



Our work in 2014



Introduction

This Annual Review covers the year 2014 and reflects a positive upturn for Garden Organic.



Like many charities, Garden Organic struggled during the recession, spending more than it earned to protect key services for organic growing and gardening. That situation has now been resolved, and after a very modest deficit in 2013, the charity returned to a healthy surplus in 2014, confirmed by the figures contained in this review.

We had a positive year across the board in 2014, getting out and about to shows, exhibitions and events the length and breadth of the country to meet members, supporters and new organic growers, and to consult with these groups as widely as possible. From Scotland to Kent, from Salford to Norfolk, we connected and engaged with a variety of audiences.

Our return to financial health allows us to plan and invest for the future. We intend to be more active across the whole of the United Kingdom, bringing organic best practice and knowledge to growers and gardeners as conveniently as possible. Our work in educating and informing new audiences continues to expand – from primary schools to prisons – and with the key organic health and wellbeing agendas at the heart of our work.

Commitment to plants, people and communities – raising the banner for the organic way – continues to lie at the centre of all that we do. This Annual Review provides in-depth analysis and detail on all our activities, and I hope you will find it a rewarding read.



James Campbell
Chief Executive

Garden Organic brings together thousands of people who share a common belief – that organic growing is essential for a healthy and sustainable world. Through campaigning, advice, community work and research, our aim is to get everyone growing the organic way.

Our vision is of a healthy and sustainable world that has embraced organic growing.

Our purpose is to get more people growing organically.

Our mission is to promote and advance the use of organic growing with its benefits for plants, people and communities.

Patron: HRH The Prince of Wales, KG, KT, GCB

President: Professor Tim Lang, PhD, FFPH

Vice-Presidents: Thelma Barlow, Raymond Blanc and Susan Hampshire

Chair of Trustees: Roger Key



Breckland Master Gardeners plant seedlings with visitors at the Festival on the Farm 2014 in Norfolk.

This Annual Review is kindly sponsored
by NFU Mutual

Contents

Sustainable Communities 4
Creating healthy and sustainable communities

Feature 6
Encouraging home composting

Education 8
Discovering the organic way

Feature 10
Food Growing Schools: London

Heritage Seed Library 11
New opportunities for heritage varieties

Feature 12
Save Our Seeds Campaign

Appeals 13
How your donations are helping us grow

Feature 14
Our next step for sharing knowledge

Finance 16
Our financial performance in 2014

Membership 17
Members' update

Chief Executive 18
Looking to the future

To learn more about Garden Organic's work and help us to grow even more ...

Website:
www.gardenorganic.org.uk

Email:
enquiry@gardenorganic.org.uk

Facebook:
GardenOrganicUK

Twitter:
@gardenorganicuk

Headquarters:
Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry, CV8 3LG

Just prefer to talk? Call us on 024 7630 3517.

Design and print by Right Click Creative Ltd.



Every order from The Organic Gardening Catalogue helps to support Garden Organic's vital work. Order online at www.organiccatalogue.com or call 01932 253666.

Creating healthy and sustainable communities

Our food growing and composting programmes continued to go from strength to strength during 2014. These projects are working with many different groups in the community, but they all have at their core the promotion and advancement of the organic message.



Attendees at our National Volunteer Masters Conference 2014.

Garden Organic Master Gardener programme

As the Local Food (Big Lottery) funding for our Master Gardener Programme came to an end in March 2014, we took the opportunity to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our volunteers. Since the project started in 2010, 609 Master Gardeners have been trained and they have given regular support to 5,949 people to grow their own food. These dedicated volunteers have contributed more than 26,700 hours of their time and had more than 77,000 food growing conversations in the wider community. To offer an in-depth insight into the health, social and environmental impacts of the Master Gardener Programme, we published a booklet called 'Growing for Health and Happiness' at the end of 2014. For more see www.mastergardeners.org.uk.

Moving on from the Local Food funding, we managed a successful transition of the Master Gardener networks into becoming Public Health

commissioned interventions in the local areas. Together with commissions in some new areas, we ended the year working with Master Gardener networks in seven areas of England. Our programmes in the London Boroughs of Camden and Islington, Warwickshire, Lincolnshire, Breckland, Medway, Leicestershire and at HMP Rye Hill, near Rugby, are all funded by Public Health.

The Rye Hill Garden Project

At HMP Rye Hill, offenders recovering from substance misuse have been taking part in our first Master Gardener Programme run in a prison. The Rye Hill Garden Project is delivered in conjunction with Substance Misuse Services and G4S, which operates the prison, and it is funded by Public Health England (Northamptonshire). The main aims are to assist offenders' personal recoveries and to improve their health and wellbeing, whilst allowing them to develop new skills and progress towards lives free

from reoffending. The success of the programme at HMP Rye Hill has been independently evaluated by Coventry University. It reports that participants in the garden project have experienced a wide range of benefits, including noticeable improvements in their physical and emotional health, social wellbeing, skills and employability. To read the report visit www.gardenorganic.org.uk/rye-hill.

Garden Organic Master Composter Programme

Our Master Composters are volunteers who spend time promoting home composting in their local community, encouraging householders to take up composting and ensuring that those already composting do so effectively. Garden Organic delivers this national volunteer scheme in partnership with a wide range of local authorities and waste companies. During 2014, we supported 538 active Master Composters, working in collaboration with ten local authority

areas in England. Together, the Master Composter volunteers contributed a total of 5,066 volunteer hours promoting home composting in their local communities during 2014 (for more see p6).

Grow and Eat

Grow and Eat is a one-year project funded by Warwickshire County Council and Orbit Housing Association. It has focused on the users, staff and volunteers of food banks in the Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick districts, and has aimed to improve their knowledge and skills around food growing, healthy eating, cooking and a healthy lifestyle (provided by food growing). The approach has included developing and piloting different growing workshop sessions within food banks, providing basic food growing training for staff and volunteers, and developing a resource kit for them to use with clients.

A food bank user said: "It's lovely to see the plants in yoghurt pots and cuttings in a jam jar, because we can do that at home - it looks so easy."

