

# The Scottish Horticulture Action Plan

A vision for cultivating a world-leading sector



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# Executive Summary

We want to build on our world-leading status in garden design, construction and management, horticultural production and crucially, education. Every child, student, adult, family and community in Scotland are influenced by plants in our living environment. We know we learn better, work better, feel better and get better faster in a green environment and yet, despite fantastic work going on across Scotland, many people still miss out on these vital benefits.

By 2022 we want to:

- Ensure all school children have the opportunity to grow plants and garden, in order to learn more about the environment and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle;
- Develop an attractive web portal for careers promotion, nurturing our skills pipeline alongside other land-based career options;
- Increase our economic contribution by half a million pounds and create 300 new jobs;
- Develop proven low-cost horticulture-based solutions to treating mental health and other health challenges;
- Ensure more Scottish-grown trees and plants are used in public procurement projects by engaging sooner in the process;
- Support communities to create community gardens in areas where they do not currently exist;
- Hosting a National Gardening Week to promote garden tourism in Scotland.

Key members of the horticulture sector have come together to form the Scottish Horticulture Panel in order to develop an Action Plan of 10 'asks' for the Scottish Government, with industry pledges to support delivery. These asks are centred around the key themes of education and skills, the economy, health and wellbeing, the planted environment and tourism.

Using this Action Plan, we want to build on our successful work with the Scottish Government and key partners to achieve this shared vision and ensure everyone in Scotland can have access to the long-term benefits created by our industry. Most industries are measured in their production and sales numbers. However our environmental, health and societal benefits start to grow exponentially once our plants are rooted in the ground and our gardens, landscapes and green infrastructure are created. Many new jobs are created as our landscapes grow, in skilled specialist areas such as arboriculture and landscape management. Horticultural skills underpin ecological and environmental management.

The benefits horticulture brings can be clearly evidenced in case studies detailed throughout the Action Plan. These demonstrate the brilliant work that is currently happening across different areas of Scotland.







# Our 10 asks of Scottish Government

The Panel have created an Action Plan of 10 'asks' for the Scottish Government, as well as industry pledges to help the horticultural sector in Scotland reach its full potential.

## Education and Skills

1. To integrate and promote horticulture through all stages of the school curriculum
2. To match fund the Grow Careers portal to promote the exciting range of skilled careers

## The Economy

3. To match fund data collection and analysis into the impact of the horticulture industry
4. To create fiscal incentives to encourage investment and growth

## Health and Wellbeing

5. To support and promote horticultural solutions to health issues and promote horticulture to communities
6. To fund support services and training for therapeutic horticulture practitioners

## Green Space and the Planted Environment

7. To increase the amount of green infrastructure in Scotland and support research into the functional benefits of plants and green space
8. To use Scottish growers to deliver planting for public procurement projects
9. To continue to support the Horticultural industry efforts to improve plant biosecurity

## Tourism

10. To invest to grow garden tourism at home and from overseas.



# Education and Skills

## Overview

Education is our key priority as we believe that stimulating a young person's interest in plants and the green environment through learning at all levels and ages will promote health, support the curriculum, forge future careers and help to support Scotland's natural heritage.

### ASK 1

#### To integrate and promote horticulture through all stages of the school curriculum

- All school children must have the opportunity to garden and grow plants, in order to learn more about the environment and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle.
- The Scottish Government need to support schools to incorporate horticulture across all areas of the curriculum through experiential learning applied to a wide range of subjects, such as STEM, business, food and design.

## Pledge

The Panel pledges to work in partnership with the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to:

- provide expertise and guidance to teachers to support horticulture within the curriculum;
- provide practical opportunities and inspiration for young people to learn about horticulture for a sustainable future.

### Did you know?

1 in 10 secondary school children believed that tomatoes grow underground.

*(British Nutrition Foundation)*



## ASK 2

### To match-fund the Grow Careers portal to promote the exciting range of skilled careers

- Scottish Government funding to enhance the GrowCareers website ([www.growcareers.info](http://www.growcareers.info)) to help the industry attract more young people into horticultural careers. By doing this, the Scottish Government will help the horticulture sector to continue to grow and thrive.
- Increased Scottish Government funding for horticultural programmes at all levels from Skills for Work programmes, Modern apprenticeships, NC, HNC to Honours Degree to develop the young workforce. This will secure our skills pipeline.

#### Did you know?

16-24 year olds make up just 11% of the horticulture, landscaping and sports turf sector workforce in Scotland, compared to 28% of 45-54 year olds.

*(Lantra)*

## Pledge

The Panel pledges to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to:

- bridge the gap between schools and the workplace through vocational programmes and relevant careers and progression advice;
- mentor students throughout their time at college and beyond;
- provide content for apprenticeship, work experience and graduate programmes;
- provide information, expertise and ambassadors to support promotional activity.

