



Gardening for Disabled Trust

Adapting Gardens, Changing Lives, Defying Disability

Newsletter 2021

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Quote

I wonder if the snow loves the trees and fields, that it kisses
them so gently?
And then it covers them up snug, you know, with a white quilt;
and perhaps
it says "Go to sleep, darlings, till the summer comes again."

Lewis Carroll (1832-1898)



The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature.
To nurture a garden is to feed not just on the body, but the soul.

Alfred Austin (1835-1913)

LEAVING A CHARITABLE LEGACY

Legacies are a vital source of income for many good causes and charities in the UK and Gardening for Disabled Trust is no exception. The truth is that without the benefit of gifts left in wills many charities would struggle to survive. Leaving a charitable legacy can also produce tax benefits. If you leave a gift to charity in your will, it will not count towards the taxable value of your estate and may eliminate or reduce any Inheritance Tax payable. This is because the value of any legacy you leave to charity is deducted from your estate before the tax bill is calculated. If you are thinking of doing this it is necessary to speak to a solicitor.



Gardening for Disabled Trust

Dear Member,

Welcome to another edition of our newsletter packed articles we think you will enjoy.

2020 began so well with two terrific events to raise funds as enjoyably and painlessly as possible from our loyal friends and supporters. The first was an excellent lecture from Marian Boswall, a landscape architect and garden designer, the second a tutorial day with Andrew Robson, the much loved bridge master. Little did we appreciate how fortunate we had been to programme these early in the year, until the gloomy lockdown was imposed and all normal fundraising came to an abrupt end.

But inspiration from one of our committee, created a brilliant project to keep us focussed and the book 'Cuttings' evolved. Full of horticultural wisdom gleaned from friends, celebrities and professionals, it has proved so popular that several reprints were required to answer the demand. The resultant profit has meant we can face another year of requests from deserving gardeners without too much concern.

All of this has been achieved without payment to anyone, as we remain a volunteer charity, without staff or premises to pay. All donations to us will be used to fund our grants to keep enthusiastic gardeners, actively gardening.

The committee deserve real thanks for all their hard work and giving of their time so generously. Paul, our brilliant Treasurer has monitored our finances with efficiency and competence. We owe a huge debt to the Trustees whose steady guidance is so reassuring.

We hope you will enjoy reading what we have been up to and please, if you have some inspiring ideas do let us know!

Very best wishes from us all,

Felicity Seton
Chairman





Arthur

Leamington Spa

He has Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary disease affecting his breathing and needs oxygen at regular times. The charity gave him a greenhouse and he says 'Having a greenhouse has given me more time to spend outside. It has helped me to live a healthier life style and remain physically active as far as my disability allows me to.'

I first started to grow and care for a range of herbs and then tomatoes, which has been very encouraging and led me to grow french and runner beans, beetroot and carrots, which have all been a success. The pleasure of growing tomatoes and vegetables has given me another interest to use them with the herbs to cook tomato soup, tomato sauce and vegetable curry. I have been able to invite my family and friends for dinner to enjoy the produce I have grown and cared for (before Covid 19 struck). Thank you Gardening for Disabled Trust so much.'

Susannah, Devon

She suffers from Ehlers-Danlos, Aspergers and anxiety and is occasionally on crutches. The Trust helped her with raised beds and she says 'Receiving the manger raised bed from the Gardening for the Disabled Trust has proved invaluable this summer as at times I am not able to stand and actively garden for long without my legs turning to jelly. I am able to lean on the manger bed and continue to work, something I have not been able to do in ordinary beds independently. Receiving the railway sleepers as well has enabled me to get part of the way to getting my back garden set up as low maintenance, with beds for growing salad, veg, flowers and plants in a woodland setting. I am not able to manage the garden due to my disability so this has been very important, and I am looking forwards to being able to use the garden in a therapeutic way as it is a very beautiful space that I am very grateful to have. I cannot thank Gardening for Disabled



Trust enough.'