To date, 32 workshop sessions have been delivered across 10 food bank locations. These sessions have focused on encouraging people to grow winter salads, herbs, summer produce, sprouting beans, microgreens, some exotic crops and edible flowers. In order to minimise any barriers to growing, we have encouraged people to grow in containers using the spaces they have available, such as windowsills. Food bank staff, volunteers and clients have been encouraged to take away plants in pots, grow them on at home and then eat them. To date, almost 200 food bank clients and 90 staff/volunteers have engaged with the project and taken plants, growing cards and recipes away to try.

Growing exotic and unusual crops

Our Sowing New Seeds project has enabled communities across the Midlands to grow exotic crops and, thanks to funding from the Patsy Wood Trust, we were able to develop and extend aspects of this project in 2014. Activities centred around practical training events, providing opportunities for people to learn about growing and using multicultural crops. One of these involved a highly successful series of courses for young people to learn about growing multicultural crops for niche markets. Attendees came from a wide range of backgrounds, including students from horticultural colleges and clients from Coventry refugee centre, and from many different cultures (the UK, Japan, Iran, India and Eritrea). This funding from the Patsy Wood Trust also allowed us to maintain our exotic plant and seed collections, and our Exotic Garden at Ryton for their ongoing use as educational resources.

Grow Clyde Road

Grow Clyde Road was set up to support residents of Peabody's Clyde Road estate in Haringey, London, through the creation of an active gardening group. Peabody is one of the oldest and largest housing providers in London, owning and managing more than 27,000 homes across the capital that house around 80,000 residents. In 2014, a Garden Organic sessional



Residents get growing on the Clyde Road estate.

worker supported residents to plan, establish and maintain productive growing areas within the estate. She helped them to take ownership of the project and get involved from the start in the decision-making process.

This project consisted of a series of weekly gardening workshops, covering a variety of topics related to food growing. The gardening group reclaimed two large communal growing beds for edible crops, and installed a large potting shed to turn into a beautifully decorated hub for the project. By the end of the summer, the residents had harvested and enjoyed eating lots of delicious, fresh lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, beetroot, herbs, peas, runner beans and strawberries. This gardening group has also helped to break down barriers between different social and ethnic groups on the estate. It has brought them together in a sociable, fun and interactive way, and fostered a greater sense of belonging and community cohesion.

Growing Health

Growing Health is a national project run jointly by Garden Organic and Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming. Growing Health's vision is that community food growing should be a natural part of health service provision. Following a successful first phase, The Tudor Trust agreed to provide additional funding for continued support of the Growing Health network. In the second phase, we will continue to support community food growing groups to develop links with the health service and gain commissions for their activities - addressing the barriers that they are currently facing. We will also continue to: raise awareness among commissioners and health professionals about the benefits of using community food growing as part of health service provision; broaden the evidence base for the benefits of food growing for health; and expand Growing Health communications activities to a wider audience.

Encouraging home composting

Composting is a cornerstone of sustainable living. That is why Garden Organic has been working to develop composting techniques and promote home composting for more than 15 years.



Master Composters receiving training at Ryton.

The pioneering work of our Sustainable Communities Team in establishing Master Composter schemes across the country, and training home composting/recycling advisors, has helped to bring composting into the mainstream. The Garden Organic Master Composter Programme is based on cascade learning, whereby volunteers are given training and then supported to go out into their local communities to promote home composting. The role of a Master Composter involves encouraging householders to take up composting and ensuring that those already composting are doing so effectively. These volunteers come from many backgrounds and age groups, but their unifying feature is their enthusiasm for encouraging more environmentally friendly waste management practices.

How it works

The Garden Organic Master Composter Programme was established in 2001. With so much experience, we are able to offer a wide range of services and resources that local authorities or NGOs (non-governmental organisations) wishing to establish a Master Composter scheme can buy into. Garden Organic offers the technical expertise necessary for the scheme, and provides various options for the day-to-day operational support of the volunteers. We supply introductory and in-service training courses, promotional resources, and a technical support package of information and advice on home composting. Through these services, we are able to provide both reactive and proactive support to volunteers to maintain their enthusiasm for the Master Composter scheme.

Volunteer achievements

We are currently supporting 538 Master Composters, working in collaboration with ten local authority areas in England. These are Norfolk, Suffolk, Leicestershire, Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Solihull and Coventry. Each year, we are astounded by the contributions that these volunteers make to the programme.

During 2014, these dedicated volunteers recorded a staggering 5,066 volunteer hours. That is 5,066 hours spent promoting home composting in local communities around the UK. County shows, village fetes, school open days, open gardens, parish magazines, online blogs, community gardens, demonstration sites - our Master Composters have been there! Over the year, we estimate that these volunteers communicated with at least 20,000 people.

Our Master Composters recorded 5,066 volunteer hours in 2014.

Sharing skills

Each year, we hold a National Volunteer Masters Conference at our charity's Warwickshire headquarters, Ryton Organic Gardens. This gives our volunteers an opportunity to learn about new organic techniques and research through a series of talks and workshops, whilst sharing best practice and networking with other volunteers in the Masters schemes. 150 volunteer Master Composters and Master Gardeners from across the country came to the last conference in June 2014, which was kindly sponsored by NFU Mutual and Straight



Worcestershire Master Composter Jeremy Thomas

Worcestershire Master Composter Jeremy Thomas says: "I was first attracted to the Master Composter scheme after a number of years spent volunteering with varying degrees of satisfaction with several very different organisations, so I came to it with not a little scepticism – how would it work, be

managed, be effective, and so on? And would I ever learn to make good compost, after so many years of trying? Now as I start my 8th year as a Master Composter, I can definitely recommend it to anyone who is actively interested in gardening, and meeting and talking with like-minded people."

Plc. The National Volunteer Masters Conference 2015, which will again be sponsored by NFU Mutual, will be held on 19 September.

Building on success

Our Master Composter Programme will continue to expand and develop throughout 2015 with training opportunities for new volunteers in many of our existing networks. We also hope to expand the reach of these programmes by launching new partnerships, in new geographical areas with local authorities and non-governmental organisations. Support for individual Master Composter volunteers will continue to improve, and we will be developing our knowledge and resource base throughout the year through various campaigns.

As part of International Compost Awareness Week (May 4 to 10), we produced a range of resources

focused on the creatures active within the composting process – these are free to download from www.homecomposting.org.uk. And later in the year, we will be unveiling an exciting Creature Trail within the Compost and Soil Fertility Garden at Ryton Organic Gardens. This trail will be designed to take you through the composting process, highlighting the bacteria, fungi and invertebrates populating your bin or heap. During 2015, we will also continue to support the creation of compost demonstration areas across the UK; working examples set up by our Master Composters that show people the various ways in which they can compost at home.

2015 has been declared as the 'International Year of Soils' by the United Nations General Assembly. So throughout the year we will also be spreading the word about the importance of soil health, and how we can safeguard our soils by

growing organically. In particular, Garden Organic will be spreading the message that garden compost and green manures - used as part of an organic growing regime - can ensure soils remain healthy and fertile. We will be producing a Soil Information Pack and will make this available both online and as a hard copy for groups, volunteers and gardeners around the country.

The future of home composting

Since our Master Composter programme started, we have seen great shifts in the waste industry; not least the increasing importance being placed on waste as a resource. A much greater emphasis has been put on targets to reduce waste being sent for disposal, and to increase reuse and recycling rates. General waste collections have reduced in frequency, whereas separate household food waste collections have increased to serve the ever expanding anaerobic digestion industry, which uses this waste to produce biogas and biofertilizers.

There can be no argument that moves have been made in the right direction, but at Garden Organic we believe that there is still much more to be done. The benefits of dealing with organic waste at home still far outweigh those of resource hungry, mechanical centralised processes. Our Master Composters are playing a vital role in encouraging fellow residents in their local communities to take responsibility for their waste, and to compost at home.

A home compost bin can divert 150 kilograms of waste per household, per year, according to figures produced by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

Discovering the organic way

Our charity's aim is to get more people growing organically, so this is the focus of our education projects. We want everyone involved to experience the benefits of growing food, learning about the environment and taking part in healthy, hands-on activities.

FfLP



A pupil looking forward to his healthy lunch at a Food for Life Partnership school.

Food Growing Schools: London

This initiative, managed by Garden Organic, aims to support every school in London to become a food growing school. Our goal is to bring together all of the components for a successful and sustainable food growing project. This includes volunteers, resources, support for linking growing to the school curriculum, and links to local businesses.

Food Growing Schools: London was funded by the Big Lottery Fund and The Mayor's Office in autumn 2013 for three years. This partnership involves Garden Organic, the Royal Horticultural Society, Morrisons (Let's Grow), Capital Growth, Food for Life Partnership (FfLP), School Food Matters and Trees for Cities working together to support the aims of the project (for more see p10).

Increase Your School Meal Take Up

Garden Organic is one of five

charities involved in the Food for Life Partnership, which has been commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to support the delivery of the Government's School Food Plan in the Midlands, London and the North. An independent School Food Plan report highlighted that the key to a viable school meals service is not reducing food costs, but increasing overall take up so that money goes further.

The DfE responded to this report with £4.8 million of funding nationally, which led to the launch of the 'Increase Your School Meal Take Up' programme in September 2014. This programme is designed to kick-start an increase in school meal numbers and ensure that more children benefit from a healthy lunch, including those pupils who qualify for free school meals. It will also equip schools with the ideas, clear actions and evidence needed as part of Ofsted's new inspection framework around healthy eating and positive food culture. The programme brings together the whole school community - leaders, cooks and students - to develop fresh ideas around school meals, and it includes free training, action plans and expert regional support.

Garden Organic is working with schools in the West Midlands to develop individual support packages that meet schools' needs - whether they feel that they just need some new ideas or are starting out on a journey to Michelin-standard school meals! These packages will include specially designed resources, workshops and practical cooking sessions on a 'Cooking Bus' to share what schools have achieved and inspire change.

This support is available to junior, middle, secondary and SEN (Special Educational Needs) schools and PRUs (Pupil Referral Units) and many have already registered for this help. This

year will see a programme of activities, training and events to kick-start changes to school meal provision and support schools on their journey to transforming school food culture. For more information visit www.foodforlife.org.uk/takeup.

National training for schools

In 2014, we delivered 28 organic growing training sessions, and developed training sessions for early years settings. The training we offer ranges from starting organic growing in a school to getting down to the nitty-gritty of how to produce the best compost.

We are flexible in what we can offer schools. We are continuously developing our training offers, so they are engaging, worthwhile and cover exactly what teaching professionals need. We are developing several new training sessions to take forward to the rest of 2015 and beyond. These will capture the most recent changes to the National Curriculum, and interpret them in a way that links organic growing to new and existing areas of the curriculum in a fun and informative way.

Social and therapeutic horticulture

Horticultural therapy can help to build confidence, improve communication and social skills, facilitate new learning and, of course, provide healthy food too. Garden Organic has two organic horticultural therapy projects running at Ryton Organic Gardens - Growing Enterprise and Growth. Both of these have continued to flourish over the past year.

Students who attend our Growing Enterprise project have learning difficulties and/or challenging behaviour. Students from seven local schools and colleges have enjoyed learning about growing food

Participants in the Growth project with Education Officer Elaine Hibbs and national award-winning volunteer Eric Barnes (both centre-left).



organically and looking after Garden Organic's wildlife. The enterprising activities carried out during their weekly sessions help the students develop many important skills and complement their studies, and often help to meet requirements for educational qualifications. Recent activities have included selling vegetables, plants, soups, grow kits and fresh salad bags, all made with their own harvests.

During the summer holidays, two students from Brooke School, Rugby, were also given work experience opportunities and this year a student from Arc School, Nuneaton, is excited to be joining us. Growing Enterprise is sponsored by The Daylesford Foundation and The Sheldon Trust.

Our Growth project, working with adults with learning difficulties and/or health conditions, had a fantastic growing season in 2014, with plenty of harvests to enjoy. They often had a surplus, which was used by the chef at Fusca, the café at Ryton Organic Gardens. The highlight of the year for the Growth team was taking some of their produce and crafts to The West

Midlands Network Flower Show in Stourbridge. This show was attended by around 20 horticultural therapy projects from all over the region and, despite some very high quality entries in the competition, the Growth team very proudly won seven medals for their work.

We are very grateful to the volunteers who continue to support both of our

horticultural therapy projects, with ten dedicated individuals helping regularly on sessions throughout the year. This includes Garden Organic's longest serving volunteer, Eric Barnes, who won The Great British Growing Awards' Garden Volunteer of the Year 2015.