### CASE STUDY:

#### LIAM, SRUC STUDENT TO CONTRACTS MANAGER

Liam's interest in horticulture began as a child, helping family members with the upkeep of their gardens. Encouraged by his teacher to apply for SRUC's 'Skills for Work Rural Skills' course, Liam attended a one afternoon per week course alongside his 3rd and 4th year studies. SRUC tutors actively seek to inspire young people to pursue land based careers and education.

Finishing school after 5th year, Liam continued his studies in horticulture with an NC in Landscape Construction, working with a local landscaping company to gain practical experience on days away from college.

This was then followed by a Higher National Certificate in Landscape Management. As a student with a good deal of practical experience, Liam was quickly employed within the landscape department of a large housing development company, where he now works as a Contracts Manager. Liam still keeps in touch with SRUC, sending his apprentices for SVQs and may return to the college to study a Higher National Diploma or possibly a degree.





# The Economy

## Overview

Retail horticulture contributes over £300 million to the Scottish economy but this is just one small sector of the industry. In reality, when you include landscaping, floristry, sports turf, green keeping, garden tourism and other areas, the actual contribution will be far larger, making it a significant contributor to the Scottish economy. However, the Government and its sector skills council stopped collecting and analysing this data years ago, and we need the data to make informed, evidenced decisions.

### ASK 3

## To match-fund data collection and analysis into the impact of the horticulture industry

- Funding to support analysis into the impact of the horticulture sector in Scotland. Horticulture needs to be recognised as a major contributor to the economy and society as a whole. Only with detailed analysis will it be apparent just how significant it is.

## Pledge

The Panel pledges to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to:

- collect, analyse and disseminate data on the Scottish horticulture sector;
- provide evidence and advice to inform decision-making and future analysis.

### Did you know?

For an investment of £9,684,000 in parks and greenspace by City of Edinburgh Council benefits worth £114,191,000 are generated.

*(City of Edinburgh Council, 2013)*





## ASK 4

### To create fiscal incentives to encourage investment and growth

- Reduced business rates and VAT for those organisations and products that aim to promote the objectives of the Scottish Government regarding the environment, health and wellbeing. This would significantly improve the economy and encourage more people to buy and reap the benefits that growing plants can bring.
- Create fiscal incentives for nursery expansion to increase capacity to produce more Scottish-grown plants.

## Pledge

The Panel pledges to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to:

- provide evidence and advice to the Scottish Government to inform decision-making regarding business rates;
- continue to produce high-quality plants, products and services;
- Increase efforts to improve environmentally sustainable business practices.

## Did you know?

Garden tourism is worth £1.4 billion across the UK.

*(Ornamental Roundtable, 2015)*

## CASE STUDY:

### THE VALUE OF EDINBURGH PARKS

The City of Edinburgh Council has measured and valued the outcomes that are achieved as a direct result of parks and greenspaces in the city, including financial benefits.

Using a Social Return on Investment (SROI) approach to identify and value the impact of City of Edinburgh Council's parks and greenspaces it was found that for every £1 invested around £12 of social, economic and environmental benefits are delivered.

As a result of City of Edinburgh Council's parks:

- Individuals will gain health and well being benefits worth around £40.5 million;
- The impact on social inclusion and community capacity is calculated to be worth over £6 million;
- Local businesses and the economy will gain additional revenue from visitors to the parks in the region of £51 million;
- Schools, nurseries and colleges are able to provide outdoor educational experiences that equate to just under £1 million;
- The awareness and understanding gained by visitors of their local environment is valued at just under £5 million.









# Health and Wellbeing

## Overview

Gardening helps us to adopt a less sedentary lifestyle and improves physical and mental health. Growing and eating fresh fruit and vegetables promotes healthier lifestyles while gardening offers a sense of fulfilment that can boost social and emotional well-being, build self-esteem, reduce isolation and help in mental health recovery.

### ASK 5

#### To support and promote horticultural solutions to health issues and promote horticulture to communities

- Encourage and facilitate industry engagement with health authorities by showcasing existing successful interventions and piloting new ideas such as Gardening on Prescription.
- Support research and development efforts in the therapeutic uses of horticulture for health and wellbeing.
- Support access to and promote community gardening initiatives.
- Support and promote volunteering in gardens and community greenspaces.
- Provide support for lifelong learning, skills development and engagement programmes, based around horticulture.

### Did you know?

1 in 4 people in the UK will experience mental health problems in their lifetime. There is well documented evidence which highlights the role horticulture, or the 'Natural Health Service' has in improving mental health.

(Trellis)



## Pledge

The Panel pledges to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to:

- provide expertise and advice to the Scottish Government to support the incorporation of horticulture on the health agenda.
- promote the benefits of horticulture to individuals and communities in Scotland;
- provide opportunities for people to volunteer within their communities;
- use garden centres and community gardens to encourage people to get involved in gardening, by providing advice, support and inspiration.

