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Grow your own gardens and allotments





Introduction

The physical creation and tending of your plot – whether it’s a patio container, a corner of your garden, an allotment or a full-blown kitchen garden – can help keep you fit and motivated, and inspire a great sense of optimism.

Today, beyond the herbaceous borders and lovely gardens, allotments, kitchen gardens and community plots are becoming a much-loved and much-visited part of the garden portfolio at the National Garden Scheme.

In the following pages, National Garden Scheme Garden Owners share how growing produce has become an essential part of their gardening lives. They also share tips and hints to help you get started, to garden organically and sustainably - whatever the size of your green space.

Photo left: Dementia friendly plot at Wellesbourne Allotments by Rob Lavers

The National Garden Scheme is a registered charity (111264) that opens gardens raising millions for nursing and health charities. www.ngs.org.uk

Content

Seed to supper	p5
A lot of benefits	p7
Top Tips for new allotment holders	p8
Special events at THE PIG	p10
Growing an edible garden	p12
Healthy Gardens Health Plants	p16
Grow Organic	p18
Sustainable Gardening	p21
Teaching the joys of gardening	p25
Community gardens are good for you	p26
Where to visit	p28
WIN ‘Drawn to the Garden’ by Caroline Quentin	p32

Seed to supper...

A plant-based diet is now acknowledged as a major contributor to a healthier life-style but there are other benefits besides eating more fruit and vegetables that can boost your health and well-being. Rather than popping down to the supermarket, growing your own brings with it benefits beyond the delicious fresh produce you can enjoy at your dining table.

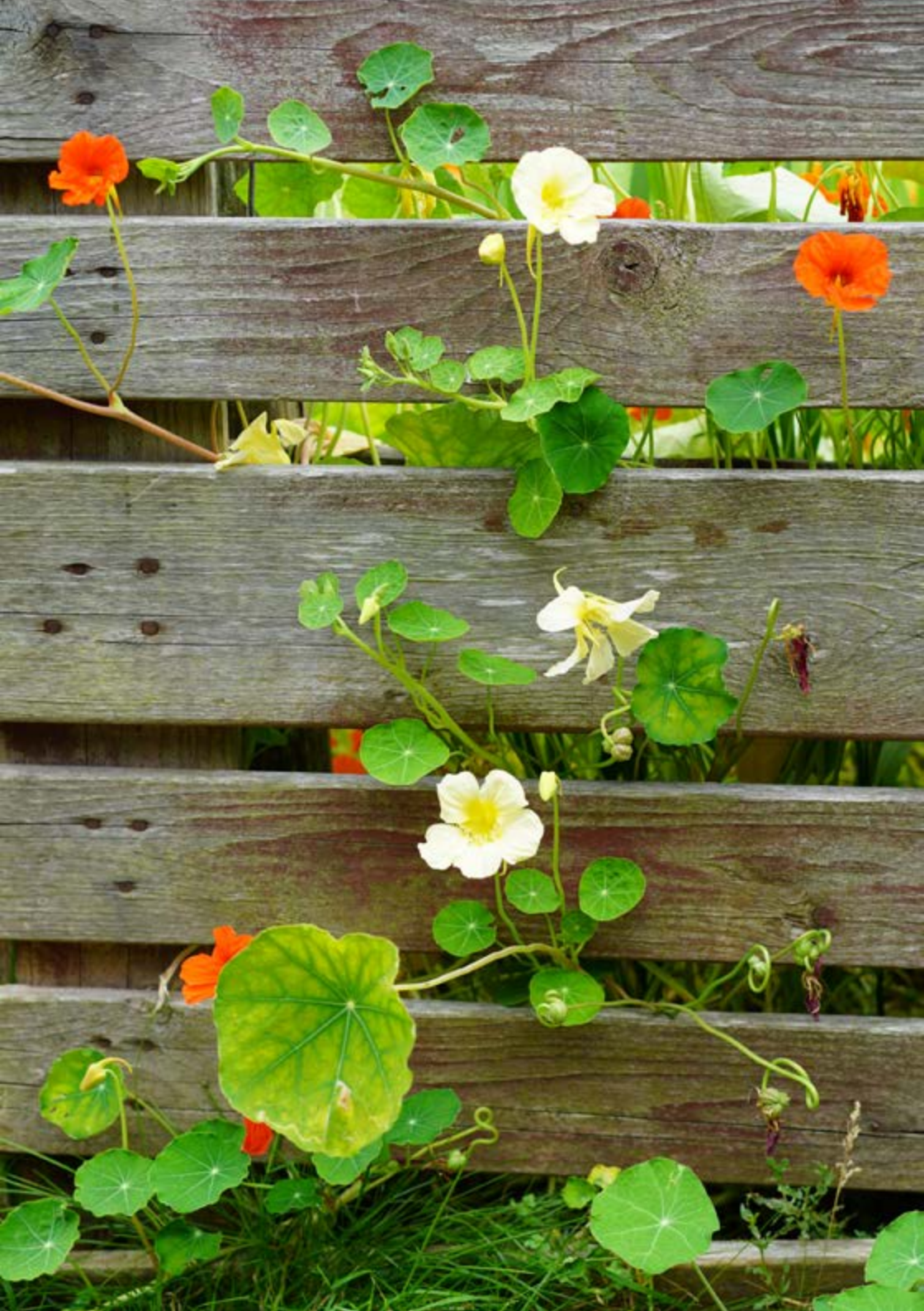


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community gardens and the diverse and stunningly well-kept allotments that open throughout England and Wales and Northern Ireland demonstrate a strong sense of social cohesion in addition to all the other benefits that growing your own creates.

The National Garden Scheme has a wide-range of 'grow your own' gardens in its portfolio. Some, like the immaculately and professionally tended kitchen gardens at [Goldstone Hall Gardens](#) in Shropshire (opens 14 Aug and 11 Sept) and [Fittleworth House](#) in West Sussex (opens 7 Aug) are the thing of dreams. While the

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A lot of benefits ...

Allotments are another highlight of the National Garden Scheme portfolio that visitors love, engaging with the various allotment holders, learning about growing fruit, flower and vegetables and very often taking fresh produce home.

While waiting lists for allotments can be long, it can be well worth it. Here are some key benefits for allotment owners:

1. Exercise

Keeping an allotment is a great form of exercise. From the more intensive clearing process at the beginning to the planting and watering later on, it's great because you get to decide the pace.

2. You eat more fruit and vegetables

...and if you grow organically they'll be free of pesticides.

3. Help the environment

Allotments are good for the environment because growing your own food can reduce your personal carbon footprint compared to shop-bought alternatives – and you limit the packaging used.

4. Sense of community

Keeping an allotment is a great way of making friends. You'll quickly get a sense of your 'neighbours' and the allotment community to which you belong. You'll also learn so much about what to grow and how to grow it.

5. Saves you money

Once you get the hang of things – and your allotment starts to give back – growing your own produce can be a very cost-effective way of living, especially if you grow perennial fruit and vegetables. You can also grow flowers which can be hugely rewarding and cost-effective.



Top tips for new allotment holders

Thinking about taking up an allotment? Caring for a plot can be quite a commitment but once you have made your preparations, you are able to enjoy the fruits of your hard work and get great satisfaction from your efforts. To help you get started, Dave Burton at Randalls Allotments shares his top tips on how to begin.

Getting started

Once you start digging and clearing your plot, and when you have a small area ready, get something you like and that will grow well at that time, put in the ground, so that as you are working on the rest of the plot you can watch your first area grow your produce. Keep that going and you will realise it is all worthwhile.

Make a plan on what you would like to grow, what you like to eat, and where on the plot you could grow the plants. Try to add in a few flowers which will encourage pollinators in to do their work on your fruit and vegetables as well. There will be some failures, which will allow you to learn about your plot and which crops will grow better than others.