Ryton Organic Gardens

During 2014, we worked to make some changes in the garden to help us support the delivery of our organic messages. This included replanting the entrance garden. In this area, we showcase some key organic methods including; no-dig gardening, pest and disease management, and crop rotation.

We hosted educational visits for local schools at Ryton Organic Gardens in 2014. We also held a wider range of courses for visitors than in previous years. Following feedback from our members and the general public, we offered courses such as Earth Oven Cookery and Natural Christmas Decorations, alongside organic growing sessions such as Compost Magic and Seed Saving. Over the next year, we are looking forward to delivering an even more varied programme of courses which will include some delivered by staff from the Centre for Alternative Technology.



Our Growth horticultural therapy

James, who has been attending our Growth horticultural therapy sessions since 2003, says "It's good exercise and the jobs are different every week. Coming to Growth helps me to eat healthy food because I can take home some of the fruit and vegetables that we grow. We work hard but we have a lot of fun."

Food Growing Schools: London

Food Growing Schools: London has an ambitious aim to encourage every school in London to grow its own food.

Eleonore De Bonneval



Rosie Boycott, Mayor of London Food Advisor and Thomasina Miers, former Masterchef winner, with pupils at the launch of Food Growing Schools: London, June 2014.

Garden Organic has engaged with almost 700 London schools from across 33 boroughs since the project's launch in early 2014. This has been achieved with the support of our partners Capital Growth, the Food for Life Partnership, Morrisons (Let's Grow), the Royal Horticultural Society, School Food Matters and Trees for Cities.

Engaging every London school

The ultimate aim of this project is to demonstrate how every school, and the community it serves, can benefit from food growing. To achieve this, we are helping school leaders, staff and volunteers find the skills and confidence needed to help embed growing across all school activities.

For schools, this means building stronger relationships – fostered by food - with their communities. With the support of local businesses, volunteers and other community groups, students who are helped to grow food enjoy better attainment, health and wellbeing - whilst bringing the community together for mutual benefit.

We are also working with local authorities to support schools, and

have engagement officers in every London borough. We hope to offer support and training, where required, in the School Food Plan Flagship boroughs of Lambeth and Croydon during 2015.

Working in partnership with other organisations is also crucial to achieving our goal. It enables us to create: a stronger network of support for schools; a forum for sharing and developing ideas; and a wider base for campaigning. So far our partnership work has included collaborating on events, competitions, awards schemes, volunteer activities and training.

How it works

The Food Growing Schools: London project team, led by Garden Organic, uses a diverse range of activities to engage schools and community support. Each term schools are invited to participate in new, themed activities, such as Grow Your Own Picnic, Grow Your Own Business and Grow Around the World. Each campaign comes with free resources, competitions, events, training opportunities for schools and partner collaboration.

Year-round project activities also include:

- *campaigning* at national, London and borough-wide events to ensure that the message of food growing is promoted;
- *signposting* to help schools find the information, resources and networks they need to start or develop their food growing;
- *matchmaking* to help connect schools with local networks, potential volunteers and community support;
- *developing* additional support where there are gaps in resources and training, in conjunction with our partners; and
- *engaging* with partners and local organisations to ensure the project is rolled out to as many schools as possible.

At the end of our first year, an independent evaluation by The University of West of England showed that London schools are increasing their participation in food growing, and finding our project useful in helping them to do so.

Looking ahead

Food Growing Schools: London is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and The Mayor's Office until the end of 2016. In years two and three of the project, we will continue developing support for schools and, with the help of local community and project partners, we will engage more schools that have yet to discover the many benefits of food growing.

Extensive research shows that school food growing can have a positive impact on health, the economy, education, community cohesion and the environment within the wider community. To read more about this research and the Food Growing Schools: London project visit www.foodgrowingschools.org.

New opportunities for heritage varieties

Our Heritage Seed Library (HSL) has been protecting hundreds of rare vegetable varieties for 40 years, but we are always looking for new ways to encourage more growers.

Distributing seed

We included 173 varieties from our collection in the Heritage Seed Library Catalogue 2014, with 9 varieties new to the catalogue of which 4 of these were exotic varieties. We distributed 24,000 seed packets in total, which significantly helped to conserve the varieties for the future.

With extra stocks of French beans, we invited our members to take part in a 'Great Beananza' competition, aiming to promote the use of recycled materials in the garden. This involved growing beans up recycled or reused supports and posting photographs on social media. The winner, as voted by our social media followers, was Dave Axon who supported his beans with a 'lighthouse' created from old plant pots.

We supported 33 seed swaps across the UK in 2014, supplying them with seed and promoting our work to visitors. We also attended 'Seedy Sunday' in Brighton and 'The Great Seed Festival' at The Garden Museum in London, which was part of our events supported by the EU-funded Leonardo programme.

Towards the end of the year, we developed a new format for our Heritage Seed Library Catalogue 2015 and an online ordering service, which was very well received by members. We included 175 varieties from our collection, including 21 varieties new to the catalogue. We distributed nearly 26,000 seed packets in total, and more than 1,400 members took advantage of the new online system, helping to minimise our administration costs.

Growing in 2014

At Ryton Organic Gardens, we grew 144 varieties of 26 different genus/species and 5 pre-accessions to assess. Most of these varieties were for HSL stock, with some for the 2015 catalogue, and some seedlings and plants grown for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show and Gardeners World Live.

Our Historic and Botanic Garden Bursary Scheme student, Claire Moore, grew a display of seeds from our partners in the European Union funded Grundtvig and Leonardo programmes, in The Heritage Seed Library garden at Ryton. Claire also looked at improving pollination in the polytunnels. Currently, we use flies to pollinate some of our crops but last year, supported by the University of Birmingham, we looked at mason bees as an alternative for the early flowering varieties.

We also promoted our HSL varieties by supplying seed to many organisations including: Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons, Oxfordshire, for its National Heritage Garden; BBC Two's programme 'Kew on a Plate'; Kew's Wakehurst Place, West Sussex, for its 50th anniversary; Gorgie City Farm, Edinburgh; Buckingham Nursery and Garden Centre; and Delfland Nurseries for Garden Organic's Heritage Tomato Collections available through www.organicplants.co.uk.

