

# Gardening4Health Newsletter

## Edition 2 Summer 2024

Summertime is sadly slipping through our fingers all too quickly, so it's high time we got the latest newsletter out to you.

Please do share this with your colleagues and on your networks. The more people we have signing up for this, the more impact we can make. And please do feed back if there are areas you feel need to be covered in the future.

Lots to tell you about – starting with our Autumn symposium in conjunction with The Serge Hill Project:

## Autumn Symposium - The Safe Green Space: Gardens and Health

*Everything that happens in a garden takes place in slow time; the flowers, shrubs and trees simply get on with growing quietly at their own pace and so it is with people' - Dr Sue Stuart-Smith*

The Safe Green Space: Gardens and Health is a one-day symposium hosted by the Serge Hill Project and Gardening4Health, at the new Apple House venue at Serge Hill, near Bedmond in Hertfordshire.



Bringing together some of the leading lights within horticultural therapy and garden design, speakers will explore the many ways that nature-based interventions can be beneficial to health and well-being. As well as focussing on the design and therapeutic work of Horatio's Gardens in NHS Spinal Injury units, speakers will bring a range of perspectives on therapeutic horticulture today and explore how we can work towards increasing provision. The day will offer something for gardeners, therapists and designers as well as those considering moving into the field.

The event will start with a keynote speech from psychiatrist, psychotherapist and author of the bestselling book, [The Well Gardened Mind](#), Dr Sue Stuart-Smith.

The morning continues with an exploration of the work of the charity, Horatio's Garden, which nurtures the wellbeing of people who have experienced a spinal injury in beautiful, green sanctuaries. Different perspectives on the healing power of the garden will be presented, including: Tom Stuart-Smith on designing and building the garden for the National Spinal Cord Injury Centre in Stanmore, London; Head Gardener Ashley Edwards on collaborating with Tom on the design and on day to day life in the garden; former patient on Joe Darrell on the experience of spending time in the garden and Dr. Olivia Chapple, Founder and Chair of trustees, about the vision and future of the charity.

Following this, there will be time before a hearty vegetarian lunch to explore the Plant Library and chat to Head Gardener Millie Souter as well as visiting Tom and Sue's private garden at The Barn nearby.

Presentations will follow from award-winning garden designer, TV presenter and writer Arit Anderson, Keely Siddiqui-Charlick (Sunnyside Rural Trust), Richard Claxton (GP, Gardening4Health) and a presentation by Ruth Madder from Bridewell Gardens about the role of the horticultural therapist and routes into horticultural therapy as a career.

The day will be hosted in the Apple House, a stunning new timber building in the heart of an orchard and plant library, and home to The Serge Hill Project, a new community interest company founded by Tom and Sue Stuart-Smith, based on the understanding that working with nature can radically transform people's health and wellbeing.

Tickets are limited in number, so it's definitely worth booking early to avoid disappointment.

We do hope you will be able to make it.

Tickets are now on sale by [clicking here](#)

£75 General Admission

£50 Student

The Serge Hill Project for Gardening, Creativity and Health



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## St Ebba's Therapy Garden

Any new Therapeutic Horticulture venture is a good thing – and we were really interested to find out about a new therapy garden for young people and adults with mental health problems and learning disabilities recently opening in Epsom.



The new St Ebba's Therapy Garden, formerly a cricket ground and pavilion, is being provided by Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with Surrey County Council.

Support for the project has also come from local businesses, volunteers from a vocational programme for adults with learning disabilities, Natural England and Surrey Wildlife Trust who have helped design and develop the space.



Ruth Leaver-Lewis, Senior Art Therapist at Surrey and Borders Partnership and lead clinician for the St Ebba's Therapy Garden, says:

"The garden provides a natural space which can be used by people with complex needs and symptoms of anxiety, low mood and trauma, as well as with neurodiversity who have struggled to engage in therapy at a traditional clinical site.

Our team of therapists have been trained to deliver nature-based interventions. We are providing group therapy as well as individual sessions and social initiatives such as café sessions for people with learning disabilities.

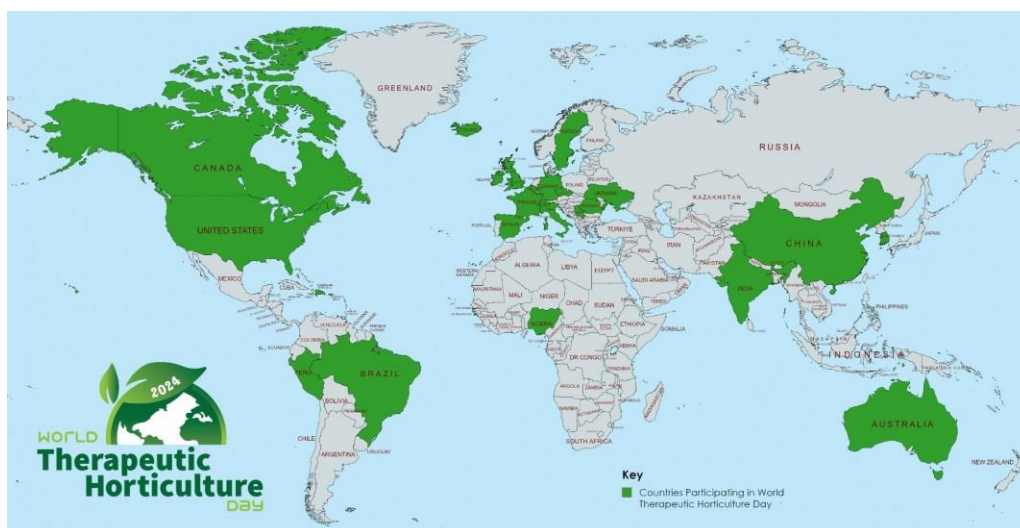
People accessing the garden can explore ways to relax, restore and revitalise through connecting with nature. The sensory elements in the space can help with mindfulness practice, such as: feeling the breeze, hearing the birds and smelling the flowers and plants. We also include families and carers in our sessions which supports relationship-building and emotional processing.

Additionally, the garden provides ecological benefit for local ecosystems and wildlife, as we have planted native flora."

In particular, this caught our attention because of the partnerships behind it – incorporating both the state health and social care bodies in Surrey, but also key contributions from the third sector and local businesses. Could this become the way forward for many other projects?

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## World Therapeutic Horticulture Day – May 18th



In the last newsletter we wrote about World Therapeutic Horticulture Day; a day dedicated to highlighting the numerous therapeutic benefits of horticulture and gardening, as well as the positive impact it can have on the environment.

Many of you will have seen or shared posts that celebrate the work that's going on around the world in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture.

Here's the map, produced by Trellis – that shows the spread of activity across the planet on the day; by following the Hashtags #WTHD or #WTHD24.

New countries that joined in included Slovakia, China, India, Nigeria, Sweden, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Romania, Republic of Korea, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Republic of Serbia, and Poland.

WTHD 2025 promises to be bigger and better, as the STH movement gains momentum!

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### **“Good Nature” by Professor Kathy Willis**

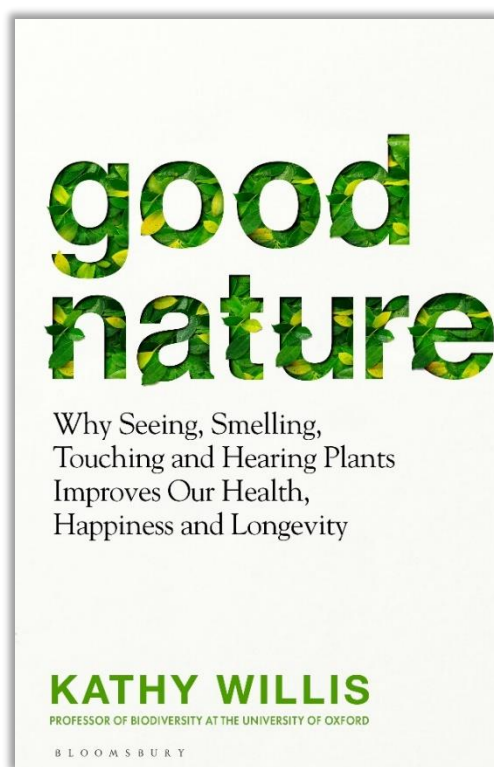
A few months ago, Bloomsbury Publishing kindly gave Gardening4Health a proof copy of Kathy Willis' new book:

GOOD NATURE - Why Seeing, Smelling, Touching and Hearing Plants Improves Our Health, Happiness and Longevity

Kathy is Professor of Biodiversity at the University of Oxford, and has put together this fascinating book which is both detailed and thoroughly researched, but thought-provoking and very readable.