Keeping the cost down

The idea is to grow your own and avoid the chemicals that are used by the farms and nurseries, but not to spend a fortune in the process. Recycle timber and other waste

products to make frames or give protection to your crops, buy your seed when the garden centres have their offers on at the end of the summer. Keeping the cost down gives even more pleasure to the enjoyment.

Little and often

Talking of seed, sow it thinly when you place it in the rows, it will make it more economical, but also save time when they are growing as there will be less thinning out to be done, allowing more space between individual plants.

Weed, weed, weed

Keep on top of the weeding, making sure they don't get to the mature seed stage as you will then get many more next year. Be aware that many weeds mature their seeds very quickly. Bittercress is a good example as you will probably spot it when it has its white flowers, but if you missed the first flowers, it is probably popping seed already. Weeding will need to be done several times a year in the same



area, they will keep coming as many of their seeds are wind borne, giving you no control over them.

Create compost

Try to have a small area to produce compost, adding kitchen waste from your home. It can be added in the autumn when the areas become vacant after crops have finished, either dug into the ground, or just put on the surface to let the worms and the weather do the hard work and take it underground for you. A basic square made of pallets secured on end will be enough, encouraging wildlife, but also getting the micro-organisms

to work on the contents and then distributed, allowing healthy conditions for your produce.

Be inspired

Have a good look at the other plots on the site, talk to other growers who might be able to give you some local and experienced advice, which may help you to get better crops. Look at the things used on the plots, maybe raised beds, netting, greenhouses or polytunnels to make areas of your plot more protected from predators and the weather. Not all sites allow buildings or greenhouses, so make sure you check before you buy or erect anything.

Special events at THE PIG this September...



This September you can enjoy an exclusive Kitchen Garden tour followed by garden-inspired tipples and local nibbles at one of THE PIG hotels across the south - all in aid of the National Garden Scheme.

These inspiring venues with grow your own at their heart can be found at the following locations. Click the venue to discover more and to book for seat at the table:

THE PIG at [Haryln Bay, Cornwall](#)

THE PIG at [Combe, Devon](#)

THE PIG on the Beach, [Swanage, Dorset](#)

THE PIG near [Bath](#)

THE PIG in the [New Forest, Hampshire](#)

THE PIG in the [South Downs, West Sussex](#)

THE PIG at [Bridge Place, Canterbury, Kent \(pictured left\)](#)

To see all the special event garden openings with THE PIG this autumn [CLICK HERE](#)



About THE PIG...

THE PIG was born in 2010 when our founder, Robin, walked into the rather unloved Kitchen Garden of a hotel outside Brockenhurst in the New Forest.

Something about this walled garden sparked his imagination – for a start, even full of weeds, it was the loveliest thing about a place that had, back then, become a bit down-at-heel.

He began to imagine it as the heart of a new style of country hotel: homey, informal, deeply comfortable and decidedly unshiny, serving unpretentious but delicious home-grown food, and rooted in the English countryside.

It would be called THE PIG, because... well, why not? Sociable, down-to-earth and keen on dinnertime – it felt right for a place that revelled in its connection with the countryside and the local farming communities.



Growing an edible garden

Nestled in West Surrey lies The Nutrition Garden, owned and designed by registered nutritionist Dr Trevor George. Trevor has a passion for edible plants, from growing, cooking, preserving and processing them to researching what happens to our bodies when we eat them. As a result, the garden is designed to produce and display a wide variety of edible plants, including fruits, vegetables, herbs, and plants for infusions.

We visited to meet Dr Trevor George and to find out more.

How does being in a garden make you feel?

It's really relaxing, very calming. I have quite a stressful job so it's really good to be out in the garden. You can really lose yourself and it's almost like meditation when you're focusing on what you're doing in the garden.

What is your favourite part of gardening?

It depends on the time of year. Because this is an edible garden, I suppose my favourite part is when things are ready to harvest. I like all aspects of harvesting, for example, taking dahlia cuttings is really nice. Although it's also lovely to see things come through in the spring as it feels very rewarding when you start to see all of your hard work pay off.

