

Newsletter Winter 2021

Welcome to this Winter edition of the newsletter. We start the new year in Lockdown Three, wondering how things will turn out. Nature, gardening and friendships will keep us going. However, we've taken the decision to pause Therapeutic Horticulture and our Martineau Mondays for a few weeks until we feel it is safe to begin again. Some staff are furloughed with a

smaller crew looking after the Gardens and keeping in touch with our volunteers. Yet this time around, Martineau Gardens is in a stronger position and we wanted to share our optimism for 2021 with you, reflecting on good news and our plans for the future here at Martineau Gardens. Until we can open our gates to you again, we wish you well.

Gill Milburn, CEO



Help Martineau Gardens to flourish in 2021

We need your help more than ever. Please donate to our current campaign to help us to carry on so that we can still be the hope in many people's lives. **Please donate here:** <https://localgiving.org/treedressing>



Winter sun and frost in the Courtyard Garden
Photocredit: F McCabe

Good news—shelter from the storm



Pictured here, (L) Broad bean seedlings (R) Volunteers making seasonal wreaths in the dry space of the Keder greenhouse, but only space for a few to work safely at a time.

With Covid restrictions continuing into 2021 and in anticipation of frost, rain, or freezing fog, we have been considering our options for January and beyond. Gardening together on the Therapeutic Horticulture programme is a mainstay of many volunteers' lives, and maintaining safe space indoors is key to facilitating winter work. The lack of dry (leakproof) working zones was a problem we were struggling with, when we were contacted by Mind with a generous offer from the Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund. Happily, we can now repair the potting shed roof, provide a dedicated wood chopping area with cover, and continue to employ additional staff to facilitate the smaller working groups. Whilst at time of writing volunteering is paused, on their return volunteers

can look forward to dodging the wind and rain as they plant seeds in preparation for spring planting out, propagate plants for our sales area or repair outdoor furniture ready for the better weather when we hope to be able to welcome many more visitors to the Gardens.

Did you know? As a permitted 'support' group, Martineau Gardens can deliver Therapeutic Horticulture with up to 15 individuals - the Coronavirus Mental Health Response Fund is enabling us to create safe space so we can continue to do this, when the time is right and safe to do so.

Update on public access

Please look out for updates from us to you, via email or check the coronavirus statement on our website for the latest position: bit.ly/3gP7C44

Martineau Mondays postponed until further notice



Sparkles of frost Photocredit: J Bradshaw

What is Martineau Gardens? Our Therapeutic Community Garden is looked after by Volunteers, many of whom have mental health issues or learning disabilities. Outside of the pandemic, hundreds of school children visit the Gardens to learn about science and the environment. Every year, Birmingham people (in their thousands) visit the Gardens to enjoy its peace and tranquillity. We host events and courses and sell plants and produce.

Restoring Shipwreck play area



As reported last issue, our funding from Persimmon Homes' Building Futures scheme will enable us to work on redeveloping the children's play area. The much-used sandpit has seen better days—and so, on a cold day, in the dwindling light of December, renovations got under way. Volunteers have now dug out the sand (and found a few 'buried treasures' along the way, *pictured right above*), and have filled in the hole with soil. In time, we hope to restore the popular Wheelhouse, create a new sandpit and furnish with eco-friendly play equipment – the refurbishment will be in keeping with our commitment to consider the environment and wildlife in all we do.

Tree dressing - one week left to give

Whilst we are delighted that we have received funding to continue the Therapeutic Horticulture programme during the pandemic, as reported overleaf, we need your help more than ever to help us meet 'behind the scenes' costs, so that Martineau Gardens can continue to flourish. Our fundraising Garden Party which generates significant funds thanks to the generosity of local residents and businesses was cancelled due to Covid. Please will you donate to our **Tree Dressing campaign** to help us bridge the gap in the final days of this fundraising push?



Donate online here: <https://localgiving.org/treedressing>

Gardening joy



Pictured here, one of our Friday volunteers having a very satisfying gardening moment.



Pat is particularly interested in seed saving, and has the skill and patience to reap success. Back in Summer 2019 Pat extracted the seeds from a punnet of expensive and tasty tomatoes she had enjoyed eating. She dried and stored the seed which were then sown just before March lockdown in 2020. Once germinated, Pat planted them in troughs in the Keder house and has tended to them ever since. By early summer, the plants were being raised in the Keder house - providing a delicious and sweet, pale orange fruit. Pat picked the final tomatoes in December. Full story and more images here: bit.ly/35coONG

Jam maker, record breaker!



Taking up the mantle from Jean Fletcher, volunteers Caroline Hutton (our former Director) and Glenys Thomas (Trustee) have been visiting the gardens almost weekly to pick fruit through the seasons. Caroline's preserving pan has been in constant use - fruit has been stewed and simmered to create the content for the Martineau Gardens 'Jam Emporium'. In early January Caroline delivered her 228th jar to the Gardens: Apple Chutney.

Our thanks to Caroline for this. [Click here for full story & pictures:](#)



Photocredit: C Hutton

Connect with us ...



How to contact us
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Opening Hours

For current details, please read our latest statement here: <http://bit.ly/33CbtMK>