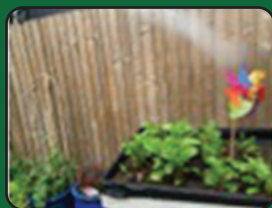
Jonathan, Hexham



He had a brain injury in 1988 and uses a powdered wheelchair. He recently moved and was keen to start gardening again. He says 'I was given a grant by Gardening for Disabled Trust which has been a godsend, especially this year during lockdown. With the help of my support worker Matty, I have been able to plan, look for and order equipment and planters for my garden to allow me to enjoy gardening once again. At the start of lockdown when I tried to order planters,

many were out of stock due to suppliers shutting down, Matty was able to order a veg trug so I could start. I also asked him to clear away a ton of rocks and stone so I was able to enjoy planting in my veg trug while I waited to order the rest. I planted lots of vegetables, including peas, broad beans and sugar snaps, carrots, leeks, radishes and beetroot in my large veg trug. Because I was able to buy tools which I can hold I was able to do this myself for the first time. This gave me happiness and a great sense of achievement especially being able to eat the produce. Throughout the summer, I enjoyed spending time in my garden as I was unable to go out due to the coronavirus epidemic. My sisters and brother came to visit me, they all enjoyed helping me eat my freshly picked peas and sugar snaps. I have now got the rest of the planters I ordered and Matty is starting to clear the plants and flowers which have finished producing and flowering in order to build them in the space. I am looking forward to preparing the rest of my garden over the autumn ready to start growing again in the spring. I have been given strawberry plants which I am looking forward to enjoying the fruit of, I have also ordered fruit trees. I am incredibly grateful to the trust for giving me the opportunity to garden again. I believe this has improved my quality of life and given me more time in the fresh air enjoying the lovely Northumberland views.'

Lyndsey, Cheshire



She suffers from depression and the Trust helped her with a planter. She says 'I remembered the feelings of relaxation that I had previously enjoyed whilst gardening. I have knee problems so thought the raised planter would be perfect. I had great success with beetroot, strawberries and kale which was very rewarding. This has helped my mental health greatly and am looking forward to starting again in the spring.

I would like to thank the trust who kindly granted me the funds. The sense of achievement that I got from growing the plants from seed to plate was so rewarding.'

Ashington Veterans & Elders Institute, Ashington, Northumberland

They were keen to create a community garden with disabled users at the heart of it with 90 people benefitting. The Trust helped with funding towards raised beds and they say 'We applied for a donation from GDT asking for support in a landscaping project we were trying to fund. We wanted to create a Community Garden, converting our disused and overgrown land into a practical activity and sitting area, where the elderly could come and do as much or as little gardening work as they wanted - particularly to provide facilities for disabled people. We now have a fantastic patio area, five benches, twelve planters of different heights and well-spaced out so that disabled people can work here without any access problems, a shed, a vegetable trough, a greenhouse, a secure perimeter fence (some of which is built on a retaining wall we had to construct) and borders on two of our three sides for climbing shrubs. We've had lots of financial support from other organisations who have got on board with our idea, which has enabled us to create a really well-constructed garden/sitting/socialising area, finished to a high standard.

The access path has been recently re-laid with concrete and everything from the entrance gate to the furthest border, is on one level – no ramps or steps to contend with, although access to the toilets at the rear of the institute is via a ramp but is easily negotiated. The place is now in top-class condition inside and out, and that is down to the funding we've managed to receive from organisations like yours. The elderly and the disabled communities in the town have an institute they can be extremely proud of. We really do hope this project takes off – we think it will! With many thanks, and much appreciation to Gardening for Disabled Trust.'



