

Perennial News

ISSUE 50 | SPRING - SUMMER 2026

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story of working
in horticulture**

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**Donate to
help people
in horticulture**



Helping people
in horticulture
Perennial

Exclusive Garden Tours 2026

“
Great value for a unique experience on a private guided tour.
Christine - 2025 tour attendee
”



For full details and to book your place, visit perennial.org.uk/garden-tours or scan QR code

Step behind the gates of Britain's most enchanting private gardens with our Exclusive Garden Tours, all in support of Perennial's essential services.

Our 2026 season is action packed with unmissable visits.

- The exclusive Nursemaids' Tunnel
- The characterful gardens of The Green and Blackbrook Estate
- Historic Birtsmorton Court
- The romantic gardens of Biddulph Old Hall
- Exquisite Wormsley Estate
- Wildlife-rich Caisson Gardens
- The beautiful Old Vicarage garden
- Award-winning Gardens of Garden Close
- Sir Harold Hillier's stunning gardens



“
I have been producing Award Winning Gardens for nearly 20 years, and I am delighted to be sharing my own personal masterpiece with an exclusive group of visitors in September to help raise funds for the charity that's there to support me should I need it.
”

Lucy Willcox
Owner of
Lucy Willcox Garden Design
Gardens of Garden Close



A warm welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of Perennial News. As CEO of the charity that supports everyone in horticulture, I have seen first-hand the incredible sense of community that defines our industry.

We provide a range of expert services that support people when they need it most – whether that's with financial, physical or mental health challenges, career development or coping with life-changing issues such as bereavement.

This help is vital: last year alone, we delivered over **19,000** preventative services and **2,445** people and their families received direct support from Perennial, ensuring that those who work with plants, trees, flowers or grass to create beautiful spaces we all enjoy are never left to face hardship alone.

Our current fundraising focus is 'Listening into Action', raising vital funds to help us develop our services to ensure we can be responsive to the industry's changing needs – from understanding the needs of apprentices new to horticulture, to helping self-employed people ensure they are planning for their financial future.

Thank you to everyone who donated in response to Clive's story which showed how quickly life can change. David's story in this issue highlights the challenges of working in isolation and the vulnerability of being self-employed when your health takes a turn. Every donation and every

conversation about Perennial with someone in the industry helps us strengthen the support we provide, so we can be a safety net to more people when they need us.

We have a variety of ways people and organisations can support us including a new partnership with Run for Charity, offering you the chance to be part of runs, cycles or obstacle course challenges anywhere across the UK. We are also celebrating 40 years of partnership with the National Garden Scheme, and the generosity of people opening their gardens for charity – a testament to what we can achieve when we work together.

Whether you are visiting one of our gardens, taking on a challenge, joining us for an Exclusive Garden



Tour, or making a donation to support our work – thank you. With your support we can continue to be there for people who dedicate their lives to the gardens and green spaces we all love.

With thanks,
Jamie Gault, Chief Executive

Looking for advice, information, or support?

Helpline: 0800 093 8543 | perennial.org.uk/contact-form

Ways we can help: perennial.org.uk/help

Something else?

General enquiries: 01372 373962 | info@perennial.org.uk

Perennial Partners: pswainston@perennial.org.uk | kcooney@perennial.org.uk

Fundraising: fundraise@perennial.org.uk

Press: media@perennial.org.uk

Perennial, 115-117 Kingston Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7SU

perennial.org.uk

How our services support you

We support everyone in horticulture with challenges around money, health, family and career as well as life-changing events such as homelessness, redundancy, long-term ill health or bereavement.

All our services are **free and confidential**. Whether it is expert one-to-one advice, digital resources, online tools or just a listening ear, we are here to support your needs.

FREE CONFIDENTIAL HELPLINE 0800 093 8543*
perennial.org.uk/contact-form

Our supportive team will listen to understand more about you and the challenges you're facing.
 + Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-4.30pm and Thursday 10am-4.30pm. Excludes bank holidays.

