

Dear Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Recruitment Team,

I am writing to express my keen interest in the Bryophyte Trainee position at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE). As a recent First-Class Ecological and Environmental Sciences graduate from the University of Edinburgh, I have developed a profound passion for plant sciences, with bryophytes holding a particular fascination for me. Having previously worked under Peter Brownless in the RBGE, the opportunity to return and develop specialist expertise in bryology is one I am exceptionally eager to pursue.

Throughout my degree, I strategically selected modules such as Evolution and Ecology of Plants, Green Planet, Plant Physiological Ecology, and Field Ecology – these provided me with a robust foundation in plant diversity and ecological principles. During these studies, and through independent exploration, the subtle complexity and critical ecological significance of bryophytes truly captured my ecological curiosity. This has solidified my ambition to focus my career on understanding and conserving these vital components of Scotland's botanical heritage.

My academic training and practical experiences have equipped me with a strong skillset, directly relevant to the demands of this traineeship. I possess a demonstrable strong interest in bryophytes and an enthusiastic desire to learn, complemented by a meticulous eye for detail and a proven aptitude for fine-scale pattern recognition. This is evidenced by my experience identifying invertebrates to species level using stereomicroscopes during my volunteer work on the PhD project at the University of Edinburgh, and in my laboratory assistant role preparing and scanning root samples. These roles have also honed my ability to manipulate minute structures using microscopy, a skill I am keen to apply to bryophyte identification using the RBGE's herbarium and lab facilities.

My First-Class dissertation, assessing invasive plant traits in Scottish environments (including sample collection at the RBGE), has instilled in me a practical understanding of ecological survey techniques and robust data collection. I am physically capable of undertaking fieldwork in remote, sometimes mountainous terrain; an aspect of the traineeship I am particularly excited by. Furthermore, I am proficient in data analysis using RStudio and Python, possess strong report writing skills, and I am a self-motivated individual with strong planning and time-management abilities. While I have some knowledge of bryophyte biology, I am eager to rapidly expand this through the traineeship's structured learning opportunities, including field trips, MSc-level classes, and engagement with the British Bryological Society.

The Bryophyte Trainee role at RBGE is exactly the kind of immersive experience I am seeking; enabling me to build extensive practical skills in bryophyte identification, field ecology, recording, surveying, and essential herbarium practices. The opportunity to learn from the expertise of the RBGE, actively contributing to conservation initiatives, and the responsibility of developing an independent research project are all aspects that I find deeply motivating. I am eager to apply my dedication, scientific curiosity, and collaborative nature to make the most of this traineeship and to contribute to the Taxonomy and Macroecology team.

Thank you for considering my application. I have attached my CV for your perusal, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my skills, enthusiasm, and experience will contribute to the Taxonomy and Macroecology team at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Yours sincerely,



Zoya Manček Páli