Zechariah, Southend-on-Sea

He is a wheelchair user and loves gardening and we gave him vouchers to buy tools. He says 'My love of gardening has only grown and the fact that I am a wheelchair user, am in constant pain and suffer from severe fatigue at times does not stop me gardening. I was over the moon when I received an email to say that they had awarded me a grant and would be sending me Amazon vouchers. It may not mean much to many people but the Garden Cart, a Dutch Hoe, long handled 3 prong cultivator, Telescopic Ratchet Anvil Loppers, a Daisy Grubber (weeder) and Trowel will make gardening not only easier but it will mean less pain afterwards. Plus the handle can be removed from the cart and it is possible to attach it to my wheelchair, which means I can take tools and the weed bin with me. So a massive thank you to the people at Gardening for Disabled Trust, you have made this gardener very happy!'



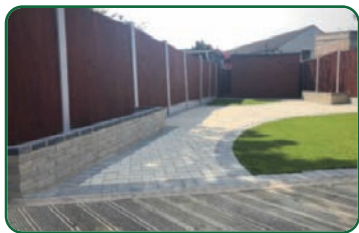
Noah's Place Care Farm, Higher Clovelly, Devon

They support adults with learning disabilities giving them the opportunity to develop horticultural and agricultural skills whilst joining with others in a variety of other skills. Noah's Place is entirely self-funded relying on volunteers. They requested a polytunnel cover to help them with vegetable production to help generate income. They say 'Last year we managed to put up the frame-work for our poly tunnel, but the cover unfortunately was ripped off by a storm, due to the ends not being pleated in, so your kind donation towards a new cover was very much appreciated. Due to Covid 19 restrictions the persons who were going to put the new cover on, have not been able to come to Noah's and we look forward to this being done in the warmer weather.'



Shake, Dagenham

He developed an aggressive form of arthritis and the Trust gave him a grant towards raised beds. He says 'I had always looked out at my garden and realised I could take control of my life again and not let this illness beat me. I had spent a lot of time and money on fixing the house up before I got unwell, and the garden was a mess. I wanted to be outside, safe and able to do something. The garden was my sanctuary, but messy and unsafe currently. Applying to the Trust was scary, I hadn't asked for support before but had no other option. The Gardening for Disabled Trust were supportive, applying was simple and I was so grateful for the grant. I have amazing friends and neighbours who helped enormously, and the design changed halfway as they felt they wanted to future proof the garden for me, should my condition worsen over time. I had to get a loan to complete the garden project but I am incredibly pleased with the end result. Two raised beds, two areas of artificial grass, blocked paved and tidied elsewhere. The lockdown would have affected my mental health but having my completed garden has helped more than I could have imagined. My outlook on life has changed, I am happier, grateful to



everyone for their help, and feel lucky to still be alive. Planting up the beds and growing plants has been slow because of lockdown and the shops were shut but I am progressing and hopeful about what the future holds. Thank you so much Gardening for Disabled Trust.'

The Northam Care Trust, Bideford, Devon

They support adults with learning and physical disabilities and have 25 residents, most who are wheelchair bound as well as 40 day users. They requested raised beds and two double wheeled barrows. They say 'The photos show only the beginnings of an exciting project we have been planning. We will be utilising some of our land for an allotment project based on the 'farm to fork' initiative. During this time with the additional challenges resulting from COVID-19, being able to engage in meaningful activities safely is even more important for wellbeing. We have already seen the benefits of the initiative with the raised beds and the allotment project will allow people we support to experience the process



from growing vegetables right through to preparing meals once harvested. Being outside in fresh air and being able to do things together safely are also significant wellbeing factors. We thank the Trust for their kind donation.'

Janet, Powys, Wales

She suffers from mental health and lost her husband last year. They have always volunteered at Ponthafren Association Garden, a mental health charity and Janet loves encouraging people to garden. She had not been back to Ponthafren, was feeling very low and it was suggested that she gardens at home and when lockdown came Ponthafren had to close its doors. Her son suggested that she sow some vegetable seeds which she did with her granddaughters at their home. This improved her mood enough for her to return home and she requested a greenhouse and raised beds from the Trust to grow vegetables. She says 'Over the years, I've seen my garden, along with other peoples' gardens, lifting people's moods and putting a smile on their faces. We put plants and veg out in the yard for donations so the garden is totally self-funded. I had so many seedlings that I contacted local villages to ask if I could put a table with an honesty box by the village hall. The money raised I would give to Ponthafren. From the plants grown in our garden at home I have also put them to good use by giving them to local people who are self-isolating and also groups that have been providing meals and delivery of these meals to the vulnerable. So again another positive knock-on effect. Alas my greenhouse came too late



for this season but I have even more plans for next season. Finally, I just want to say a huge thank you to all involved with the Gardening for Disabled Trust – you are truly lifesavers take care.'