Plus we also have:

<p>Be money smart Ways to help you make your money work harder</p> <p>MONEY MANAGEMENT A practical app offering help for budgeting, spending and saving plus a financial health check, 24/7.</p> <p>MONEY AND DEBT ADVICE Our free advice service can help you manage your budget, review benefits and support with debt management.*</p> <p>RETIREMENT & PENSIONS We're working with the government's Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) to ensure everyone in the industry can access free, specialist guidance to plan for retirement.</p>	<p>Be health smart Take control of your physical & mental health</p> <p>HEALTH & WELLBEING An app packed full of valuable advice and support on health, fitness, nutrition and wellbeing.</p> <p>MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT 24/7 helpline via the Health & Wellbeing app, plus tools and resources to support your mental wellbeing.</p> <p>PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICE A referral service for back, muscle and joint pain to help keep you moving.</p>	<p>Be career smart Tools to help you achieve your career goals</p> <p>INTERACTIVE CAREER HUB Move your career forward with confidence, with our CV builder, 360 interview review and job search.</p> <p>HORTICULTURAL TRAINING Support to build your horticultural skills and career with recognised training and qualifications.</p> <p>CAREER COACHING Tailored advice and guidance with a fully qualified, professional career coach.</p>	<p>Be life smart Resources to support you during life's challenges</p> <p>LEGAL ADVICE Our team can refer you for independent, expert advice via our legal helpline provided by Irwin Mitchell.</p> <p>HELP LOOKING AFTER SOMEONE ELSE Digital resources providing practical and emotional support for all those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>SUPPORT THROUGH GRIEF An app providing expert guidance and a gentle, step-by-step journey through your grief.</p> <p>SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES Our team can help with practical support and guidance to access the benefits and programmes you may be entitled to.</p>
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We are here for everyone working in the industry, including:
Arborists | Florists | Foresters | Gardeners | Garden Centres | Garden Designers | Greenkeepers | Grounds Staff | Growers | Landscapers | Landscape Architects | Nurseries | Tree Surgeons | Viticulturists

*Some debts like credit cards, loans and car finance are known as consumer credit. Our advice on consumer credit and mortgage debt is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority under FRN: 694883 (fca.org.uk).

David's journey from isolation to inspiration



I'm a self-employed horticulturalist and garden designer based in Angus, Scotland. I discovered Perennial when I got involved in an obstacle challenge for them. Horticulture is my life, almost my sense of identity, but it can be isolating. I've spent my own money to be involved, working on RHS Chelsea Flower Show gardens just to feel part of the industry.

From 16 I was employed on a private estate, working alone in a beautiful garden surrounded by 12-foot walls. While there was so much to appreciate, I felt so isolated. We only opened to the public for one month a year, but this is when I came alive.

At 21 I decided to stop being a prisoner in paradise and set up my own business, Pullar Horticulture. I wanted to be seen as a professional horticulturalist, not just garden maintenance. When I started, I was too cheap, I was run ragged for low paid work. By my mid 30s I felt completely burnt out. Professional equipment is expensive and only charging £10 an hour, you have to work a lot before you make any profit.

Now I've built a name for myself. I have clients who invest in their gardens, and pay me to develop them, making the most of their space. It's only taken 20 years!

A few years ago, chronic neck pain and tennis elbow made me consider throwing it all in. I had

multiple doctors' appointments and approached Perennial for support, who gave me a series of physio appointments. Eventually I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia, which explains so much. **It's only when you have health problems that you realise how vulnerable you are being self-employed.**

I needed to future-proof my career, so I'm now a part time lecturer at Dundee and Angus College. I've also set up a hort academy at a prison in Perth, to support prisoners' rehabilitation. I still do gardening but if I'm unwell I have days to recuperate, as sometimes it hits me like a train, physically and mentally.

Last year I was chosen to build a Showcase Garden as part of the Scottish Garden Design Competition at Scone Palace, with a theme of hope. I worked with a team from Castle Huntly Prison, and we won silver, but more importantly we also won the People's Choice Award. That led to a commission designing a courtyard garden for a secure children's unit including Highland and Mediterranean murals, to help young people take their mind somewhere else.

Feeling isolated working in the walled garden has given me valid insight into working with people in prison. I talk from experience and people take from it what they will. I enjoy creating opportunities, as trying new things and meeting people helps you grow.

Perennial have some really useful toolkits for self-employed people. If you would like to find out more call our helpline **0800 093 8543**.



Listening into Action

Throughout our long history we have always placed people at the heart of Perennial. By truly listening to individuals and hearing directly from employers across the industry, we've learnt how powerful real voices can be in shaping the support we provide, changing lives for the long term.

As the industry evolves, so do the ways we listen, so we can respond quickly when new challenges emerge. We do this through online surveys, focus groups, peer-to-peer conversations, industry panels and ongoing conversations with our trusted industry partners.