Seed Guardians

We currently have 195 Seed Guardians. We recruited 32 new guardians in 2014, who will be supporting us for the first time this year. Seed Guardians returned a total of 340 batches of

seeds to us in 2014. This equates to over 34,000 seed packets, which is considerably higher than the previous three years. We produce an 'Orphans List' each year of HSL varieties in need of seed savers and 72 of our guardians offered to grow these. We also produced newsletters for Seed Guardians in spring and summer.

Sharing knowledge

We secured the Leonardo and Grundtvig funding to improve skills and training, whilst working together with European partners. Into the second year of this funding, we attended events in Austria, Spain, Portugal and Greece. We also hosted two visits, one to Ryton, and one focusing on fruits grown in East Sussex and Kent.

We gave seed saving training as part of several events at Ryton, including our National Volunteer Masters Conference 2014, and to staff from Weavers House, Coventry. We also gave training off-site at an ecotherapy project in Swaffham, Norfolk, The Garden House in Brighton and to members of the community on the Isle of Bute. We filmed in Brighton for The Guardian's Gardening blog, and gave talks to gardening clubs in Leicester, Bidford-upon-Avon, and at Wageningen University, Holland.



Staff and volunteers cleaning seed from our heritage varieties.

Save Our Seeds campaign

A proposed European Union seed regulation, which our charity has been lobbying against for three years, has temporarily been withdrawn.

Garden Organic has been campaigning against the proposed 'Plant Reproductive Material' regulation since 2012. This new EU regulation sought to replace the existing twelve directives. The draft legislation would have seen gardeners and farmers prevented from exchanging seeds and, as a consequence, not being able to grow heritage varieties. Unlike the directives, this single regulation would not have been open to interpretation by each member government; it would have been an EU law that would have applied directly to the whole of Europe.

The proposed EU regulation led to fears that seed exchange networks, like our Heritage Seed Library, and the making available and swapping of seeds between individuals and growers, would be subject to costly annual fees, registration charges and increased bureaucracy. Faced with this threat to our seeds, bulbs and plants, we began campaigning in opposition

to such a regulation with other NGOs (non-governmental organisations).

Garden Organic formed an alliance with concerned UK organisations – including NGOs, small seed producers, plant breeders and trade associations – to work together to persuade EU officials and MEPs to reject the proposals and reinstate the previously agreed exemptions. In March 2014, the Plant Reproductive Material regulation was set before the EU Parliament and rejected with more than 1,400 amendments.

The European Parliament was then dissolved due to impending elections. However, in May 2014, the Member States' Council working group demanded that the EU Commission rebuild the proposal.

In November 2014, we joined forces with our allies from across Europe at a meeting in Vienna (following previous meetings in November 2013)

to plan our forthcoming strategy and campaigning. The meeting was hosted by Arche Noah, an Austrian NGO with similar ideals and principles to Garden Organic and also with an extensive library of heritage vegetable varieties. At the meeting, we shared updates from each organisation about what they had been actively doing in their own country and also shared plans and strategies for the coming months of campaigning. It was clear in that meeting that if we were to be effective going forward we needed to ensure that our actions were co-ordinated and carried cohesive messages.

In January this year, two options were outlined by the EU for the regulation. The first option would have seen the commissioners accept an amended, re-presented version of the rejected regulation in the work plan. So, we began campaigning for our preferred option – we wanted to see the EU conducting an impact assessment and direct consultation with stakeholders, leading to a complete rewrite of the EU seed regulation.

Following the decision to formally withdraw the proposed regulation, there has been no notification as to what will happen next, but we will keep you updated with any future developments, as and when they happen. We'd like to, once again, thank all our members who have actively supported us throughout this long campaign with donations and by lobbying MEPs.

You can also follow any updates to the Save Our Seeds campaign by visiting the news section of www.gardenorganic.org.uk or by following #saveourseeds on Twitter.



How your donations are helping us grow

We receive tremendous support from our members. Your generosity in responding to our appeals in 2014 made a real difference to what we could achieve.



Save Our Seeds campaign

We started the year by asking for support to fight a proposed European seed regulation that would have seen farmers and gardeners prevented from exchanging seeds, and could have threatened the very existence of our Heritage Seed Library. (See p.12)

The response from our supporters was overwhelming. Whether by writing to MEPs, donating money, or helping to raise awareness of the proposed legislation, our members and supporters rallied round to help us. Thanks to donations, we were able to travel to crucial meetings in Europe, and work with other organisations to lobby and influence key decision-makers. We are confident that without this support we would not have been able to achieve the positive progress detailed on p12.

Transforming lives

In 2014, we also asked for support to build on the work our horticultural therapy programme is achieving in transforming the lives of vulnerable individuals. We could see the fantastic impact these projects have on those

involved, and asked for help in taking these to a wider audience so more people can benefit.

Thanks to the money donated to this appeal, we have been able to:

- spend time developing new partnerships which will lead to a network of projects taking place across the country. One example of a potential new partnership is with Saracens Rugby Football Club in London, which is considering developing a horticultural therapy garden for its local community
- promote our work to senior social services managers and decision-makers, raising awareness of horticultural therapy as a suitable tool within this profession with the aim of securing further long-term funding
- continue our work with a land-based college to secure accreditation of the value of horticultural learning for horticultural therapy participants
- improve the facilities for those currently participating in our horticultural therapy programmes. These changes are already improving

the participants' experience, and will allow us to cater for more students in the future.

Making your money go further

A key priority for our Fundraising Team is to find efficiencies and money-saving measures within our work. To this end, we sent the Transforming Lives appeal alongside last year's Annual Review, resulting in a considerable saving on postage. We have also minimised costs by avoiding glossy appeal packs and by carrying out as much of the design work as we can ourselves. These improvements have meant that for every £1 we spent on fundraising appeals, we raised £9.04 to be spent on our vital projects. This compares very favourably with typical rates of return in the charitable sector, and it has helped us achieve a total appeal income for 2014 of £117,000, or £135,000 including Gift Aid.

Thank you for continuing to support our work - whether through a one-off donation, regular giving, topping up your membership subscription, or helping us to spread the word. Much of the work we achieve would not be possible without you.

Our next step for sharing knowledge

One of the most important elements of Garden Organic’s work is providing accurate, relevant, current and appropriate information, advice and guidance on organic horticulture to members, supporters and the wider growing public – sharing our knowledge.

Changing demand

Over the years, our charity has addressed this in different ways – in the 1950s we worked as a modest collaborative enterprise, sharing results of basic practical experiments through simple newsletters and word-of-mouth. In the 1960s, we started in a more organised way to send results to newspapers and magazines, and started to engage with the academic community. In the 1970s, supported by a new generation challenging orthodox methods, and with a media expansion which included the sitcom ‘The Good Life’, increasing numbers adopted alternative lifestyles and publications supporting this change started to reflect organic principles.

By the 1980s, HRH The Prince of Wales was actively promoting organic growing, and the ‘All Muck and Magic’ Channel 4 TV programmes had an immense impact in sharing knowledge and advice on organic growing, which continued through the 1990s as general and commercial interest expanded.

Into the new millennium, the dawn of new media exploded, and the traditional routes of print media and advice/help desks contracted as the rise of the internet and social media expanded. Multiple channels became the new mantra, with websites, Twitter, Instagram – as well as email – replacing more traditional routes to knowledge.

For HDRA/Garden Organic, the manual expansion of advice through a helpdesk at our Ryton HQ, based on years of accumulated knowledge through practical growing – at its zenith in the 1990s – began to give way to online provision, as telephone calls diminished and were replaced by email enquiries. At the same time, enquirers became less interested in generic responses, and more interested in a more

individual response tailored to specific growing environments – so that rather than wanting to know the best variety of organic carrot, for example, enquirers were increasingly interested in the right organic variety for a particular soil type in a particular location.

Accurate knowledge online

Responding to this new demand, Garden Organic has decided to establish a purpose-built online service to provide – as we have been doing since the 1950s – accurate, relevant, current and appropriate information, advice and guidance on organic horticulture to members, supporters and the wider growing public – sharing our knowledge. And we have a lot of knowledge – a great deal more than in the 1950s. This is not only our own

knowledge, but also information from a variety of other sources of organic research and practical application including:

- university research into organic horticulture (and agriculture) at home and abroad
- independent research organisations – such as the Organic Research Centre at Elm Farm in Berkshire
- information sharing from active organic growers and gardeners from across the UK.

This organic growing knowledge will be accessible through the Garden Organic website over the course of 2015, as a 21st century solution to



sharing this knowledge. We aim to return Garden Organic to our rightful place as a centre of excellence and authority on all aspects of non-commercial organic growing, which will appeal to many different users – gardeners, Garden Organic members and supporters, the media, other research institutions – indeed anyone with an interest in growing organically. It will be established not only to showcase our charity's expertise, but also, by linking with other research institutions and growers, to encourage knowledge sharing.

The information will be topical, highlighting issues currently in the news – such as the European Union Plant Reproductive Material directives, 2016 International Year of Pulses, local vs organic, food miles in metropolitan areas, and of course the summer favourite, water management in organic gardening.

Expert panel

There will further be a panel of organic growing experts – drawn from a wide spectrum of best practice – to ensure that all the information on the organic knowledge site is verified, reliable and authoritative. These will include Garden Organic experts, Bob Sherman, Margi Lennartsson and Pauline Pears, as well as renowned practitioners such as Charles Dowding, Beatrice Krehl and Lindsay Berry, and current Garden Organic and Heritage Seed Library staff, such as Anton Rosenfeld and Neil Munro. The expert panel will not only oversee the effective management of the site, but also identify key issues, trends and topics for greater focus and scrutiny.

The site will be principally web-based, via the Garden Organic website, and will have a range of information available to any internet user, but with more detailed knowledge, specific advice and one-to-one interactions available to Garden Organic and Heritage Seed Library members. Information will be added regularly, and will be refreshed and renewed on an ongoing basis to reflect current interest and information.



Putting our HSL lettuce 'Bronze Arrow' to the test against slugs

Members' Experiments 2014

Our Members' Experiments have played a vital role in Garden Organic's research and development of organic horticulture since its beginnings. Every year, hundreds of members participate by undertaking experiments in their own gardens and allotments. In 2014, three experiments were carried out by these enthusiastic organic growers:

Biochar as a soil improver

There has been a lot of interest in the use of biochar in recent years - both to improve soil fertility and as a means to sequester carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This experiment was organised in conjunction with Coventry University, as a project within the Centre for Agroecology and Food Security. Together we developed the 'Big Biochar Experiment', which was run by Oxford Biochar. We compared the performance of carrots, beetroot and cabbage grown with or without biochar.

Growing Oca or New Zealand Yam

Oca (*Oxalis tuberosa*) originated in the Andean Highlands, and was taken to other parts of the world in the 19th century as an alternative to the potato. It is now quite commonly grown in New Zealand, but it has never really become popular in Europe. Long-term members may have tried this crop when our founder Lawrence Hills investigated it, and we thought that it was time to look at it again.

Slug-resistant lettuce?

Many gardeners have a constant battle with slugs and a whole range of techniques have been suggested to minimise the problem. Our Heritage Seed Library (HSL) lettuce 'Bronze Arrow' has been reported as being particularly resistant to slug damage and we wanted to see if this really is the case in a wider range of locations. We compared Bronze Arrow with our members' standard variety of lettuce.

Results will be published within the Members' Area of our website, www.gardenorganic.org.uk, later in the year.

Our financial performance in 2014

Garden Organic finished 2014 ahead of expectations with an unrestricted surplus of £334,728, compared to a deficit of £15,032 in 2013.

This improved performance is due to a number of factors including increases in: legacy income; fees from our gardening projects, such as our Master Composter and Master Gardener schemes; and additional income earned from renting out surplus office space at our Warwickshire headquarters, Ryton Organic Gardens.

This has led to an increase in our net current assets from £86,407 to £309,508, reflecting an increase in our cash balances. During the year, we repaid £89,818 of debt.

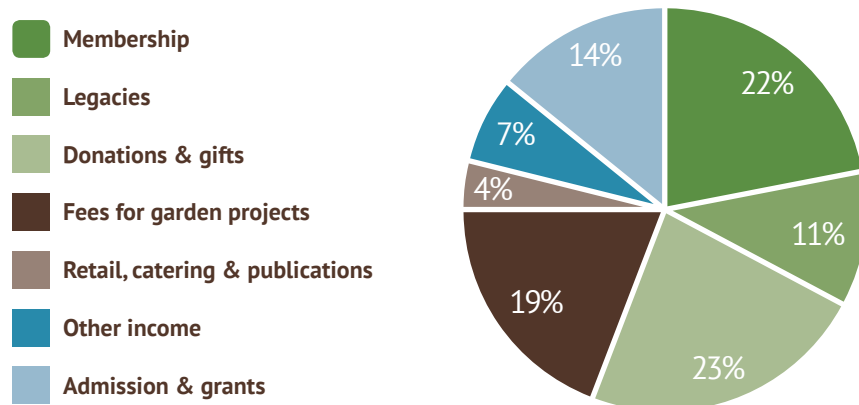
Reserves

Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of funds, and to enable the charity to cover unplanned emergency expenditure. In 2014, the Trustees reviewed the charity's reserves policy and agreed that a general reserve of £500,000 is required, which is equal to three months unrestricted, non-trading expenditure.

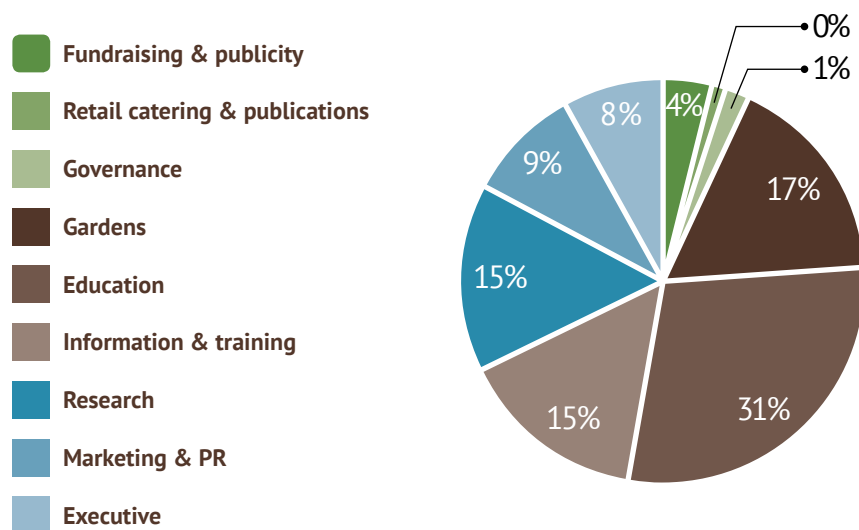
In 2014, the Trustees also established a designated fund which is ringfenced for the specific purpose of maintaining and replacing assets currently owned by the charity. This includes the maintenance of the buildings and infrastructure at Ryton Organic Gardens.

For more detailed information on our 2014 Report & Accounts, please visit www.gardenorganic.org.uk/charity-information.

Total income in 2014 - £2,795,744



Total expenditure in 2014 - £2,624,878



Garden Organic's "outstanding results" during 2014 were highlighted at our Annual General Meeting and Members' Day.

Chief Executive James Campbell shared our charity's key successes with more than 100 members attending this inspiring event at Sheepdrove Organic Farm, Berkshire, in May. Members were invited to welcome new Trustees Nicky Foster Vander

Elst and Steve Howell, who will be our Treasurer. And retiring Trustees Sally Bucknall and John Brown were thanked for contributing so much to our charity's work.

Tim Lang, Garden Organic President and Professor of Food Policy, gave a fascinating insight into the big issues facing our charity, organic growing and food security in the wake of the General Election. And keynote speaker

Lawrence Woodward OBE, Coordinator of Citizens Concerned about GM, gave a passionate talk entitled 'Time to Take Action'. After lunch, members had opportunities to learn more about our charity's projects, discuss our future plans, take tours of Sheepdrove and join in an Organic Gardeners' Question Time.

For more about this event visit www.gardenorganic.org.uk/news.

Members' update

Garden Organic's Membership Team enjoyed another productive year in 2014. We focused on how we can improve our service to members, and offer benefits that will support your organic growing - whether you're in Land's End, John O'Groats or anywhere else in-between!

At the end of 2014, we had a total of 25,733 memberships. These were held by just under 20,000 individuals, including 1,733 new memberships set up during the year from as far afield as the United States, Singapore and New Zealand. We would like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm 'organic' welcome to all our new members.

Local organic activities

In our Annual Review last year, we spoke about our desire to make organic growing support accessible to members across the UK, regardless of where they are based. We are pleased to say that since then we have added new areas to our website to promote:

- local organic groups:
www.gardenorganic.org.uk/local-groups; and
- local organic group events:
www.gardenorganic.org.uk/local-events.

We have also supported groups in going out to local events to promote organic growing, and helped signpost members to their nearest group.

The next phase of this work is currently underway. We will soon be introducing listings of local organic gardens that members can visit – some may not even be open to the general public. If you know of an inspirational organic garden in your area, please send us the details.

We also attended a number of shows in 2014 to promote organic growing. These included: The Edible Garden Show in London; RHS Chelsea Flower Show; RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show; The Home Grown Expo in Coventry; Sandringham Flower Show; West Dean Chilli Fiesta in Sussex; and Brogdale National Apple Festival in Kent.

These events gave us an ideal opportunity to talk to people who had never considered growing organically before, and to catch up with our members. Special thanks must go out to those members who helped out on these stands, your support was invaluable. We will be out and about even more in 2015, with several new shows added to the diary – visit www.gardenorganic.org.uk/events to find out more.

Thank you

In our last Annual Review, we asked you to help us further by setting up a Gift Aid declaration and by switching to Direct Debit payment. We were absolutely thrilled with your response, receiving over 1,500 new Gift Aid declarations during the year and increasing the proportion of Direct Debits up to 75% of our memberships. We can't thank you enough for this. Although these may seem like small changes to you, they have a huge impact on our charity, helping to make your money go even further. If you've not done one or either of these yet, and think you may be able to, please call 024 7630 8210 or email membership@gardenorganic.org.uk.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all Garden Organic and Heritage Seed Library members for supporting us this year. Your membership subscription plays a vital role in supporting all of the projects you've read about in this Annual Review.