Lucy, Cornwall

She suffers degenerative heart disease and social anxiety. She was given a life expectancy of 35, is now 36 and has moved into a new build with an empty garden. The Trust helped her with small planters, plants and compost. She says 'I'm over the moon with the result. My home is starting to look like a palace and I have something to enjoy. I am truly grateful for that gift you have given me. Thank you so much Gardening for Disabled Trust.'



Rachel (Biggs), Hemel Hemstead

She is in a wheelchair having suffered a stroke and the Trust gave her a grant towards some long-handled tools.

She says 'I have always been a gardener of sorts, always loved the outdoors, whether it be on the farm or rambling around the Wiltshire Countryside. I used to grow lots of fruits whilst looking after some two hundred chickens. Then I had my stroke - I have always had a few illnesses and from a young age was limited by asthma. Things really changed for me when I was told I needed a wheelchair, suddenly I had to give up being on the farm, it affected me greatly, but I worked hard to adapt to my new life and found I "could". It is then you realise that as time goes on being disabled is not a barrier - it's just saying I have to do things differently. I had to have other equipment to help me accomplish the tasks I used to do. I have had to plan and think about what I do and not to give up, so once again I decided I wanted to grow my own fruit, vegetables and plants. I managed to get some raised beds, soil and seeds and with the kind help of Gardening for Disabled Trust who provided me with the specialist tools I needed, I was able to plant shrubs and flowers in other parts of my garden. I would have never been able to afford let alone start gardening this year without their kind help. Gardening gives you freedom, pride, accomplishment from planting the seeds to the first shoots that show themselves through the soil to finally seeing plants. To be able to go into my garden and pick vegetables, or the first bowl of strawberries is a wonderful feeling especially as you have grown them. It has not only given me a sense of well-being but a sense of pride. I can sit at the top of my ramp and look at all the work I have accomplished and know that I am someone with self-worth. I am useful, I didn't have to rely on other people bringing me food or plants because I can grow my own. I can make my garden my own and I am sure it helps my mental health as well. Instead of thinking I could not, I can.'



Roger, Edinburgh

He suffers from ME, depression and emphysema. He'd enjoyed growing plants in the past but when he moved into new accommodation he had to start from scratch. A grant from Gardening for Disabled Trust in March, in the form of vouchers, enabled him to purchase raised bed kits, compost, a small greenhouse and soil, seeds and plants. With the help of his friends by June, Roger's garden was transformed; he's now enjoying his own strawberries as well as an array of vegetables – raddish, cabbage, broad beans, lettuce and kale, as well as herbs like mint and growing some beautiful flowers. He says 'I would like to say a huge thanks to Gardening for Disabled Trust for my grant to help start my garden! I couldn't have done it without the grant as I didn't know how expensive gardening could be! I have made the best of what I had with the generous grant and hope it will continue to bring me much joy and provide many vegetables and nice growing plants for years to come.'



Crompton Court Bloomers Group, Manchester

They are formed from the sheltered housing made up of 38 flats with a garden which needed updating to help disabled people to garden. The Trust gave them a grant in May towards raised beds and a path. They say 'Everyone is delighted, unfortunately at the moment additional Covid-19 measures for the borough of Bolton are now in place to stop the spread of the virus and prevent a need for a local lockdown. We are currently not to



mix with other households in any setting indoors and outdoors. This means we have been unable to get to the garden yet as a group. We are really pleased and excited about the project and can't wait to get gardening.