What are your top tips for growing edible flowers, fruits and vegetables?

It definitely depends on how much time you have; growing vegetables takes a bit more time. Whereas growing edible plants or berries for example, can be more low maintenance. The only work you might need to do is cover the berries before the birds get them. So yes, the berries and shrubs are a great place to begin for people starting out.

If you only have a small garden, what would you suggest growing?

Daylilies are one of my favourite edible flowers because they seem to cope in so many conditions. They cope well with the dry weather but can also grow in boggy parts around a pond. With the current



Red fleshed apples and pots of goodness flourish in The Nutrition Garden in Surrey



climate we're getting very hot summers with a deluge of rain afterwards, so daylilies are ideal to cope with that.

What encouraged you to begin your journey with nutrition?

It's two fold. When I was growing up my granddad used to grow vegetables in the garden, so I grew up with that. When I went to university, I studied nutrition as I was interested in fruits and vegetables and how they affect health. Then I started looking at growing plants with nutritional benefits and quickly became interested in how the different

colours of fruits and vegetables affect health. After a while I started collecting weird and wonderful coloured fruit and veg. Once you start getting into that world you gravitate to anything that says it's edible which has made me a bit of a collector.

Discover more about the incredible range of edible plants when The Nutrition Garden opens for the National Garden Scheme By Arrangement from July to 1 September for groups up to 20.

For more details [CLICK HERE](#)

Healthy gardens, healthy planet...



It can be hard to understand how we as gardeners can play our part in helping reverse the effects of climate change and the global decline in biodiversity. The good news is that the small steps we can all take in our own gardens really do make a difference.

Sarah Mead, head gardener at the Yeo Valley Organic Garden in Somerset, which opens annually the National Garden Scheme, has been gardening organically for over 20 years, creating one of very few ornamental gardens in the UK to be fully certified organic by the Soil Association.

She says, “We know organic has huge benefits for the environment, particularly in safeguarding our soil and supporting pollinators and wildlife, but you don’t have to go the whole hog. Working with, rather than against, nature in your garden is good for the planet AND it helps your mental and physical health.”

On the following pages you can read Sarah’s top tips to control pests naturally, boost biodiversity and benefit the soil. But it’s not just big names like Yeo Valley that can make organic gardening work - everyone can.

But first, here are eight reasons to go organic from National Garden Scheme garden Tuppenny Barn, an organic smallholding used as an outdoor classroom to teach children about the environment, sustainability and healthy food.



Eight reasons to go organic from Tuppenny Barn, Sussex

1. Food is grown using natural fertilizers like manure and compost.
2. Weeds are controlled naturally through crop rotation, weeding and mulching.
3. Pests are controlled using natural methods, relying on our birds and insects to control them, rather than chemicals.
4. It’s better for your health, as it contains more antioxidants and lower levels of undesirable pesticides.
5. It’s also fresher because it hasn’t travelled as many food miles to get to your plate.
6. It reduces environmental pollution and the release of greenhouse gases, as it doesn’t use artificial chemical fertilisers and pesticides.
7. It’s good for wildlife as the absence of weed killers allows bees, birds and butterflies to thrive.
8. It protects our soils for future generations to grow healthy food.

Tuppenny Barn in Southbourne, West Sussex opens By Arrangement from Jan to 7 Oct 2024 for groups of between 12 and 30. This means the garden welcomes visitors on pre-agreed dates. You can find out more [here](#)



Grow organic ...

Yeo Valley's Sarah Mead's top tips to control pests naturally, boost biodiversity and benefit the soil ...

Cut your lawn less

If you only do one thing this year to improve your garden's value for nature, cut your grass less, or not at all. The UK's climate is perfectly suited to allow grass and the many species of beneficial plants that share our lawns to thrive, but regular cutting deprives essential pollinators of an important food source. According to PlantLife, the British conservation charity behind the No Mow May* initiative, allowing your lawn to grow naturally for just a single month can provide enough nectar for ten times the amount of bees and other pollinators than a regularly cut lawn.