Over the last year we've developed our mental wellbeing offering for everyone working in horticulture, providing free **Confident Conversation webinars** created with Mental Health First Aid England. We also introduced **Penny for your thoughts**, a space for peer-to-peer support from people across the industry and our **Apprentice and Trainee survey** gave us vital insights into the pressures facing young people starting careers in horticulture.

One of our partners recently said, "People use the Perennial service more than we realise and the peace of mind it gives us, you can't buy that."

This is a reminder of the quiet, profound difference Perennial makes every day.

When you make a donation, you help turn insight into action, so we can provide practical support for people across horticulture.

Your gift ensures new and emerging needs don't go unheard.



To make a donation please visit perennial.org.uk/donate or scan QR code

What your donation could do

£25

Helps us listen

Supports ongoing engagement with the industry through feedback initiatives, panels and peer groups.

£50

Helps us learn

Helps develop our services based on what we're hearing, identifying unmet needs like grief support and help for carers, before people reach crisis.

£100

Helps us respond

Helps fund practical, frontline support and tailored advice, when people need it most.

£7.50

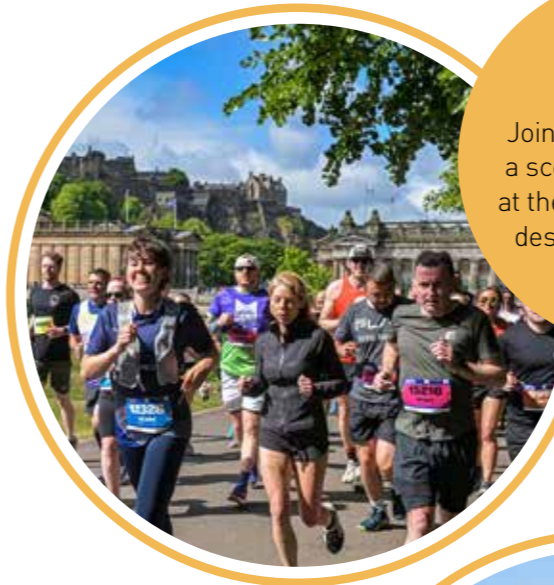
Helps us plan for the future

A regular gift keeps our services responsive to the industry. It helps us listen, learn and act quickly when new needs arise.

Ready...Set...Go! New challenge events across the country

Through our partnership with Run for Charity we are able to offer challenge events nationwide. Offering new and fun ways to support the horticultural community, while smashing your personal goals. Whether you are a seasoned athlete or taking on a challenge for the first time, our 2026 programme has events for everyone, from running and cycling to epic obstacle courses near you.

Featured Events



Edinburgh Marathon

Join 35,000 runners for a scenic, downhill route at the UK's most popular destination marathon.



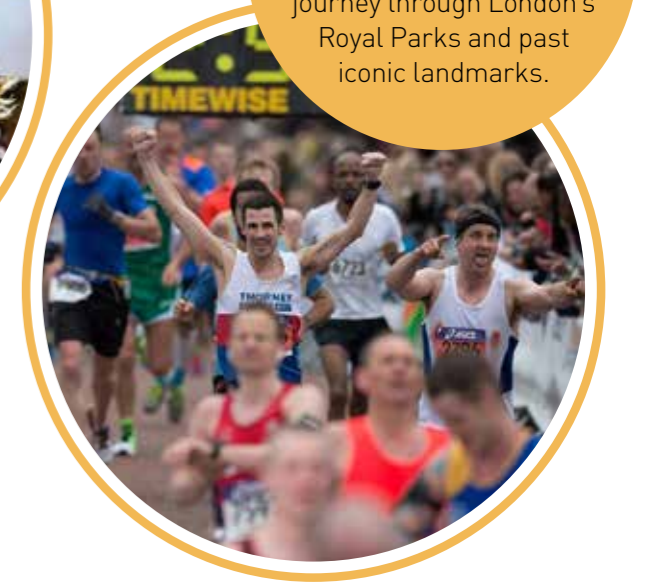
Ride Reigate

Explore the rolling Surrey countryside on a picturesque cycling sportive with 25km, 50km or 100km options.



Tough Mudder Scotland

Tackle a course that's as scenic as it is savage with your choice of 5km or 15km obstacle-filled routes.



Royal Parks Half Marathon

Experience the capital's greenest race on a stunning 13.1 mile journey through London's Royal Parks and past iconic landmarks.