Would you please thank everyone at the Trust from us for supporting our gardening project.'

Emma, Penzance

She suffers from Raynaud's Disease causing her hands to go white and numb and has been told to keep them warm and dry. She is pursuing a career in horticulture and has been told about the RHS Gold Leaf gloves being waterproof and warm. She says 'There was a 15% off clothing offer on the RHS website when I made the purchase. I'm deeply grateful to the Committee for approving my request! The gloves fit very well and are so

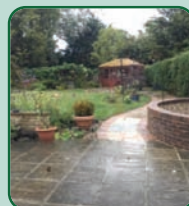


warm and waterproof- perfect for my needs. I have just had an interview for a place on the RHS Level 3 Diploma at Wisley (I find out if I've been successful at the end of the month), and I've just secured part-time

gardening work at a local garden called Trewidden. Having the support of the Trust has given me the confidence to put myself forward for these opportunities.'

John, Hailsham

He suffers from MS, uses a wheelchair and has moved to a bungalow. The Trust helped him with paving and a brick built raised bed. He says 'Thank you for your generous donation towards creating a more accessible garden for me. With the help of a friendly landscaper we created one large raised bed for growing flowers and vegetables and a path around the right side of the garden. The path means I can make use of the now wheelchair friendly summerhouse all year around and gain access to the back garden. More raised beds are planned for the new year which will allow me to grow a variety of fruit/vegetables and enjoy the garden even more.'



Philip, Sheltered accommodation, Dover

Philip is a resident of Goodfellow Way in Dover. This is a small, Dover District Council owned, estate of flats built in the '80s for over 55year olds with health issues and who need 24hr access to emergency assistance. The residents have various medical conditions, some incurable and life shortening, others with mental and physical disabilities. There is a garden which is now abandoned. Philip (somehow) found himself taking over the care of this garden, along with a few of the other residents who are interested in gardening. Philip's ambition was to completely renovate the garden making it an area for socialising for the residents as well as for gardening. Gardening for Disabled Trust were able to help by funding a greenhouse, raised beds and some garden tools. Philip says 'As you can imagine it has been a difficult year, especially as our residents including myself are getting on in years and many have difficulties getting around. A bad start to the year with the very wet and stormy spring delayed getting started. The first thing I did was to remove a large old rat infested shed that had been condemned by the council. We live next to the river Dour so rats have to be expected. After that we started putting the raised beds together and then the greenhouse. We are now looking forward to next year as we still have quite a few jobs that need doing. The kind gifts of the Gardening for Disabled Trust have made an enormous difference to the garden and boosted the residents' interest in participating in a little gardening or just relaxing with a cup of tea. We don't have a communal hall, the garden is our meeting place so it is important for communication amongst the residents and preventing loneliness and alienation. We can't thank you enough for your generosity.'



Lisa, Bournemouth

She has had two spinal strokes and a brain haemorrhage with paralysis on one side from the waist down. Her carer has helped create the garden for her and the Trust helped her with raised beds, gravel and a path so that she can grow vegetables. Lisa says 'The front garden was out of bounds for me as it was so uneven and now I can help with planting and sit while doing it. I have a more enjoyable place for me and the children to grow our own vegetables so thank you Gardening for Disabled Trust ever so much.'