We have learnt to take a more relaxed approach and turn the other cheek where pests are concerned. A pest is a delicious snack for someone, so don't be too hasty to wipe them out. By tolerating your pests, you are providing a valuable food source for your predators and they will do the work for you.

Give your soil a break

Every time you stick a fork, spade or trowel into the earth you are disturbing the fine balance of micro-organisms that it supports. It's this life support system that holds carbon in huge quantities and helps mitigate climate change. Minimise soil disturbance by mulching regularly to suppress weeds, and save your digging for planting.

Give your plants tough love

It's possible to live without manufactured pesticides but it can be tempting when planting out your precious seedlings. Don't over cosset your youngsters but certainly don't put them out into the veg patch until they are big and strong enough to survive slugageddon. A baby lettuce is nectar to a slug and an attack by cabbage whites will completely destroy a brassica. We try to grow

everything in pots (old yogurt pots of course) until they are big enough to thrive.

Cover up precious crops

If you feel the wildlife has enough to eat elsewhere in the garden, and you'd like at least one hole-free crop, cover your brassicas, salads or other edibles with a fine horticultural mesh. Make sure it's tight and hole free, butterflies can be very determined when they're laying!

Feed the birds wisely

We feed the birds generously throughout the winter, when they most need it, and then remove the feeders in spring to encourage them to focus on eating our pests.

Grow loads of flowers

Choose a range of perennials, annuals, trees and shrubs to ensure a steady supply of nectar and pollen for beneficial wildlife throughout the year. And take time to deadhead regularly – it will encourage more blooms giving you a longer display and pollinators a longer supply of food. Added bonus is I find it a very therapeutic task!

Drink more coffee

We have tried various methods of 'barrier control' in the case of slugs and snails and have found two



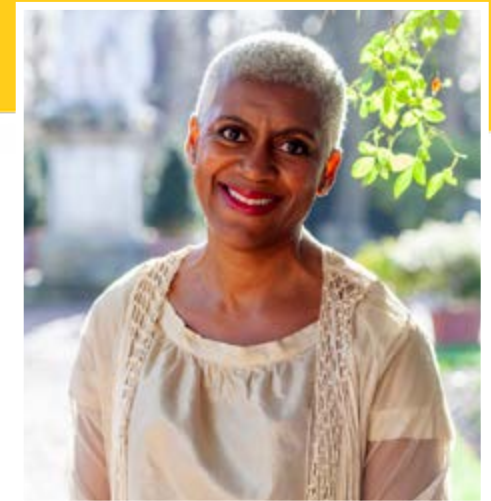
methods to be effective. Sprinkling coffee grounds (not decaf) around precious plants in a generous circle seems to work well for us. We also recommend copper rings. You can make your own by buying the copper from a roofing supplier by the roll – it's a much cheaper alternative than buying ready-made.

Discover more about Yeo Valley Organic Garden [here](#)



Creating a more sustainable future

Garden designer, writer, presenter and National Garden Scheme Trustee, Arit Anderson, looks at the importance of sustainability.



In this time of change, one of the huge positives has been the celebration of the garden, and people have been able to take comfort in its benefit to our wellbeing. It's amazing that when we tend to our plot of land however big or small, the return is we feel better to. There has most certainly been an increase in biophilia – the innate connection and love of nature that is deeply ingrained within us.

Sir David Attenborough recently said “...the world depends on an understanding of the natural world, and where does that start? For the majority of human beings on their doorstep, into their gardens.” For those of us lucky enough to have outside space, I hope all gardeners experienced and new have been able to use this extraordinary time, to deepen or better understand the crisis that faces the wider environment.

It's a wonderful fact that nearly half of this nation gardens! Therefore, the 27 million of us that do, means every action we take, can make a difference. In an urban setting our gardens act as network of green space before meeting the wider landscape, so what we do within our fence line can assist the ecology in our area. A butterfly, bird or bee doesn't knock on your door or worry about the neighbours, before taking a sip of sweet nectar. They just need to get through a healthy natural environment to do so. There has been a huge upswell and talk of sustainability, but what does that mean for us gardeners?