## Did you know?

2,300 volunteers gave over 110,000 hours in 2016 as part of Keep Scotland Beautiful's "It's Your Neighbourhood" gardening campaign.

*(Keep Scotland Beautiful)*

## CASE STUDY: THE BENEFITS OF ALLOTMENTS

Craigneuk Allotments is a wonderful green oasis in Airdrie, invisible from the road and tucked away behind social housing, but opens into a beautiful and productive space.

The thriving allotment group is an integral part of the local community, uniting people of all ages, either as growers or those who come along to enjoy the garden as a place to relax and socialise. Over only a few years, the group has transformed a barren, unloved space affected by anti-social behaviour, into a haven that is now buzzing with people and wildlife, where everything is recycled and nothing wasted, grow your own is a way of life and everyone is welcome.

Craigneuk's Sharon Craig said: *"We now have so much to offer all ages in our community – it has sparked a real interest in gardening with a younger generation."*





## ASK 6

### To fund support services and training for therapeutic horticulture practitioners

- Scottish Government to support therapeutic gardening as a viable health intervention by backing support services and training for practitioners in this area. This will help to ensure the benefits of therapeutic horticulture are available to all those in need.

## Pledge

The Panel pledges to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to:

- advise on therapeutic gardening matters as required and recommend organisations to partner with NHS, health and care professionals within our communities.

### CASE STUDY:

#### IMPROVING DONALD'S QUALITY OF LIFE

A recent BBC Scotland Radio feature described how a gardening project from the Trellis network has helped a man with dementia improve his quality of life tremendously.

After hearing Donald's wife on the radio, an Occupational Therapist explained that she had referred Donald to Kinross Potager Garden.

The therapist revealed that she wouldn't have known about this project if it wasn't for the Trellis network. Trellis regularly organises training days on Garden Activities for People with Dementia.

Commenting on the work of Trellis, Donald's wife said: *"This place is a godsend. At the gardening project, we get back the man he was."*



### Did you know?

There are over 380 therapeutic gardening projects helping 9,000 people across the country improve their health. These projects provide skills training, rehabilitation and recovery programmes in care homes, schools, hospitals, prisons and community plots. (Trellis)

# Green Space and the Planted Environment

## Overview

Plants and gardens are more than just ‘nice to look at’. They can deliver an improved quality of life by delivering many environmental benefits such as improving air quality, reducing soil erosion and the risks of flooding. They can also be a powerful tool to mitigate against the effects of climate change, as well as increasing wildlife and biodiversity. Yet gardens for new houses are decreasing in size with less planting created.

### ASK 7

#### **Increase the use of green infrastructure in Scotland and support research into the functional benefits of plants and green space**

- Scottish Government to continue to drive increased use of green infrastructure through the planning system and at local house-building levels across Scotland.
- Government to support research and testing of green infrastructure evaluation tools such as i-Tree Eco, creating credible value data to inform evidence-based policy making.

## Pledge

The Panel pledges to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to:

- promote the benefits of horticulture for the environment and the importance of safeguarding Scottish plant health to members of the public;
- provide expert advice and support for green infrastructure evaluation.





**ASK 8****To use Scottish growers to deliver more planting for public procurement projects**

- Support the creation of an online market place for Scottish growers and utilise local horticulture businesses when delivering planting for major public development projects in Scotland. Doing so will support the local economy and reduce the risk of introducing pests, diseases and non-native invasive species.

**Pledge**

The Panel pledges to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to:

- forward-plan to deliver the necessary planting for major projects;
- make it easier for consumers to identify and purchase Scottish plants through the creation of an online market place.

**Did you know?**

Figures state that by the mid 2040s the UK will only be able to feed 53% of its population.  
(National Farmer Union)

**ASK 9****To continue to support the Horticultural industry efforts to improve plant biosecurity**

- This will include the backing of a growers quality assurance scheme, investment incentives, research, increased and complementary biosecurity protocols in parks, gardens, forests and in the wider natural environment.

**Pledge**

The Panel pledges to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to

- Help improve awareness to gardeners, horticulturists and the general public on the need for Biosecurity to help protect plants in our parks, gardens, forests and in the wider natural environment
- Provide expert advice, feedback and support to Scottish Government where necessary.

**CASE STUDY:****THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF RAMORUM BLIGHT**

Ramorum blight (*Phytophthora ramorum*) was initially detected in the UK in 2002 on container-grown *Rhododendron*, *Viburnum* and *Camellia* plants, brought in from outside the UK. By 2009 it had been detected in the wild on heathland. Throughout the U.K. historic plant collections have on occasion been devastated not only by the disease but by the control measures in force which have required whole areas of planting to be destroyed and burnt.

The real threat of such diseases was brought home in September 2015, when perhaps the most iconic tree in the rock garden at RBGE, the Temple Juniper, succumbed to *Phytophthora austrocedri* a relative of ramorum blight. As soon as the disease was confirmed the removal of the tree was organised, and following best practice to reduce the spread of the disease from infected material, all infected plants were burnt on site in the rock garden.

# Tourism

## Overview

Scotland has some of the most beautiful landscapes and gardens which attract people from around the world. Garden tourism is worth £1.4 billion across the UK and the Panel recognises the excellent work that VisitScotland has done to support gardening tourism in Scotland, including Discover Scottish Gardens and Scotland's Garden Scheme.

### ASK 10

### To invest to grow garden tourism at home and from overseas

- To continue to support garden tourism through Scottish Government match funding.
- To celebrate Scotland's unique horticultural heritage through creating events such as a National Gardening week in Scotland. This will ensure the Scottish economy continues to benefit from the contributions created by garden tourism.
- To conduct market research in both the UK and abroad to attract increased numbers of visitors.

## Pledge

The Panel pledges to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to:

- provide expert advice, evidence and materials to promote garden tourism in Scotland;
- help organise and host a National Gardening week in Scotland;
- support the increased promotion of Scottish gardens abroad through promotional videos and a more visible online presence.

### Did you know?

A third of those visiting the Highlands visited a country park or garden.

(NTS)





**CASE STUDY:****VOLUNTEERS AT ATTADALE GARDENS**

Attadale Gardens in Wester Ross were created over a hundred years ago. Initially, it was open for one day a year to raise money for local charities. As more time and effort were invested in the garden, it became better known and more people were employed. Now the gardens are open from Easter until the end of October and attract visitors worldwide.

Volunteers are a crucial part of what makes Attadale special. Local retired people help by welcoming visitors to the garden. Visitors enjoy speaking to both the volunteers and the gardeners as they explore. Attadale has developed in to a real asset for the local area and has become an important part of the local economy.

**Did you know?**

Thanks to a committed group of over 1500 garden openers and volunteers located from Orkney to Galloway; Scotland's Garden Scheme - Open for Charity has raised and distributed over £1 million pounds for 200 different national and local charities since 2012.

*(Scotland's Garden Scheme)*









# Our Vision

Many people see horticulture as gardening, but that is to take a very limited view of a broad and important industry which is vital not only to the Scottish economy and the environment but for education, health and quality of life of the people who live here.

Horticulture has an important role to play in Scotland, beyond jobs, products and services. Once the plants are in the ground and the gardens and landscapes have been built, there are hundreds of years' worth of added value to the economy, to people's health and wellbeing, to the wider environment and to society as a whole.

By 2022, our vision is to work in partnership with the Scottish Government to:



Ensure all school children have the opportunity to grow plants and garden, in order to learn more about the environment and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Develop an attractive web portal for careers promotion, nurturing our skills pipeline alongside other land-based career options.



Increase our economic contribution by half a million pounds and create 300 new jobs.

Develop proven low-cost horticulture-based solutions to treating mental health and other health challenges.



Ensure more Scottish-grown trees and plants are used in public procurement projects by engaging sooner in the process.

Support communities to create community gardens in areas where they do not currently exist.



Hosting a National Gardening Week to promote garden tourism in Scotland.

# The Scottish Horticulture Panel



Royal  
Botanic Garden  
Edinburgh

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



The Association of  
Professional Landscapers

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



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



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



Scottish Allotments  
and Gardens Society

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



[www.scotlandsgardens.org](http://www.scotlandsgardens.org)



[www.rchs.co.uk](http://www.rchs.co.uk)



the National Trust  
for Scotland  
a place for everyone

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



[www.growforth.co.uk](http://www.growforth.co.uk)



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



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



[www.discoverscottishgardens.org](http://www.discoverscottishgardens.org)



[www.ben-reid.co.uk](http://www.ben-reid.co.uk)



[www.edinburgh.gov.uk](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk)



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



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



[www.klondyke.co.uk](http://www.klondyke.co.uk)



[www.newhopetoungardens.co.uk](http://www.newhopetoungardens.co.uk)



[www.st-andrews.ac.uk](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk)



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



[www.sruc.ac.uk](http://www.sruc.ac.uk)



[www.gardeningscotland.com](http://www.gardeningscotland.com)



[www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk)



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



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



[www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org](http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org)



[www.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.uhi.ac.uk)



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



If you would like to know more about the work of the Scottish Horticulture Panel, please contact Neil Cummings, HTA Regional Business Manager on **07715 000 181** or at **[Neil.Cummings@hta.org.uk](mailto:Neil.Cummings@hta.org.uk)**