Find your challenge

Browse by region and sign up for the challenge that suits you - from a 5km run to a 100km cycle ride: perennial.org.uk/challenge-events

Get in touch: to contact us directly email Eleanor at fundraise@perennial.org.uk

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you



We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported Perennial. Whether through personal donations, industry events or volunteer-led talks, your generosity is the backbone of our charity.

Your donations



We are hugely grateful to everyone who chose to donate after reading Clive's experience – your generosity raised over **£16,000** and continues to help individuals and families at the times they need support most.

Horticultural societies and Speaker Panel



Our deepest thanks to the horticultural societies and clubs who collectively raised over **£16,000** through donated income, following events such as talks from our volunteer Speakers, who raised over **£9,000** for Perennial.

You can book a speaker online at perennial.org.uk/speaker-panel

Industry support



Over the past few months, industry support has played a vital role. The British Association of Landscape Industries raised **£2,900** at the 2025 BALI Awards and The Garden Media Guild raised over **£700** at the Garden Media Guild Awards. John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance raised **£1,000** from a staff event where Perennial Trade Ambassador Mark Gregory gave a talk. We also were delighted to receive a donation of **£4,900** from The Kent Nursery Stock Group.

Pie and Pint



Members of the industry came together in January to take part in Pie and Pint – our bespoke quiz event for Partners. By testing their general knowledge, they raised over **£3,800**. It was a fantastic evening that highlighted a strong sense of community within our industry.

STIHL

We're delighted that STIHL is continuing to support us for a fantastic third year by taking on a marathon hike through the Surrey Hills.

We are proud to continue our support for Perennial, a charity whose mission aligns closely with STIHL's values and heritage. By extending our partnership with Perennial, and through our ongoing fundraising efforts, we hope to further support the horticultural community and the people who make it thrive.

Simon Hewitt, Head of Marketing at STIHL GB

To everyone who has donated, fundraised, and supported us along the way, thank you. Your continued generosity is helping Perennial make a lasting difference.



Scan the QR code to watch the video

Plants for Perennial

Our 2025 Plants for Perennial collection, from four leading wholesale nurseries in Hereford and Worcester, featured seven vibrant plants: Fuchsia, Dianthus, Nemesia, Clematis, Salvia and Hebe. Each plant brings colour, form, fragrance and wildlife to gardens while also planting a seed of hope to someone working in horticulture. Together they helped raise over **£15,000** for Perennial through wholesale sales.

For 2026, Frank P Matthews will join Plants for Perennial with a

Crab Apple Tree, 'Julia', launching to the trade at the National Plant Show in June. At the same time, Wyevale Nurseries will introduce Hydrangea 'Cherry Explosion' and Miscanthus 'Lady in Red' to the range.

Look out for a Plant for Perennial at your local garden centre this summer and help support the people who grow the gardens, parks and woodlands we all love.



Become a Perennial Partner

Join a growing community of businesses shaping the future of horticulture. As a Perennial Partner, your organisation will support people working behind the UK's green spaces. With partnership levels to suit every budget and flexible payment options, it's easy to get involved in a way that works for your company.



Partnering with Perennial shows your employees and customers a meaningful commitment to supporting everyone facing challenges in horticulture, which is clearly communicated through use of our 'Perennial Partner' logo. We can't do what we do without your help. It takes the whole industry working together to create lasting change and ensure we're there for the almost 722,000 people in horticulture when they need us most.

Together, we can make sure no one in horticulture faces unnecessary hardship alone.

Interested in partnering with us? Visit perennial.org.uk/partners to find out more.

Will you Dig Deep for Perennial?



Fundraising Lunch

Join hosts James Alexander-Sinclair and Joe Swift at Perennial's annual Fundraising Lunch

Friday 9 October | 12 noon – 4:30pm

Sponsored by



The Cumberland, Marble Arch
£160 per ticket, £1,440 per table (10th place free)

perennial.org.uk/dig-deep

Book Today

The afternoon of fun and fundraising includes:
Glass of fizz on arrival | Three-course meal with wine | Envelope Raffle | Live Auction | Silver Shovel Awards | Magician





Beauty in bloom at Perennial's Gardens

We look forward to welcoming you to the new garden season, where natural beauty combines with nature, capturing the hearts of all those who visit them. The gardens are full of fresh green foliage, with buds forming – a promise of things to come.

These gardens are a retreat for those seeking inspiration, reflection or a simple pause from general life.