Meet your membership team

Whether you've spoken to us over the phone or by email, it's always nice to put a face to a name, so here's your membership team...



Hannah Rogers
Membership Manager



Sarah Moran
Magazine Editor



Suzanne Golby
Membership Officer



Beth Cawte
Membership Officer
(maternity cover)



Becky Witcomb
Membership Officer
(currently on
maternity leave)

Contact us on 024 7630 8210 or membership@gardenorganic.org.uk

Looking to the Future

As we come out of recession and cautious optimism returns – at least in some parts of the country – we at Garden Organic are actively looking to the future, and planning for it.

Advanced motorists are taught to look up much further ahead than they are used to, identify obstacles and plan a route around them, and not to focus too much on the rear-view mirror. I doubt Jeremy Clarkson took that advice, which is possibly why the future of 'Top Gear' looks precarious as I write, but from my perspective the road ahead is fairly clear, with some very interesting opportunities to either side.

Expanding our presence into the regions, counties and cities of the wider UK will be a very important part of delivering our organic growing messages in the coming years, and I have an ambition for a network of local organic groups bringing together expert organic growers with new and aspirational gardeners who need advice in a supportive environment.

My experience of gardeners – as an active organic grower for more than 25 years – is that whether on my allotment or in my garden, fellow gardeners are more than willing to share knowledge, experience and plants – and we need to encourage and support organic gardeners to take new and converting growers under their wing.

Part of that process is about visiting gardens and getting inspiration – although I admit to a sense of personal satisfaction when I see something which I've grown looking better and healthier than that grown by the professionals – and so as we look to the future I want to create both a nationwide network of organic partner gardens, and to rejuvenate Ryton Organic Gardens back to its rightful place as the epitome of organic horticultural excellence in practice.

So what I've already started to do is to identify potential partner gardens, which need to be either Soil Association certified (not many of these) or self-certified as being grown in accordance with our Organic Guidelines (much more likely), and open to the public, with supporting information about organic growing and an experienced grower to deal with questions. Luckily, there are more and more of these across the country, and I'm confident we can build up a great network so that wherever you live, there will be an inspirational organic garden for you to visit nearby.

Ryton Organic Gardens, like many gardens, has progressed from youthful

exuberance to settled maturity, but now needs some reinvigoration and hard work to bring it back to that pinnacle of organic excellence – and we're working hard so that by the year of our Diamond Jubilee in 2018, we will be proud again of our own organic gardens and what they represent.

So the future is bright for Garden Organic, for the Heritage Seed Library, and for our broadening range of projects and activities actively promoting the benefits of organic growing.

I'm particularly proud of our work with hard-to-reach communities, taking the organic message of health and wellbeing to black and minority ethnic communities, to prisons and offenders, families using food banks, to those with mental health issues, and all those seeking to protect our organic heritage for future generations.

We will continue to work for what we believe in, and to represent you, our members and organic growing supporters, wherever necessary to secure a sustained future for organic growing and gardening.

James Campbell
Chief Executive



The inspirational Yeo Valley Organic Garden in Somerset, available for Garden Organic members to visit at a reduced rate.

NFU MUTUAL IS PROUD TO SPONSOR GARDEN ORGANIC



Taking the time to offer you an attentive and personal service for your insurance, pensions and investments.

For a quote call

0800 197 1293

(Mon-Fri 8am-8pm. Sat 9am-12.30pm)



NFU Mutual

INSURANCE | PENSIONS | INVESTMENTS

It's about time[®]

NFU Mutual Direct Limited. An appointed representative for life, pensions and investments of The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited.
For security and training purposes telephone calls may be recorded and monitored.

Thanks a bunch!

Garden Organic was only able to enjoy such a productive year in 2014 because of our fantastic supporters who believe in our work and are committed to helping us.

So we would like to take this opportunity to thank our members, volunteers, project participants, local groups, Seed Guardians, visitors to Ryton Organic Gardens, Organic Open Gardens supporters, donors, sponsors, partner organisations, Trustees, Ambassadors and many others for all of their support.

Organisations recently funding our work:

The 29th May 1961 Trust
Baron Davenport's Charity
Big Lottery Fund's Local Food programme
Big Lottery Fund – Single Award
Breckland Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Children in Need
CHK Charities Ltd
Coventry City Council
Coventry University
The Daylesford Foundation
Defra
Delfland Nurseries Ltd
Department for Education
DJ & M Wood Trust
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Duke of Portland's Charitable Trust
The Earl Castle Stewart Trust
Ecotricity
The Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Trust
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
EU – Cost Action
EU – European Fund for Rural Development
EU – Leonardo Lifelong Learning Programme
EU – Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme
EU – Seventh Framework Programme
Fisherbeck Charitable Trust
G4S

GLA (Greater London Authority)
Gloucestershire County Council
Golding Homes
The Grimmitt Trust
The Heritage Lottery Fund
JHF Green Trust
Kaye Pemberton Charitable Trust
Keep Calm Gallery
Leicestershire County Council
Lincolnshire County Council
The London Boroughs of Islington and Camden
Medway Council
Network Rail
NFU Mutual
Norfolk Community Foundation
Norfolk County Council
Northamptonshire County Council
The Oakdale Trust
The Oram Foundation
Orbit Heart of England
The Organic Gardening Catalogue
The Other Hat
Open Gate
Oxfordshire County Council
The Patsy Wood Trust
The Peabody Trust
The Phone Co-op
The Ratcliff Foundation
Rural Development Plan for Wales 2008-2013 (Supply Chains Efficiencies Scheme)
Salvia Foundation
Sandra Charitable Trust

The Sheepdrove Trust
The Sheldon Trust
Shropshire County Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Somerset Community Food
Stanley Smith (UK) Horticultural Trust
Straight plc
Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Suffolk County Council
Suma
The Tanner Trust
Tesco Charity Trust
The Tisbury Telegraph Trust
Triodos Bank
The Tudor Trust
Veolia
Vinceremos
Warwick District Council
Warwickshire County Council
William Dean Countryside and Educational Trust
Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc
Worcestershire County Council
WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme)

Thank you to the many organisations which have supported Garden Organic in other ways.

Garden Organic is the working name of the Henry Doubleday Research Association. Registered charity number 298104.

Photo: Heritage Seed Library carrot 'John's Purple'.