Stanely Park, Paisley

Stanely Park is a care home catering for mainly elderly people suffering from dementia. The Friends of Stanely Park was formed in 2018 in response to research which showed that engagement with nature had many benefits for individuals with dementia. Using a National Lottery grant Stanely Park worked in conjunction with Muirshiel Regional Park to set up outdoor activities for residents. It was decided that in conjunction with Muirshiel they would create a wildlife garden and purchase planters to enable residents to do some gardening. On top of this Muirshiel rangers would lead educational activities on the plants and wildlife in the garden. Stanely Park works with senior pupils from Gleniffer High who had agreed to come in and help with some of the landscaping along with the Spinners Gate Centre (for special needs adults) who would come in and help with planting, observation and building habitat boxes. The whole thing was to start in April 2020 but then Covid-19 hit and plans were postponed until next year. However, we did go ahead and buy the planters in order that we could have spring displays of bulbs and be in a good place to start the project again next April. One resident says 'It's years since I planted bulbs for spring. I used to love doing that in the autumn and I used to enjoy sowing my seeds in the greenhouse. These planters will let me do that again.' Fiona, whose 90 year old mother lives there said, 'My mother loved her garden and the animals that came into it. Residents working with young adults as they explore the natural world on their own doorstep will make their shrinking world seem so much bigger again. It is fantastic that the Trust recognises that people with dementia can still derive tremendous pleasure and satisfaction from a spot of gardening and watching animals hard at work. On behalf of the relatives we'd like to thank you for your support.'



Nicolas, Ammanford, Wales

He suffers from MS and is in a wheelchair. He moved from Devon to Wales and needed a raised bed to help him continue his love of gardening. He says 'After 12 months my raised bed is complete and I have already planted rhubarb, wallflowers and garlic. An odd combination but as James Wong would say gardening is an experiment and also therapy in these awful times. A huge thank you to the Gardening for Disabled Trust.'



Sarah, Preston

She suffers from cervical spondylosis and lumber disc degeneration all affecting her mobility. The Trust helped her with high raised beds. She says 'We have finally got the three raised beds built and filled with soil and I've started to plant up. We had to buy the soil in bags and carry them through the house because we have no access from front to back. My husband had to carry all the bags and discovered muscles he never knew he had! I laid lots of cardboard boxes on the base of each bed plus I had some old pallets. We added old crocks and broken slates to help with the drainage as you don't need 27" depth of soil. I have a couple of tiny strawberry plants and one raspberry and I'll be ordering some more. I'm planning to put some sweet peas at the end of this bed and build an archway between the fruit and vegetable beds. Then the sweet peas can grow up one side and the climbing French beans on the other side in the vegetable bed. The vegetable bed has two rows of cabbages and two rows of

Charlotte potatoes in. I'm really looking forward to next Spring and Summer when everything is growing and flowering in abundance and we can properly enjoy the fruits and vegetables of our labour. Thank you so much Gardening for Disabled Trust for helping me.'



Mona, London

She suffers joint mobility syndrome and depression and the trust helped her with raised planters and tools. She says 'It was at the perfect time during lockdown to be able to rebuild the garden. I honestly got my own space around the green nature to do calming art which lowers my depression and relieves my anxiety. Moreover, I enjoyed my time planting different type of flowers, trees (fig and apple), herbs (mint, parsley and basil) and fruits such as strawberries, blueberries and raspberries. This was like a physical therapy to strengthen my muscles and keep me active. The workers built a pavement then levelled the ground so the children had fun playing football and tennis. My daughters loved the new garden and one of them got excited and built a pond for frogs! Thank you Gardening for Disabled Trust so much.



Mossfield Allotments, Manchester

The aim is to provide allotment facilities for anyone with restricted mobility or function. The Trust gave them a grant towards a polytunnel which one person in a wheelchair used during the first lockdown. Due to the virus they were unable to open up the facility fully to others. The lady who used it says 'It has always been my ambition to grow vegetables in a greenhouse setting. I have successfully grown among other things tomatoes, aubergines and some very delicious lemon cucumbers. The polytunnel has wide doors with acres of space meaning I can move around easily in my wheelchair getting easy access to my plants.' Mossfield Allotments say 'We really appreciate the support from Gardening for Disabled Trust without which we could not have got this project up and running and hope to expand this facility as safety allows.'



FUND RAISING

Garden Design

We had a very interesting illustrated talk *Creating a Landscape Legacy* from Marian Boswall at Goudhurst Parish Hall, Goudhurst, Kent in January. Marian described her work across the UK and her award winning gardens. Her aim being to design for the very long term with sustainability and wildlife at the heart of her designs. Marian believes in listening to the land and to the people that live there. Shown here is Marian's design of Lady Angela Nevill's garden in East Sussex by kind permission of Jason Ingram, photographer.



