

The Mulch

New Therapy Garden for Thrive in Reading

A highlight of the year for me was the opening of a new therapeutic garden for horticultural therapy charity, Thrive, by HRH Princess Alexandra in July.

The Secret Garden will enable Thrive therapists to work with two client groups with contrasting needs: young people with attention deficit disorders and older people with memory loss and other cognitive impairments.

The culmination of two years design and planning, the garden was built by volunteers, staff members and Graham Bell Landscape Design and Construction.

It was an enormous pleasure to design this flagship new garden for Thrive. It represents a high point in my ongoing work with organisations to create healing gardens that help to improve the health and care of patients, staff and service users.

There will be more pictures of the garden on my website shortly. To find out more about the therapeutic work carried out by Thrive across the country, visit: www.thrive.org or telephone 0118 988 5688. If you are interested in developing a therapeutic garden, then check out the BBC's 'Breathing Places' campaign for possible lottery funding: www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/



^ A view through the new Thrive therapeutic garden with the custom-designed Living Wall feature in the foreground and raised beds with trellis screen dividers in the centre of the garden. A cedar summerhouse in the top left of the picture doubles as an office, presentation space and shelter.

Magnolias in Danger

A plea for gardeners to include a magnolia in their borders. Ever since I learned that this important family is on the Red List of 'critically endangered' plants, I've actively included magnolias in as many of my planting schemes as possible.

Magnolias are among the most ancient groups of flowering plants and have long been cultivated for their nutritional and medicinal value as well as their striking appearance.

Their habitats are under increasing threat. In the wild, more than half of magnolia species (131 out of 245) are in danger of extinction. For example, my favourite magnolia, (*M. stellata*) is vulnerable in the one small area of Japan where it grows naturally, due to land encroachment and development.

For further information about the Red List, where to see magnolias in the UK and how to take part in a global magnolia survey, visit www.bgei.org.

Also, for further information on conservation efforts, visit a couple of useful websites: www.fauna-flora.org and www.globaltrees.org.



^ *Magnolia stellata* 'Waterlily' and *Magnolia sieboldii* subsp. *sinensis*

Going Potty over Plastic

Ever wondered what to do with those old plastic plant pots and trays?

Well, there's a local end user who'd very much like to have them: local plastics recycling company, **Associated Polymers**, Castle Lane, North Baddesley, near Southampton.

To find out more, call Steve Griggs, transport manager, on 07899 672684. You can take them to the depot yourself or he can pick them up (there may be a charge for this).

He just asks that you separate trays from pots to make storage and handling easier. Allotment holders can usually recycle these items via their local association.

Would like more copies? Give feedback? Get in touch? Please email me at:

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