



the national charity  
for organic growing

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2010



# Welcome to our review of 2010

**2010 was an exciting and eventful year for Garden Organic. It was a fruitful time for new projects, new partners and new members.**



It was also a very important year for us. We were able to concentrate on the delivery of a new strategy, which clearly focused on innovation and working in partnerships to enable us to reach out to the widest possible audiences.

We continued our outreach work, inspiring and educating schoolchildren; we spread the word on allotments and in local communities and sowed new ideas for policies and research with decision makers and project partners. We opened our doors with new events like the Exotic Crop Fair; went out and about to the Chelsea Flower Show and the START Garden Party and welcomed yet more visitors to Ryton Gardens. We also had a successful financial year, fortunately aided by some significant legacy donations that helped us to a position where we can plan on a longer-term basis.

This *Annual Review 2010* shows how we are achieving real impact in our work. By helping to transform people's health and well-being, developing and sharing knowledge, and helping to create stronger communities, we are bringing sharp focus to the importance of embracing activities that support sustainable living.

On behalf of all our beneficiaries, we thank our volunteers, our members and many other donors and supporters who either donate or work tirelessly to support all that we do – it really does matter.

Thank you.



**Myles Bremner – Chief Executive**

*OUR VISION is of a healthy and sustainable world that has embraced organic growing.*

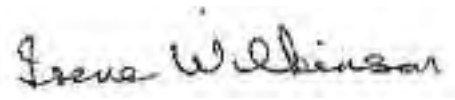
*OUR MISSION is to promote organic gardening, focusing on individual, community and school growing throughout the UK. We use innovative practices to inspire and encourage people to grow organically. We collaborate with others to achieve the greatest impact.*

*OUR PURPOSE is to get more people growing organically.*

This *Annual Review 2010* demonstrates the progress Garden Organic has made in widening its range of beneficiaries. Three examples in particular stand out: the Gardening Therapy project – getting young people with challenging behaviours and multiple disabilities involved in growing their own food; the Sowing New Seeds project – supporting and sharing knowledge with culturally diverse communities in the West Midlands to grow exotic crops and the One Pot Pledge campaign, which has already succeeded in introducing 20,000 people of all ages to organic growing.

Our three-year Business Plan for 2011-13 sets out how we will fulfil our organisational purpose of getting more people growing organically. We will take a three-pronged approach comprising a Big Learning Agenda, the sustainable use of land, seeds and resources, and promotion of the benefits of organic gardening.

Overall, 2010 was a year of significant achievements. But we must not be complacent. The current economic climate is not favourable and we are already aware that some funding will be cut. However, we are confident that our enhanced ability to think strategically combined with a sounder financial position will enable us to overcome these challenges.



**Irene Wilkinson – Chair of Trustees**

# Garden Organic's Big Learning Agenda

Garden Organic prides itself on researching, generating, collating and sharing knowledge about organic gardening with its members, schools, allotment holders and the wider public. It's all part of our Big Learning Agenda.

## YOUNG PEOPLE

### Food for Life Partnership (FFLP)

Garden Organic plays a key role in this Partnership to introduce practical growing and cooking into schools. The scheme is having a significant impact on food culture in schools and their local communities. So far 3,000 schools have signed up to the programme, which has reached 132,000 beneficiaries. In 2010, we delivered horticultural training to 400 school-linked staff from nine English regions to set up and maintain school gardens. We also produced our second FFLP food growing manual for schools, providing knowledge, skills and practical examples to help schools grow food themselves.

### Gardening Therapy

We worked with five specialist schools and enabled young people with challenging behaviours and multiple disabilities to get involved with growing their own food. By the summer, pupils were enjoying the fruits (or vegetables) of their labours.

Working in the Special Education Needs sector is a new area of our work, and one that we hope to build upon in the future.

## Nurturing lives

*Leanne, a teenager from Birmingham, dropped out of school, but a place on a college catering course helped her to imagine a more positive future for herself. The course includes a food production module, and although Leanne "thought planting vegetables was really uncool, being in the college's allotment has been great fun". She now hopes to become a chef.*

## VOLUNTEERS

### Master Gardener and Master Composter programmes

These twin programmes are building a network of expert volunteers, who support people to start growing and composting at home. During 2010, we piloted the Master Gardener programme in four different regions, Warwickshire, North London, South London and Norfolk, in partnership with local authorities. We recruited 144 volunteers, who have reached 8,760 new or less experienced gardeners.

We also welcomed a further 85 new Master Composters – and now 550 volunteers are actively promoting composting within their local communities.

## HELP INTO WORK

### Work placements

Together with Groundwork, we've been helping the long-term unemployed to learn new skills and gain an insight into working in organic horticulture. We gave

## NEW PROJECT: Get Growing

Launched in October 2010, this local growing project already has six groups developing their own growing initiatives. Get Growing hopes to build stronger communities by supporting growing projects and building links with rural businesses – all thanks to funding from Central Warwickshire's LEADER programme.

15 long-term unemployed people six-month placements at Ryton Gardens, and we benefited greatly from the energy and enthusiasm they brought to their role.

### Apprenticeships

Seeds of Change sponsored three organic horticulture apprentices at Ryton Gardens. We benefited from the apprentices' hard work, and they gained accredited, work-based training. Read more on their blogs at [www.seedsofchange.co.uk/apprentice-home.aspx](http://www.seedsofchange.co.uk/apprentice-home.aspx).

*“Looking back to when I arrived at Garden Organic, with only a basic knowledge of horticulture, it's astonishing how much I've learnt – from plant names to soil treatments. I never imagined how physically demanding gardening is, but it was worth every second, and so rewarding! Once daunted by the idea of being a professional gardener, I now want to make it my career.”*

*Helen Lockwood, apprentice*



## Ensuring sustainable use of land, seed and resources

Organic growing is only successful when all the key components are available: land, information and resources. At Garden Organic, we are determined that everyone should have access to all three. Projects like our Heritage Seed Library and Sowing New Seeds are just some of the ways we offer access for all.

### SEEDY THINGS

During 2010, our Heritage Seed Library (HSL) collected another 67 vegetable varieties for testing, including the 'