

ISSUE 131
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**Gardening with
Disabilities Trust**

ADAPTING GARDENS. CHANGING LIVES
DEFYING DISABILITY

Review



Hello!



Hello and welcome to another edition of our newsletter packed with new and inspiring accounts of gardening achievement.

The Trust has never been so busy and requests for financial help cascade through our website door. The positive effects of gardening are recognised and increasingly prescribed by our health professionals. Since our inception in 1968 we have worked as an entirely volunteer charity with no fixed costs for salaries or premises, every penny raised or given goes to the deserving client who wants to keep gardening despite everything fate has thrown in their direction.

Our fundraising events are enthusiastically attended by our loyal mailing list and have contributed a substantial sum to our coffers. All donations to us will be used to fund our grants to keep enthusiastic gardeners actively gardening. The committee deserve real thanks for their energy and skill and giving their time so very generously. We owe a huge debt to our terrific Trustees whose knowledge and guidance is so vital. We hope you will enjoy reading this and please if you have some inspiring ideas do let us know.

With very best wishes from us all.



Follow us on:

Flick Seton
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A little about **Gardening with Disabilities Trust**

FORMERLY THE GARDENING FOR DISABLED TRUST

In 1968, Mrs Peggy Kinsey created the Gardening for Disabled Trust. A prescient and inspired lady, she observed that being outside in the fresh air, doing a little gardening and getting the 'soil under the fingernails' was helpful to well-being. Half a century later, the value of 'horticultural therapy' is well-known; and the Gardening with Disabilities Trust continues to award grants to those facing all kinds of mental and physical challenges, helping them defy their disabilities and making gardening possible again. Our clients tell us that these little grants can be 'life-changing'. Thank you for supporting the Trust, and helping more people re-discover the pleasure of gardening. *

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.

Client News

Stories of how our Grants have helped.

West Specialist Inclusion Centre, Leeds, James (Paylor)

This is a college for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. James is a teacher of mentally disabled young adults and helps them develop life-skills.

His disabled students cleared and created a garden for **Claremont Care Home in Leeds** the aim being that the students who did the work will help the residents of the Care Home to maintain the garden. He says 'The grant from the Gardening with Disabilities Trust enabled us to start a project that has had a huge impact on both our students, providing them with a valuable real life work experience as well as the residents of a local care home, providing them with a sensory garden and outdoor space that they can use for gardening activities.

This has helped to create a project that can now be run throughout the year with our students maintaining the site as well as the residents being able to meet with them, providing wonderful opportunities for social opportunities for everyone involved. Without the initial grant from the Gardening for Disabilities Trust this would not have been possible and we really appreciate the difference that the grant made in getting us started with this important community project.'



Donna, Bewbury, Berkshire

She is a kidney transplant patient and in chronic pain. She is a keen gardener but has struggled in her allotment. The Trust helped her with raised beds, plants and chippings to make it more accessible.

Sally, Cardiff

She suffers with her mental health and the Trust helped her with materials for raised beds. She says 'I have a space now that I can use to distract myself from intrusive thoughts and depression. The volunteers who also suffer from mental health issues have transformed a derelict neglected communal garden into a peaceful beautiful mindful space. The insects and nature have returned I cannot tell you what a difference that grant has made! Gardening has been my mental health saviour and to have this focus has and will make such a difference. Thank you so much for the grant which has helped many people in creating it.'



Arthur, London

He suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and moved to a housing association flat on 1st floor. TheTrust helped him plant up a large trough. He says 'Thank you very much for this. I now have mint for fresh tea, other herbs with some lovely scented flowers too. It looks lovely, is great for cooking and teas and the local wildlife benefits too.'

James, Eastbourne

He had an accident in 2018 and now uses a wheelchair. His family had to move to a more accessible home and theTrust helped him make the garden accessible with a large raised bed and paving. He says 'Thank you to Gardening with Disabilities Trust enabling me to spend quality time with my son working in the garden together.'



Stewart, Scotland

He has a learning disability, diagnosed with cerebral palsy, epilepsy, lives in sheltered accommodation and loves cooking food he grows. TheTrust helped him with tools, tall raised planters and he has been involved with painting/ weatherproofing them which have been made by the Mens' Shed in Duns which is a voluntary organisation. Stewart has been cultivating plants in pots ready to be transplanted and has grown potatoes, chard and carrots. He has now returned to the Mens' Shed to start on a new project to build garden furniture. He says 'Thank you so much to theTrust for supporting me.'

Brett, Burton in Kendal

He acquired a brain injury and cerebral palsy when young and theTrust gave him a grant for tools and a shed. His mother says 'We were stimulating him into trying gardening as an activity and after 10 years the therapeutic value of gardening is still being enjoyed by my son of 33. He loves being and working in the garden and asks to go outside for a "breath of fresh air" working in his accessible garden.'

His seizures frequently leave him tied to the house so having a lovely relaxing easily accessible space makes all the difference to his well-being. He finds the garden soothing, loves smelling the different herbs and enjoys watching the hedgehogs, frogs and butterflies. He has a new hobby doing woodworking and has built a stall out of recycled wood for selling our excess produce and plants. Any monies from the stall pay for gardening items like compost, seeds etc. He followed that up by making a herb planter, window boxes, trellis, bird and swift boxes alongside bug houses and lately a HOG POD for hedgehogs. A wonderfulTrust- keep up the good work and know that what you do has value and you are building a great legacy making an actual difference to so many peoples' lives.' TheTrust has given him a voucher to help him continue with his gardening.



Client News

Stories of how our Grants have helped.



Rock Foundation, Grimsby

This is a charity for young-disadvantaged people and adults with learning disabilities and the Trust helped them with a polytunnel and some raised beds. They say 'The service users are growing a wide range of vegetables for the kitchen with a range of sensory plants as well. One of the users Ron, who is blind says what a difference the polytunnel has made to his life- never in his wildest imaginings did he believe his life could be so good.'

The Next Step Trust, Halifax

They support 48 people with complex needs and learning difficulties in supported accommodation. The Trust helped them with raised beds and a water butt. They say 'We have used the planters and an old bath to create a cosy, relaxing and inviting garden in the corner of our car park. Current work is planting spring bulbs and working together to ensure the garden is enjoyed all year. We thank the Trust so much for helping us.'

Jan, Birmingham

He is a fulltime wheelchair user, has always loved gardening and the Trust gave him a Veg Trug to grow vegetables. He says 'I am thrilled to bits with my Veg Trug and thank you so much. As you can see our grandson also enjoyed it and helped me with some late sowing vegetables. This has helped my mental health so much giving me something to focus on and also something to talk to people about.'



Marcko, Tunbridge Wells

He suffered a severe brain injury and due to his determination he has moved into his own ground floor flat with support. He uses a wheelchair and loves his garden. The Trust helped him with a raised rose bed, water feature and bird table. His carer says 'Marcko is thrilled with what has been achieved in his garden and very grateful that you were able to make this possible for him. Gardening is now part of Marcko's daily routine, which is great for his well-being and physical health. Marcko and his whole team wanted me to pass on their thanks to you and to also let you know that making Marcko's garden his own has been hugely beneficial to him.'

Kate, Malmesbury, Wiltshire

She suffers from Lupus causing fatigue and joint pain and loves gardening. TheTrust helped her with a VegTrug and says 'We were able to bring the VegTrug close to the house and I was able to grow tomatoes, garlic and shallots. We also put marigolds in-between to manage the bugs. Having the Trug at waist height was great with soft compost and the good feeling you get from picking your own vegetables and pottering outside although I have to be careful with the sun and Lupus.'

Wilderness Foundation, 'Down to Earth Allotments', Chelmsford

There are 6 plots for people with mental and physical disabilities and all food grown is shared amongst them. TheTrust helped them with higher raised beds for wheelchairs and some tools. They say 'The sleeper raised beds are suitable for sitting on for clients with mobility issues. The lightweight ergonomic hand tools have been ideal for our less abled participants. Thank you so much for helping us.'



Jenni, Eastleigh, Hants

She suffers from severe rheumatoid arthritis using a rolator and power chair beyond her gate. TheTrust helped her with two raised bed sleeper kits. She says 'I have enjoyed having the raised beds and the rolator allows greater access round the beds. Having the impetus to go out and sort the raised beds has led to an increase in my physical fitness, my dexterity and ultimately my mental well-being. I cannot thank theTrust enough.'

Forest Harvest, Lichfield, Staffordshire

They are a charity promoting sustainable living including growing your own food. They started a new community garden running 3 eco-therapy courses involving gardening for the local branch of MIND with stunning results. TheTrust helped them with a ramp, handrails and a bench for wheelchairs. They say 'Many of our visitors have health issues and are unable to work at ground level and the grant from theTrust has helped access for all and everyone can join in the fun (work)!'

Roger, Middlesborough

He suffers with MS, is a keen gardener and taught gardening at a school.

TheTrust gave him a grant towards sleepers for his own raised beds and he says 'The raised beds allow me to still partake in gardening. Without them I wouldn't be able to do this as the ground is too low. They are sturdy for me to lean on which helps when moving around the planters. Being outside is such an important part of life but something that is restricted when you have a disability. It allows me to spend time with the family outside too in a lovely environment!'



Gorfenna Community, Liskeard, Cornwall

They are a small holding Social Farm and run a day service for vulnerable adults with mental and physical disabilities. The Trust helped them with a path to provide wheelchair access to their polytunnel. They say 'By having this path laid, it has meant that those with restricted mobility have been able to access and take part in the activities taking part in the polytunnel and we thank Gardening with Disabilities Trust.'

Rhona, Kinross Scotland

She is a keen gardener with multiple conditions including osteoporosis and arthritis and the Trust helped her with a garden cart/tipper, seat with wheels and special long handled tools. She says 'The cart is fantastic and I have been able to move things about the garden with ease. The tools really help my arthritis, especially the seat which is great for sitting on whilst weeding or planting.'



The Mortimer Society, Snodland, Kent

This is a charity providing residential care for people suffering with Huntington's Disease, Motor Neurone Disease, MS, brain injury and stroke. They provide practical support to help the residents enjoy their lives, despite their diagnosis and the charity helped them with a fully wheelchair-accessible garden shed. They say 'Thanks to your wonderful support, we have been able to complete our sensory garden project. We are now in the process of equipping

the space with the shed which will mean our residents – all of whom have a complex neurological diagnosis – can have a degree of independence and carry out gardening tasks unsupervised. 29 adults at any one time will benefit from the shed. Your grant truly enabled this work to happen and we thank Gardening with Disabled Trust so much.'



Hollie, Lichfield, Staffordshire

She is 19 and has complex health needs and autism - due to the health needs she uses a wheelchair for pain management. The Trust helped her with some tools, garden seat and a raised planter. Her mother says 'Hollie has LOVED using her tools and the garden seat has been amazing. It has been so lovely to see her sitting on the chair dead heading her flowers with the tools and planting new ones. My daughter has loved watching the flowers grow. Thank you so much - it really made me smile seeing her out of the house and enjoying being independent, tending to the garden. Thank you so much for helping my daughter.'



Fundraising



Gravetye Manor Gardens Talk

We were treated to an inspiring, humorous and very informative talk from the Head Gardener Tom Coward at Ticehurst Village Hall in March. He shared his experience of restoring and gardening this historic landscape originally created by William Robinson.



Open Garden & Specialist Plant Fair

This was held at Nettlestead Place in Kent in April in a 10 acre plantsman's garden set around a 13th Century Manor House. We had amazing weather serving coffee and lunch outside. There were a good selection of plant stalls helping us to raise funds for the charity.



Summer Evening Garden Visit

We had a wonderful evening garden visit in August to a garden in Wadhurst, East Sussex in the Wealden Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with lovely views. Music from Saxophone, canapés and drinks made this event a great success.



Bridge Masterclass by Andrew Robson

This event was held in November 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 raised some good funds for the charity.

Expert Advice

One of the greatest joys to be had by anybody: whether a "gardener" or otherwise is the growing of something from seed to either flower or fruit. Annuals can bring a rapid, zesty, dynamic reward. Nothing gives the same sense of achievement or ownership over a garden or pot as filling it with your own homegrown plants. Growing from seed is simply magical, transforming a peck of dust-like poppy seed or a pebble-like nasturtium into something vital and alive giving weeks of colour and pleasure.

Seed sowing can confound with jargon and complexity, but it is essentially a simple and natural process. It is a mistake to be in a hurry with sowing seeds for most garden purposes; mid to late April is soon enough. Unless you have heat and space waiting for softer airs and warmer days, reduce stress to both you and your emerging seedlings.



Sow in small trays or pots; fill to the brim with peat-free compost, and compress lightly to leave a firm, level surface just below the pot rim. Big, easily manipulated seeds e.g. calendula, nasturtium, cosmos and orlaya l space out across the compost surface placing the seeds individually and leaving a gap between the seeds, before covering lightly with layer of, preferably sieved, compost. Smaller seeds: petunias, lobelias and nicotiana l sow as thinly

The Joy of Seeds

as possible, a peck at a time over the surface and lightly cover with fine vermiculite.

Water gently from above using a watering can with a fine rose, this settles everything down ensuring the seeds are in contact with the compost. Placed on a windowsill, greenhouse bench or cold-frame and most seeds will germinate in 7-10 days. Initially fragile and pale, tiny specks of hope, promise unfurling and reaching up to the light.



Sowing thinly makes pricking out, the truly fiddly bit, much easier. Fill small 7cm pots with peat-free loam-based compost, firmly. Using a pointed stick or dibber wiggle a small hole in the middle of each pot. Using the same stick gently lever up individual seedlings from their seed pot, one at a time handling them carefully by the leaves. Ease them into their new pots, burying the stems up to the leaves, water again from above. This tricky process can be avoided by simply sowing a single seed in its own pot. Place seedlings into a sheltered place or cold frame out of the worst of any weather, grow them on, watering as necessary until robust enough to cope with hurly-burly of the garden where, as the magic unfolds, they will bring weeks of colour and joy to beds and borders.

Edward Flint
Head Gardener, Consultant and Lecturer
East Sussex

Snippets

Garden Tips to Help you grow Successfully!

Mulching

A good garden compost is one of the best forms of mulch for plant and soil health. One chief benefit is that good compost contains a rich diversity of creatures, microbes and fungi that aid all soil health, comparable to a woodland floor.



Why should we mulch?

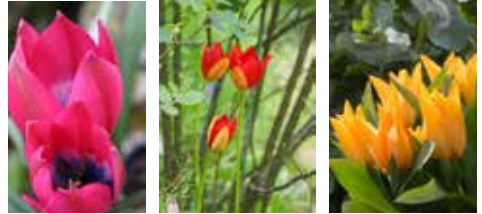
We mulch to provide food and nutrients to the soil keeping it moist, helping plants through hot summers, limiting the need for constant irrigation and helping smother early spring weed germination. You can use well-rotted animal manures, mushroom compost but do not use on acid soils, straw or cardboard if you don't have compost or manure and leaves which take a year at least to rot down. Simply spread in late autumn-early spring at a maximum of 2.5-5cm in depth. If weed suppression is the primary role then 7.5cm is more suitable.



Species Tulips

Unlike their gaudier cousins, which generally do not flower well after their first year, many species tulips are reliably perennial, coming

back year after year in a similar way to daffodils. They will also bulk up and naturalise, creating ever more impressive displays year on year.



Sweet Peas

Place plants about six inches apart, with a trench of manure at their roots, then let them get on with it. Every couple of weeks tie the new growth in, pick away from the end of May until the end of July, dead-heading as you go.



Hardy annuals can withstand the frosts, are often planted in the autumn or early spring and tend to be easy to grow in our northern climate. If growing from seed, hardy annuals are happy sown outside from April and will germinate before the frosts finish in May otherwise sow inside in March for an earlier crop.

Half-hardy annual plants cannot withstand winter wet and cold and are not frost hardy. Sow your seeds in March – May protecting them under cover until the frosts are over. Plant them out in the garden at the end of spring.

Biennials are plants whose lifecycle spans two years, so they flower, produce seeds and die in their second year and they may self-seed. When grown from seed, biennials are usually sown between May -July. Examples: Foxgloves, Hollyhocks, Teasels, Forget-me-nots.

Perennials are plants that stay in the garden from one year to the next. They make a brilliant investment and addition to your patch. Some of them are slightly tender and may not survive winter.

Amaryllis

To prolong flowering keep at 15-18 deg. After flowering liquid feed and place outdoors in summer. As foliage dies off, dry bulbs off for a late-summer dormant period, replanting in autumn.



Cutting Back and Pruning

Do not neglect hanging baskets and planted containers – deadheading, watering and feeding will help them last through until autumn. Hardy geraniums can be cut back a little after flowering to remove tired leaves and encourage a new flush of growth. Hebes and Lavenders can be given a light prune after flowering.

A lighter trim of Lavenders can also be done in early Spring to tidy up frost damage. Rambling roses can be pruned in August once they have finished flowering. The main pruning of Wisteria is done in January or February. Reduce the shoots to just two buds which encourages the production of flower buds. Prune again in August/September cutting back the long shoots unless they are required for training.



Hanging Baskets Before going away keep densely planted baskets fresh by moving them into the shade beside a bucket of water. Take several strips of capillary matting and insert one end of each strip into the baskets' compost, the other end into the bucket of water. The matting wicks up water, enabling the plants to draw up moisture as needed.

Install a green roof A shed or a bin store is an ideal spot to site a small green roof, where you can grow sedums and other low-growing plants that pollinators will adore.



Gardening with Disabilities Trust

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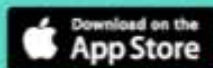
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