

Catherine Clancy - Inspired Gardens

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Catherine Clancy set up and runs her own garden design business, Inspired Gardens, based in the Blackheath and Greenwich areas of London. Having studied science at Trinity College Dublin, Catherine worked in the computer and media industries before Women and Work funding helped her pursue her garden designer dream.



Catherine Clancy

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Funding for Training from Women and Work

Catherine's work focuses on making the most of the available space whether it's a planting scheme for an individual border, small urban courtyard, larger country garden or a community garden, such as that for a school.

"I eventually decided I had enough of working in an office and it was time to pursue my dream," says Catherine Clancy.

She took part in evening classes, designing and building her own garden, growing fruit and vegetables on her allotment and through designing gardens for her friends. But for her desired profession, she needed to find ways to retrain while in full-time employment.

"I did most of my training at evening and Saturday classes," said Catherine. "It took years, but enabled me to earn a living at the same time."

As an IT Project Manager she trained in:

- Planning
- Finance
- Management.

"I think it's so important to keep learning and taking training courses. Unfortunately, some of the professional training courses can be expensive. In 2008, Lantra's [Women and Work programme](#) provided funding for a Vectorworks CAD training course, which has been a huge benefit to my design practice."

Catherine then increased her horticultural knowledge through the:

- RHS (general horticulture)
- English School of Gardening (design)
- City and Guilds (general horticulture)
- KLC School of Design.

"I believe that the RHS course, with practical application was the most effective part of my learning, alongside extensive project work. Completing a course at any of the horticultural colleges around the country is a fantastic start to a career, but practical experience is also vital to be able to build gardens properly."

"A course in garden design will teach to you draw, and think, but you need to follow up by reading, researching, practicing, looking at other gardens, learning from the great gardeners of our time and looking at garden history," she added.

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