

First Garden Apprentice Report for the Barbara and Phillip Denny Trust

I feel like I have settled well into the apprenticeship at Fulham Palace and I am as excited as the first day started. I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to fulfil my dream of becoming a gardener.

As I started on the 6th of August the harvest season was already in full swing. I was taking over from Lizzy, who you met in the summer. She did a great job on the roots and squash beds as well as establishing the first soft fruit bed at Fulham Palace for a number of years. I started by planting the last succession of carrots, radishes, beetroots and turnips of the growing season as well as harvesting potatoes and early successions of roots for the Palace's barrow. Towards the end of August I was kept busy raising over 100 squashes and pumpkins off the ground to stop them from rotting as well as clearing some of their abundant foliage so the fruits could get some light to mature.

As the days started to get shorter and the harvest almost over we began to clear and mulch the beds preparing them for winter. It was great collecting all the vegetable waste knowing that, with effort and attention, this will be working itself into rich soil in our composting bays!

Under the tutelage of Chris A & Chris R, I have learnt how to use a variety of useful machinery from mowers to tractors, turf cutters to strimmers. I have also learnt about:

- propagation from semi ripe to hardwood cuttings,
- seed collecting
- composting
- station sowing

Away from the walled garden we were also busy creating the borders of the new south path which I learned to seed with guidance from Lucy Hart and Chris A. This involved preparing the soil for planting (what a master class in the use of the rake), understanding the correct amount of seed required and finally protecting with fleece until germination.

As part of our Heritage Lottery Funded restoration project Lucy has designed a new bed by the south wall of the walled garden to host and reintroduce a number of the species that the Bishops used to grow in Fulham Palace's heyday. For added visual appeal we set up a wattle fence that we learned to weave during a workshop hosted by expert Clive Leeke. I look forward to updating you with my next quarter at Fulham Palace.

Alfonso Moreno, Fulham Palace Garden Apprentice 20th December 2018