We raised £584.

Bridge Masterclass by Andrew Robson

This event was held in February at The London Beach Hotel, Tenterden, Kent. Andrew is a born teacher and has devised a brilliant system to help us all remember the complications of this fascinating game. Coffee and lunch were provided by the hotel and we had a very successful raffle.

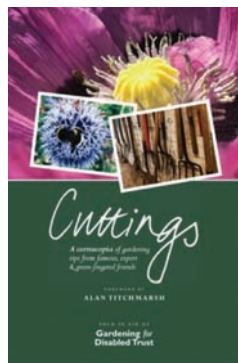
We raised £2,807.

Due to Covid 19 we had to cancel a talk in March by **Dr. Mark Spencer** who is a forensic botanist and was going to talk on using plants to unlock crime scenes and hope to have this at some future date. Also we had to cancel our annual Specialist Plant Fair which is always held in April.

'Cuttings' – a cornucopia of gardening tips from famous, expert and green-fingered friends.

We finished the year on a high when the launch of our first ever book of gardening tips, "Cuttings" went on sale in November. This 'lockdown project' for the GDT committee resulted in huge orders and some great publicity in national newspapers and magazines such as Country Life and The English Garden.

Packed with expert advice from Bunny Guinness, Roy Lancaster, Carol Klein, Mark Lane (and many more) as well as from well-known faces such as Dame Helen Mirren, Joanna Lumley and Julian Clary. Cuttings is a little treasure trove of gardening expertise: in addition, it has sparkling photography from Justine Stringer, one of our committee, and is beautifully illustrated by Sharon Grosse. With the help of Mark Lane, one of our Trustees, we did a launch on social media which was very well received. Go to YouTube and search for Mark Lane launches Gardening for Disabled Trust book 'Cuttings'. You can still order a copy now, through our website, at £10 plus p & p, with all proceeds going towards the Trust. www.gardeningfordisabledtrust.org.uk We welcome anyone wanting to open their gardens or hold other events in aid of the charity. *We raised £13,670.*



Garden Tips

- **Children & Gardens** It is never too early to get children involved in gardening, perhaps your own children or your grandchildren. Not only does it show children where our fruit and vegetables come from, it teaches them about the seasons, helps them to identify the different fruit and vegetables grown, and shows them how different types of weather affect what you grow and how insects benefit your garden.

- **Cut and Run** March is a great time to increase plants that are starting to grow new shoots, such as lupins and delphiniums, by taking basal stem cuttings. The technique works very well on lupins, delphiniums, dahlias and chrysanthemums, as well as achillea and gypsophila.



You will need: Sharp knife, dibber, polythene bag, pot containing equal parts peat-free compost and vermiculite or perlite and a cold-frame or propagator.

Method: Take the cuttings once the basal stems of the plant are about 10cm high. Using a sharp knife, remove the shoots from as close to the base as possible. Once you have taken 3-4 cuttings, remove any lower leaves that may end up below the compost surface. Dib the cuttings around the edge of the pot of compost, water and cover with a polythene bag. Put the pots in a propagator set to about 12deg C or place them on a shady windowsill. Cuttings from hardy perennials can be kept in a cold frame and they should take root within just a few weeks.

- A garden is to be loved and enjoyed! Don't overstretch yourself or looking after it will become a chore.

- **Pest Control** Slugs and snails love eating your hard-grown vegetables and emerging plants. To help control these, use spent coffee grinds around your vegetable plots and you will have more success than you would using slug pellets. Coffee ground are brilliant for slug protection on your hostas. Use immediately after the hostas break through the ground and keep re-applying.



- **Greenhouse Care** The best time for cleaning your greenhouse will be when the crops have finished so the house is empty before you put the overwintering plants indoors to shelter. This will vary but usually we're looking at a fine sunny day between November and February. Always start with a good tidy and clean of your greenhouse: your seedlings will benefit hugely from this. Old trays and dirty pots harbor pests and disease, as does the glass in your greenhouse: not a good start for your tender seedlings. Sterilise pots, trays, benches and glass and Jeyes Fluid is ideal. Ventilate your greenhouse as much as possible to deter red spider mite. Dampen down three times a day when it's hot.

