



HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

# SCHOOL GARDENING FOR WELLBEING



**SPACE TO STIR AND BE STIRRED**

TOWER OF LONDON • HAMPTON COURT PALACE • BANQUETING HOUSE  
KENSINGTON PALACE • KEW PALACE • HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE AND GARDENS



# THRIVE 1978- 2021

We are a national charity using gardening to bring about positive changes in the lives of people living with disabilities or ill health, or who are isolated, disadvantaged or vulnerable.

Within our gardens we use an approach called Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH).



# PEOPLE AND GARDENS



[www.thrive.org.uk](http://www.thrive.org.uk)

[www.carryongardening.org.uk](http://www.carryongardening.org.uk)



# SUPERBLOOM

This presentation provides an introduction:

- Explore why gardening in schools is a positive addition to school life.
- Learn and be inspired by how plants can provide learning and wellbeing.
- Plan how to develop a wellbeing garden within your school.

You will also receive:

- Superbloom seed packs
- Additional online resources, supporting teachers regardless of gardening experience (from Spring 2022)

# Why gardening?

- Time in nature is good for you.
- It restores attention and mental capacity through the alleviation of mental fatigue and stress.
- It produces positive emotional responses, increased serotonin and reduction in cortisol. Our mood improves and we self report improved feelings of wellbeing.

[BRAGG, R., ATKINS, G. 2016. *A review of nature-based interventions for mental health care.* Natural England Commissioned Reports, Number204.]

# Why gardening?

1. Positive emotions (including feelings of happiness and satisfaction)
2. Interpersonal well-being (including positive connections with others and with nature)
3. Self-esteem (including positive self-concept and perceived competences)
4. Behaviour (including expressions of empathy and cooperation)

[Dyg, P.M., Wistoff, K., (2018). *Wellbeing in school gardens - The case of the Gardens for Bellies food and environmental education program*. Environmental Education Research, 24(8), 1177-1191]

Similar evidence can be found to corroborate these findings from school gardening, although criticisms of a lack of quantitative evidence can also be found.

# Why gardening?

The Avenue School Reading is a SEND academy for 2–19 year-olds.

Thrive have worked with the school to enable contact with nature and gardens.

Pupils visit Thrive and we provide sessions within their school as part of our Pots and Petals programme.

“A positive happy experience for the whole group.”



# What type of school garden?

- Will the garden activities be linked to the curriculum?
- Will the garden activities be respite from planned learning?
- Will the garden activities support specific children identified as needing additional support?
- Will the garden activities be focussed to support children for specific development, wellbeing or behavioural outcomes?