First, we have to know what it means. According to the United Nations (UN) World Commission on Environment and Development, “environmental sustainability is about acting in a way that ensures future generations have the natural resources available to live an equal,



if not better, way of life as current generations.”

We turn to the garden for the gratification that it provides, the beautiful flowers with their colour and scent. The shade of a tree, the reflective quality of a water feature or pond. But to create our lovely oasis, there are several resources that are pulled on, and in a changing climate and a degrading environment, we will need to be more sensitive and informed on the choices we make in our garden.

If we see ourselves as custodians of the plot we have and not the ‘owner’ then there is a shift in our thinking, as we know that we are not just creating something for us to enjoy today, but a space that will be enjoyed by others in the future. Add to that the sense that we are serving the ‘other clients’ like the wildlife that freely joins in to create a rich tapestry of biodiversity and

life. And that all of this makes us feel better, which in turn improves the lives of the people around us and helps us to all appreciate this planet which is our home.



Top tips

In a changing climate here are some top tips for a more sustainable garden:

Biodiversity

- Plant flowers that are good for pollinators
- Have hedges instead of fences – hedges offer wildlife habitats and counter air pollution
- Add bat boxes and bug hotels to the garden, plus twigs and leaves in piles at the backs of borders

Water

- Install large water butts.
- Don't water your lawn
- Mulch your borders to aid water retention
- Use permeable paving for paths, terraces and parking areas.

Trees & Plants

- Plant a tree. Or don't cut one down. Trees are excellent carbon sinks.
- Buy plants sold in recyclable pots. Re-use plastic pots.

- Try to avoid other one-off plastics... buy bulbs or potatoes in paper bags or compost in re-usable bags

Materials & Waste

- When buying commercial compost, choose peat-free
- Make your own compost
- Use biodegradable wooden plant labels
- Use wool or jute twine ties not plastic

- Use metal plant supports or make your own from birch twigs
- When buying new garden furniture, look for FSC certification and check origins
- Re-use or recycle larger items such as tools and furniture. Try eBay, Freecycle, Freegle and charity shops

Pest & Disease

- Use environmentally friendly pest controls



Teaching the joys of gardening

Lara Honnor inspired us all with her story of surviving an aggressive form of cancer and changing her life with the help of nature and horticultural therapy. She also contributed to Charles Dowding's No Dig Children's Gardening Book sharing tips she has learnt from her Skool Beanz project on teaching the joys of gardening to children.

Teaching the joys of gardening
The project began as an after school club at the primary school with children learning how to grow beautiful vegetables and flowers and how to garden to help nature. Free from pesticides, this is a no dig garden buzzing with life and colour and packed full of inspiring ideas to engage the children.

There is also a whole plot planted with sunflowers and pumpkins over the summer, a community orchard and children's playground.

Not surprisingly the project has attracted a lot of media interest and was featured on Gardeners' World in 2023, episode 22.

Lara spoke at a recent National Garden Scheme conference and regional meeting and in 2024 the project received a National Garden Scheme Community Garden Grant to help support the children who use the allotment and who learn so much from it.

“Skool Beanz Saturday gardening club started in April 2021,” says Lara. “Now in its third year, it

continues to run every Saturday from spring to Christmas as well as taking school groups on Wednesdays and Fridays and clubs throughout the holidays.

“The Skool Beanz allotment is a rainbow of colour. Children learn how to grow delicious veg, beautiful flowers and how to garden to help nature, with plenty of upcycled art thrown in. There is a quiet wildlife garden with a tiny pond, a rainwater collecting station, muddy buddy compost heap, secret den, polytunnel classroom, community raised beds and sunflower shed. It is a garden where children can just be and also let their imaginations run wild.”