- **Saving Seed** Saving your seed for planting next year can be really simple and brings many benefits. The most obvious advantage is that you will not need to buy it from someone else, so can save money. Be aware though that seeds from F1 hybrids will not come true so you may want to take this into consideration when choosing what to buy in the first instance. Choose a dry day to collect seeds from aquilegia, sweet pea, marigold and love-in-a-mist allowing them to dry naturally spreading them out on newspaper. Put in envelopes and keep them in a cool dark place.



- In September if you are quick and can find some seed potatoes at the garden centre, you just about have time to get a crop in time for Christmas.

- **Remove** plain green shoots from variegated shrubs otherwise they will take over. During the growing season you can instantly recognise reverted shoots as pure green growths emerging from among the branches of a variegated plant. As these shoots contain more chlorophyll than variegated ones, they are more vigorous and can eventually take over the plant.



- **Planning your garden** Five important things to take into consideration. 1. Use plants for structure and form. 2. Choose plants with a long interest over the seasons. 3. Use combinations of plants for continuity of colour. 4. Add features and focal points such as topiary and sculpture. 5. Create stunning seasonal displays.

- When tidying up the garden do not be too vigilant. Leaving some seed heads will provide valuable food for birds over the winter and encourage them into your garden. Sunflowers will be particularly popular.



- **Housing Hedgehogs** With gardens being a hog's favourite habitat, it is important that we make them as welcoming as possible. By providing a home for a hedgehog in your garden, you are creating a safe space for hedgehogs to live and survive. Make sure to put your hedgehog home in a shady place in your garden, in an area that won't be disturbed by excessive noise. Encourage hedgehogs to stick around by leaving out food, as well as plenty of water, for them to enjoy. There are many things you can do to make your garden as welcoming as possible for hedgehogs. Great features to introduce are log piles and compost heaps, as these encourage a whole host of wildlife, which will not only create a food source for the hedgehogs, but also a safe place for them to nest.



GUEST BLOGGERS ON THE WEBSITE

Our contributors to our Weekly Guest Blog on the website this year have come from all over the world including the USA, Bermuda and China. They have written about a wide range of topics all basically linked to gardening. Contributors have been Landscape Architects, Authors, Garden Designers, Horticulturists from the RHS, The Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, a Regional Manager of WFGA, Head Gardeners, Smallholders and even a Radio Talk Show Host.

January 2020 started with Jason Stevens, the Chief Executive officer at Veterans' Growth Charity and how he left the military and fell in love with gardening ending up setting up Veteran's Growth. The charity is dedicated to helping ex-service personnel who are suffering from mental health issues.



At the end of January Colin Moat the Co-owner of Pineview Plants and Chair of Plant Fair Roadshows wrote about how he managed a 'proper job' and his love of horticulture and how he ended up developing and running a nursery full time.

March saw Mike Rogers, an allotmenteer, armchair gardener, blogger and a great supporter of our charity write about annual flowers.



Later in the year Janet Elizabeth Rogers MBE who had received a grant from our charity wrote about how her garden had become a haven for her after her husband died and got her through this year.

Ed Bowring is a horticultural therapist and gardener who uses his blog to talk about the benefits of gardening and how it has helped him get through 2020.



Towards the end of the year Stephen Mason an Organic Community Gardener wrote about the gardens he works in and how his grandmother had encouraged him to be a gardener.

All the blogs are archived on our website. These are just a few examples of people who have taken the time to write for us this year about their horticultural experiences. If you would be interested in writing a blog for us please get in touch. We love sharing people's experiences and we know how beneficial gardening is to everybody. Please visit our website weekly to read the latest blog. All that's left to say is thank you to our contributors this year.



Charity No. 255066

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