Published at the end of August, subscribers to this newsletter were put into the hat for a chance to win one of three copies – to be drawn on 14<sup>th</sup> September.

But if you're not one of the lucky winners, we can vouch that you won't be disappointed if you purchase a copy!



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### **Get involved in research on STH**

Many of you will remember Dr Carly Wood, who spoke at the Tuppenny Barn event last year. Carly is leading a research project at the University of Essex exploring the effectiveness of social and therapeutic horticulture for the prevention and treatment of depression and anxiety.

Carly is hosting two online seminars in September, on the theme of 'Growing Social and Therapeutic Horticulture in the UK'. One is for STH service providers, and the other is for mental healthcare professionals. The team needs your input - do attend if you can - Flyers below with the booking link:



## Growing Social and Therapeutic Horticulture uptake in the UK: Online webinar and discussion for service providers

Thursday 19 September 2024, 10am-12pm

Are you involved in the delivery of a Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) programme?

Do you want to contribute to the growth of STH provision in the UK?

If so, please join us to:

- Hear about the findings of our research exploring the effectiveness of STH for the prevention and treatment of anxiety and depression
- See new infographics designed to encourage service users, clinicians, commissioners, and policy makers to engage with STH
- Co-produce best practice guidelines for the use of the infographics by a range of STH stakeholders.



Book your place at:  
<https://sthproviders.eventbrite.co.uk>



## Growing Social and Therapeutic Horticulture in UK mental healthcare: Online webinar and discussion for mental health professionals

Friday 20 September 2024, 10am-12pm

Do you refer to or commission mental health services?

Are you interested in the use of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) in healthcare?

If so, please join us to:

- Hear about the findings of our research exploring the effectiveness of STH for the prevention and treatment of anxiety and depression
- See new infographics designed to encourage service users, clinicians, commissioners, and policy makers to engage with STH
- Co-produce best practice guidelines for the use of the infographics by a range of STH stakeholders.



Book now at:  
<http://sth.eventbrite.co.uk>



We gather participants will also be able to see a sneak-peak of our newly developed video highlighting the findings of their research so far.

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## Horatio's Garden National Garden Scheme Open Days



All of the Horatio's Gardens are opening this year in support of the National Garden Scheme or Scotland's Gardens Scheme. Open Days cost £5-7 for adults and are free for children.

As per all NGS openings - cake is also available!

You can pay on the gate, or book [via the Horatio's Garden website](#). Upcoming dates are:

- Sunday 15 September | Horatio's Garden London & South East
- Saturday 28 September | Horatio's Garden Stoke Mandeville
- Sunday 13 October | Horatio's Garden Northern Ireland

Horatio's Gardens also offer guided tours by arrangement – again see the website for details.

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## Root and Branch Network Meeting

Many of you will be aware of Root and Branch, an independent charity based in Oxfordshire, providing activities that promote recovery for people who experience significant mental health difficulties.

Here's a flyer for their forthcoming network event.



Root and Branch, Westmill Farm, Watchfield, SN6 8TH, Tel: 01793 782999  
E: [office@rootandbranch.org.uk](mailto:office@rootandbranch.org.uk) or [manager@rootandbranch.org.uk](mailto:manager@rootandbranch.org.uk)

Root & Branch are delighted to be hosting the next Social and Therapeutic horticultural network meeting.

On  
Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September  
10am to 3pm

This is an informal day for practitioners working within these settings

Provisional agenda items include:-

- Garden tour
- Person centred therapeutic horticulture
- Structure of day at centres
- Measuring impact
- Creating revenue
- AOB or contributions

If you haven't done so, please let us know if you are able to attend on the above email. Other possible agenda items welcome.

We will supply refreshments, please bring your own lunch.

We look forward to seeing/meeting you.



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That's all for the moment, as we said above, do share this with your colleagues and networks, and let us know if there are get in touch if you have any requests for content in future issues.