Skool Beanz Children's Allotment in Somerset will open for the National Garden Scheme on 15 September [CLICK HERE](#) for details

Community gardens are good for you ...

At a time when the cost-of-living crisis is forcing many people to find innovative ways to support themselves, their families and their communities National Garden Scheme Community Garden Grants are providing even more of a helping hand to thousands of people across the UK.

With many of the applications centred on the growing of food for communities and those helping others to learn to grow food we take a look at one London project that was funded in 2023...

St Peters Community Wellbeing Projects in Bethnal Green, London (pictured) works to support local elderly and/or vulnerable BAME women through participation in community gardening activities.

The women who benefit from the project face cultural, financial and language barriers to accessing mainstream services, are suffering from physical and mental health problems or are vulnerable to poor mental health through isolation and loneliness.

Through the community gardening project these women have the opportunity to develop gardening skills, build friendships and make connections with the local community as well as experiencing the health benefits of being outside and gardening.

They applied for a National Garden Scheme Community Garden Grant

If you'd like to know more about our Community Garden Grants, including when and how to apply, click the link below. Follow us on Instagram [@ngscommunitygardens](https://www.instagram.com/ngscommunitygardens) for more community gardening project stories.

in 2023 to make improvements to the gardening space including building strong climbing frames to withstand the weight of crops commonly grown in Bangladesh such as bottle gourd and Asian pumpkin.



**CLICK
HERE**
for more about
Community
Garden Grants

Allotments and kitchen gardens to add to your garden visiting list this autumn ...

There are some wonderful allotments and kitchen gardens opening with the National Garden Scheme in 2024. Here's a few to add to your list from August and beyond...

Cadhay in Devon is set in a tranquil two acres with two medieval fish ponds surrounded by rhododendrons, gunnera, hostas and flag iris. Roses, clematis, lilies and hellebores surround walled water garden. 120ft herbaceous border walk informally planted. Magnificent display of dahlias throughout. The walled kitchen gardens have been turned into allotments.

Opens on Sunday 25 and Monday 27 August - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Fittleworth House in West Sussex has a lovely garden but the star of the show is the stunning, organic walled garden with a charming potting shed and greenhouse to explore. Knowledgeable gardeners Mark and Pete will be on hand to answer your questions and get you inspired about growing your own.

Opens Wednesday 7 August and By Arrangement [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Goldstone Hall Gardens in Shropshire is five acres with a highly productive beautiful kitchen

garden. Unusual vegetables and fruits - alpine strawberries; heritage tomatoes, salad, chillies, celeriac. Double herbaceous in front of old English garden wall at its best July and August; sedums and roses stunning in September. Winner of the prestigious Good Hotel Guide's Editor's Choice Award for Gardens.

Opens Wednesday 14 August and Wednesday 11 September - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

The Golf Course Allotments in north London are a large, long established allotment group with over 200 plots, some organic. Maintained by a culturally diverse community growing a wide variety of fruit, vegetables and flowers enjoyed by bees. There are picturesque corners, quirky sheds and tours of best plots and newly created plot 147, a jewel garden not to be missed. A visit feels like a holiday in the countryside.

Opens on Sunday 1 September - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Helen's Bay Organic, County Down, Northern Ireland is an urban market garden, established in 1991, producing over 50 varieties



of organic vegetables for direct retailing. It also hosts a community garden and allotments which include an extensive range of fruit and vegetables.

Opens Saturday 31 August - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Hill Close Gardens in Warwick are restored Grade II* Victorian leisure gardens comprising of 16 individual hedged gardens, eight brick summerhouses, herbaceous borders, heritage apple and pear trees, and many varieties of asters and chrysanthemums along with heritage vegetables.

Opens Saturday 26 October - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Littleover Lane Allotments, in Derby is a quiet oasis just off Derby's Outer Ring Road, hidden away in a residential area. A private site of nearly 12 acres, established in 1920, cultivated in a variety of ways, including organic, no dig and potager style. Come and chat with plot holders about their edibles and ornamentals. Many exotic and Heritage varieties cultivated.