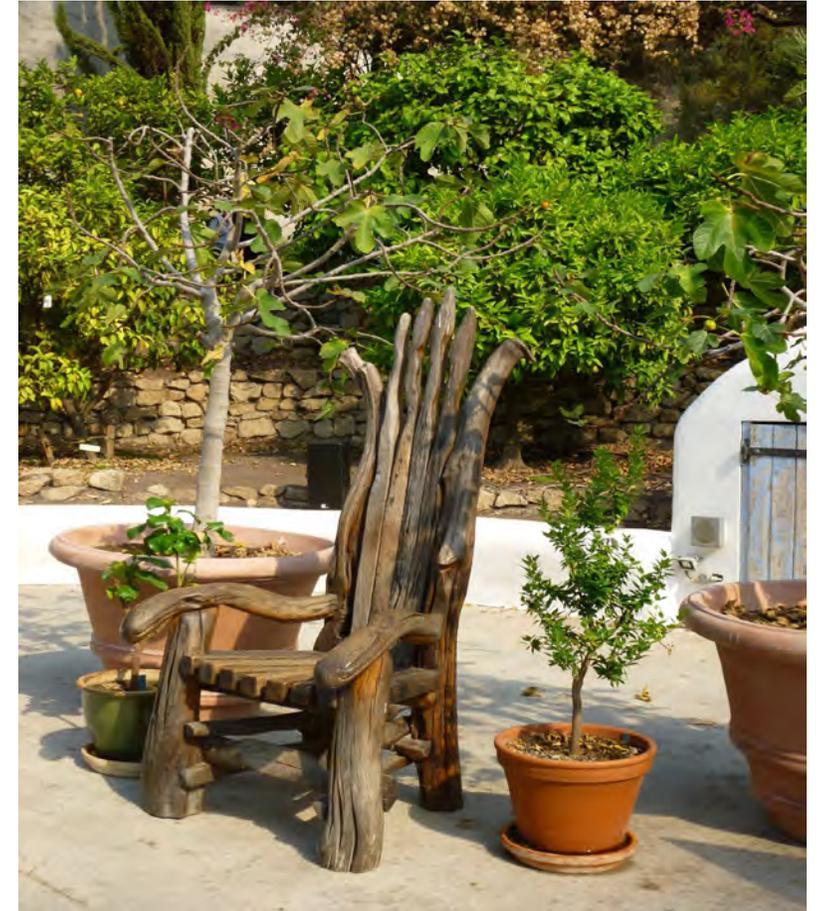
# Gardens to support the curriculum

- Linked to specific curriculum areas
- Lesson plans and resources to support curriculum attainment
- May need additional teaching resources
- May need additional structures or design considerations to be used in inclement weather



# Gardening as respite

- Can support children to return to class and focus better
- Creates exploratory opportunities
- Enables passive as well as active engagement
- Could be led by non-teaching staff or TAs
- Will you want to monitor its effect?



# Gardening to support children with identified needs

- In schools with larger groups of children with SEND or BESD needs it may be a time set aside for them as a group.
- It can be an opportunity for them to have time where their strengths and qualities can shine in their class groups.
- It could be used as and when it is identified as needed, a place to go when frustration in the classroom becomes too much.
- It can be used to teach numeracy and literacy in practical and less abstract ways.



# Gardens focussed to achieve outcomes

- Can focus on individual developmental or curriculum targets
- Reduces the repetition of methods used inside the class
- Can support motivation to succeed
- Utilises the environment and flexibility of gardening: e.g. counting pots and seeds, measuring space, labelling, working together, problem solving, seed sowing and deadheading for fine motor skills, wheelbarrow and long-handled tools for balance, strength and stamina.



# **Making choices and implementing your garden approach**

- Can be done organically, allowing the ways you use the garden to develop as you observe and understand how it is working for pupils.
- Will require support from across the school and, in particular, from senior teachers.
- May require some structuring of timetables to achieve more specific use.
- Will require thinking about who leads, and if a group overseeing the garden needs to come together.
- May benefit from volunteer support.

# The wondrous opportunities of nature



# Superbloom seed pack

- *Anethum graveolens*, Dill
- *Centaurea cyanus*, Cornflower
- *Atriplex hortensis*, Red Orache
- *Eschscholtzia californica*, Californian Poppy
- *Helipterum roseum*, Daisy Whites

# FAQs

Here are some questions teachers often ask us:

## **Q. How much space do we need?**

Gardens can be squeezed into any space, although 6m<sup>2</sup> is the total area your Superbloom seed pack will cover

## **Q. Can a garden be made in just containers?**

Yes, although you may need some larger and deeper ones.

## **Q. Which tools do we need?**

The basic kit we recommend includes a trowel, hand fork, kneeler and bucket.

## **Q. What if we don't have any budget for tools/equipment?**

Try your local supermarket branches and DIY shops for donations of materials like tools and compost.

## **Q. How do we work out where to develop a garden?**

Spend a few days taking notice of the school grounds, e.g. look for where it's sunniest and free from strong wind. On the internet you can find instructions how to test soil simply by squeezing a handful.

## **Q. How do we start our garden?**

If appropriate, get your pupils involved in some way from the start. You could arrange a day for families and friends to help with the heavier work, like digging up the ground.

# Resources to support you

Available online from Spring 2022:

- A **Gardening Manual** about sowing your seeds and maintaining your garden
- **Lesson Packs** supporting PSHE, Science (biodiversity), English, Art, and History, with themes linked to the Superbloom project
- Online **sharing platform** where schools will share stories and images during the Superbloom project

