

### Amenity Landscaping a rewarding career for women

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Zoe Taylor has found her happy place working in landscaping after 10 years in the workforce doing a range of work from processing and packaging, food production, to administration and customer service.

Now a team leader at Aspen Landscapes in Wellington, Zoe wants to get the word out to other women that there are great opportunities in the trades. "I have done a multitude of jobs since I finished university, but I have never had the progression that I have had since I got into studying towards a trade qualification."

In her final year of school Zoe went on a 12-month student exchange to Nagasaki, Japan, before completing her degree, a Bachelor of International Studies and Japanese language, at the International Pacific College.

After graduating she sought a role using her qualification but didn't land the type of job she wanted, instead taking administration and customer service roles.

A keen triathlete, Zoë found her office day-jobs were not satisfying her drive to succeed and hindered her ability to get out and train. "I like being outdoors. I was thinking 'what can I do that is outdoors and will fit with my training?' Perhaps something in horticulture or landscaping."

In 2019 she moved to Wellington from Taranaki. "I decided to look for work that would allow me to be outdoors and fit with my training."

The seed was sown when an agency placed her in a role at City Care working on parks and recreation areas. Her next step was a role with Aspen Landscapes Ltd where she was encouraged to do the Primary ITO NZ Amenity Apprenticeship. This on job learning teaches the skills and knowledge to build and maintain stunning gardens and public spaces.

"I have loved it ever since. We are starting from a blank canvas and transforming people's properties into something beautiful. I get a real satisfaction from that achievement."

Zoe has been promoted to Team Leader and is enthusiastic about encouraging other women into landscaping. She says the work particularly suits those who like to keep fit.

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There are currently eight women in Aspen's large team and Zoe says the skills they bring compliment those of the men. "Women look at things in a different way and often bring more of that detail to completing a job." And she says there are many job opportunities, with landscapers in high demand due to Covid-19.

"People are definitely putting a lot of effort and investment into their backyards because travel has been so restricted."

The high demand means landscapers are booked up and hiring more staff. "There are plenty of opportunities for jobs, study and a career path."

Zoe says she's enjoyed studying for her apprenticeship and found it easy to fit the study in around her work. "It has been awesome. I have learnt heaps at the classes and been able to put everything I am learning back into my daily work."

Zoe's current passion is soft landscaping, but she has an eye to the future for how she can continue to build her skills. "I would like to look at learning more construction in the future."



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