Our nursery teams have been busy propagating plants so you can take a small piece of the gardens home with you and our gift shops are full of contemporary wares for that all important keepsake.

Open April to October visit perennial.org.uk/gardens for details

Celebrating 40 years of a partnership rooted in care



In 1956, Perennial launched Gardeners' Sunday, opening private gardens to support gardeners and their families. The initiative grew nationwide and merged with the NGS in 1986, with Perennial as a core beneficiary. Since the schemes merged, Perennial has received over £2.4 million from the NGS, to sustain support for horticultural professionals.

NGS Open Days at Perennial's Gardens

Fullers Mill Garden 3 May and 4 October
York Gate Garden 9 May and 27 June

The Laskett Garden

After careful deliberation, the trustees of Perennial have taken the difficult decision to close The Laskett Garden. A severe lack of parking provision unfortunately means visitor numbers cannot increase sufficiently to generate the income required for the garden to operate sustainably.

Perennial cannot continue to financially support the garden without a realistic prospect of being able to cover operational costs. As a charity we need to prioritise funds for our core purpose of providing expert services that support UK horticulturalists facing everyday and complex life challenges.

Our team of four staff and 26 volunteers have worked exceptionally hard to maintain and develop the garden and we would like to thank them for all their efforts and commitment over the years.

This does not affect Perennial's other gardens – York Gate and Fullers Mill are both open for visitors as usual.

More information is available at perennial.org.uk/ceo-message

If you need help call 0800 093 8543 or visit perennial.org.uk

Support us while you shop

Celebrate our garden birds with these vibrant greeting cards from printmaker Kat Lendacka. Blank inside, 155 x 155mm.



Goldfinch £2.60



Blackbird with Eggs £2.60



Beautifully crafted and sustainable, our traditional wooden toys from Orange Tree Toys are a real treat for the little ones.



Stacking Flower Pots £15.99
Suitable for age 18+ months.
Length 24cm



Honey Bee Stitching Kit £3.99
Wooden card and lace. Suitable for 3+ years

Niwaki are renowned for their high-quality garden tools and their gardening gloves are one of our best sellers!



Niwaki Gloves £8.00
Available in S, M, L or XL



Niwaki Garden Snips £20.00
Carbon steel, 18.3cm long

Find out more, get involved or donate at perennial.org.uk

Shop from the full range at perennial.org.uk/shop



Growbars are curated seed collections nestled in coir bars – simply unwrap, water and watch them grow! Once big enough, your seedlings can be potted on or planted out in the garden.



The Bee Bar £13.30
Hyssop, sweet rocket and cornflower seeds



The Gin Bar £13.30
Lemon basil, cucumber and purple wild bergamot seeds

The vegan Busy Bees range from Heathcote & Ivory combines uplifting honey-free fragrances with extracts of bee balm flower and manuka leaf to keep your skin feeling soft and scented.



Busy Bees Hand Cream Trio £7.00
Thyme, rose and orange blossom, 3 x 30ml



Busy Bees Shower Gel £7.00
With notes of rose and honey, 250ml

How to Order

The UK delivery charge is £3.95; however, delivery is free for orders of £75 or over.

Online: perennial.org.uk/shop

Phone: 0800 093 8792 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

Post: Please note down the items you would like, together with your name, address and phone number, and include either a cheque payable to Perennial or your card details to cover the items and postage. Send your order to: Perennial, 115-117 Kingston Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 7SU.

Goods will normally be sent out within 5 working days. Returns will only be accepted within 28 days of delivery and must be in original packaging.



Get involved

There are lots of different ways for everyone to support Perennial – whether you are visiting one of our gardens, doing an event with friends and colleagues or supporting us as an organisation. If you have your own ideas, we would be happy to support you – just call us on **01372 373962**.



Fundraise for us

Organise your own activity

perennial.org.uk/fundraise



Exclusive Garden Tours

Book a unique garden experience

perennial.org.uk/garden-tours



Dig Deep

Book a seat at our fundraising lunch

perennial.org.uk/dig-deep



Donate

Make a difference to people in horticulture

perennial.org.uk/donate



Perennial Partnership Scheme

Sign your business up to become a partner

perennial.org.uk/partners



Friends of Perennial

Entry with a guest to Perennial's gardens

perennial.org.uk/friends



Donate

perennial.org.uk/donate



Visit

perennial.org.uk



Helpline

0800 093 8543*

* Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-4.30pm and Thursday 10am-4.30pm. Excludes bank holidays.

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Perennial

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