Opens Sunday 8 September - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Middleton Hall Retirement Village in Darlington enjoys 45 acres of gardens and grounds including allotments.

Opens on Saturday 17 August - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.



The Nutrition Garden in Surrey is the creation of registered nutritionist Dr Trevor George (see the full story on page 13). Trevor has a passion for edible plants, from growing, cooking, preserving and processing them to researching what happens to our bodies when we eat them. As a result, the garden is designed to produce and display a wide variety of edible plants, including fruits, vegetables, herbs, and plants for infusions.

Opens By Arrangement - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Skool Beanz Children's Allotment in Somerset is a gardening club for children, created by Lara Honnor, to encourage children to enjoy gardening. The allotment has a huge cut flower dahlia bed, vegetable area, fruit trees and bushes, a rainwater collecting station, 'Muddy Buddy' compost heap, quiet wildlife garden, secret den, polytunnel and plenty of seating and tables for upcycling garden arts and crafts.

Opens Sunday 15 September - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Willoughby Road Allotments in Boston, Lincolnshire are set in five acres the allotments comprise 60 plots growing fine vegetables, fruit, flowers and herbs. There is a small orchard and wildflower area and a community space adjacent. Grass paths run

along the site. Several plots will be open to walk round. There will be a seed and plant stall. Artwork created by Bex Simon situated on site.

Opens Saturday 31 August - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

The Wonky Garden in Widnes, Cheshire focusses on horticultural therapy and nature based activities. It has large herbaceous borders, trees and shrubs, planting focussing on the senses and wildlife. They grow masses of edibles and cut flowers in the allotment garden with 80% donated to support food poverty. The children's 'explorify' garden nestles between the two and is used to support young families.

Opens By Arrangement [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Woodpeckers Care Home, Hampshire is a garden for all tastes and seasons and includes an allotment that grows veg for fun (pumpkins!) and for the kitchen along with cut flowers for the house and dining tables.

Opens Saturday 31 August and Sunday 1 September - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

THE PIG Events in September [CLICK HERE](#)

[ALL GROW YOUR OWN GARDENS CLICK HERE](#)



Recipes ...

We have a wonder range of recipes on our website - [CLICK HERE](#) for more - but here are a few of our grow your own favourites.

Caroline Quentin's jalapeño pepper poppers

Caroline Quentin has shared one of her favourite recipes from 'Drawn to the Garden' with us. She says the recipe serves two, ideally with a cold beer on a hot day!

Ingredients

8 jalapeño chilli peppers – I allow 4 chillies per person, so 8 halves.
I know it sounds like a lot but it's never enough.
2 unsmoked back bacon rashers
A handful of grated mature Cheddar cheese
165 g (5¾ oz/scant ¾ cup) cream cheese

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F/Gas Mark 4).
2. Rinse the chillies under a cold tap, then slice them lengthways, trying to slice through the stalk too, so that you have a little handle to lift the chilli into your mouth. Deseed the halved peppers carefully using the handle of a teaspoon, taking care not to damage the integrity of the skin and taking even greater care not to touch your face.
3. Fry the bacon to your liking – in this recipe, I don't like it crispy. Leave the rashers to cool, then cut into tiny pieces – the smaller the pieces, the easier it is to stuff the peppers.
4. Stir the Cheddar into the cream cheese, then mix in the bacon bits. (If you make these once, you'll make them again. Play around with the amounts of cheese and bacon to suit your taste.)
5. Fill the little green cases with the mixture (I use 2 teaspoons per half pepper and make a right mess), then arrange on a baking tray. Place in the preheated oven for 15–20 minutes or until golden brown.
6. Serve the jalapeños to your guests; I'd advise having a glass of milk (and a swear box) handy just in case.

WIN a copy of
Caroline's book
'Drawn to the
Garden'
[CLICK HERE](#)
closes 12 Sept





The National Garden Scheme is a charity registered in the UK.
Charity Number 1112664

Discover more at: www.ngs.org.uk