosity



THE ROLE

Responsibilities and Duties

Reporting directly to the Board of Trustees, and the Scottish Parliament as the Accountable Officer, the Regius Keeper (CEO) assumes ultimate responsibility for directing all Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh operations to meet its mission to Explore, Conserve and Explain the World of Plants and to achieve its full potential to address the global environmental crisis.

Vision and Strategic Priorities:

- Collaborate closely with the Board of Trustees to establish a forward-thinking strategic direction that aligns with the organisation's mission and values.
- Drive the implementation of strategic objectives and results, ensuring they are in line with the organisation's overarching vision and priorities.
- Strengthen the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's national and international reputation for impact and excellence in biodiversity science, education, horticulture, and public engagement, fostering innovation and continuous improvement in these core areas.
- Lead the development of income generation strategies to optimise self-generated income, ensuring the financial resilience and sustainability of the organisation.
- Maximise the organisation's contribution to the Scottish Government's National Outcomes and to United Nation's Mission for the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Communicate our response to the urgent challenges posed by the biodiversity crisis and climate emergency, setting ambitious yet attainable goals to realise the organisation's vision.
- Foster positive working relationships with Scottish Government and be an active member of its Environment and Economy Leaders' Group.

Leadership:

- Champion our world-leading science, research and education capabilities against the twin threats of biodiversity loss and the climate emergency.
- Promote a culture of entrepreneurialism to leverage commercial opportunities and income.
- Provide visible and effective leadership to the entire community, fostering a culture of collaboration, respect, and continuous learning.



- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of staff, students, volunteers, and visitors, maintaining a high-quality environment reflective of the organisation's commitment to excellence.
- Lead by example in upholding our values, demonstrating integrity, empathy, and dedication to environmental stewardship.
- Promote a culture of equity and inclusion, ensuring all members of the organisation feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to collective success.

Governance and Finance:

- As the leader of a Non-Departmental Public Body, serve as the Accountable Officer, personally answerable to the Scottish Parliament for the exercise of functions, including financial propriety and regularity, risk management, and the economic, efficient, and effective use of resources.
- Maintain an excellent working relationship with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's Board of Trustees to uphold the highest standards of governance and ensure full legal and regulatory compliance.
- Ensure the organisation fulfils its charitable purpose and meets the requirements of charity law.
- Significantly expand the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's funding base through the development of self-generated income, including donor cultivation, commercial activities, and enhanced support from grant-giving bodies.
- Oversee and manage all commercial aspects of the organisation's operations to identify market opportunities, define target markets and grow market share.
- Chair and shape the Botanic Trading Company Board to drive revenue generation, business growth and profitability.

Safeguarding the National Botanical Collection:

- Safeguard the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's invaluable National Botanical Collection, including the Living Collection, Herbarium, and Library and Archives, and associated historic buildings.
- Ensure the long-term integrity and accessibility of these irreplaceable assets.
- Further develop the Four Gardens as leading and inclusive visitor destinations.



Major Capital Development:

- Oversee the delivery of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's £100-million capital transformational programme to restore/replace the glasshouse estate and associated infrastructure.

Representation and Relationship Management:

- Maintain and cultivate strategic and operational alliances, ensuring the organisation is well positioned to capitalise on collaborative opportunities nationally and internationally.
- Serve as primary external spokesperson, enhancing our position as a world-leading botanic garden.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential:

- Clear leadership skills, including an ability to work with and further develop high-performing teams, and foster positive and innovative work cultures.
- Experience of developing and delivering corporate strategies and leading successful change/business transformation programmes.
- Knowledge and experience in a plant or biodiversity-related field, such as research, horticulture, education, policy development, or conservation. An understanding of the essential role played by plants and fungi in addressing the interconnected challenges of the biodiversity crisis and climate emergency.
- Significant experience in scaling organisations with both charitable and commercial business models.
- Exceptional communication and influencing skills with the ability to translate complex scientific concepts clearly and succinctly to diverse audiences.
- Demonstrable experience of developing commercially successful initiatives, whether through networks or as standalone commercial streams.
- Proven ambassadorial skills and ability to form positive relationships with all key partners, across Government, private, public and third sectors.
- Externally focussed - a natural public spokesperson, adept at broadcast media and public affairs.
- Experience of networking within high-net-worth communities and partnering with philanthropic teams in securing major gifts/legacies.
- Tenacity and an unrelenting focus on results, outcomes, and impact.
- Calm, collaborative and with a deep commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Desirable:

- Adept at creating innovative cultures and embedding change within an organisation.
- A global perspective and experience in international environment, conservation or biodiversity initiatives, with an international network at a senior level.



Vision

A positive future
for plants, people
and planet.

Mission

To explore, conserve
and explain the world
of plants.





TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

This role is based at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh with occasional travel to the three regional gardens and international travel.

We offer a generous employment package:

- Salary: £115,000 to £125,000.
- Membership of the civil service defined benefit pension scheme.
- 25 days holiday entitlement on appointment, increasing to 30 days after 5 years of service, with the option to buy additional holidays.
- 11.5 days of public and privilege holidays annually.
- A range of staff support mechanisms, including an employee assistance programme, cycle to work and staff discount schemes.
- A range of family-friendly options to support work-life balance, including flexible working arrangements, enhanced contractual maternity, paternity, adoption, and shared parental leave, and career breaks.
- Relocation allowance available if required.
- Discounts in our shop, restaurants, and cafes.

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.



HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code DBSGA.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on 17 April 2025.

Key Process dates:

Preliminary interviews with Saxton Bampfylde will be held early May followed by final interviews with Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh w/c 2 June 2025.

*The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

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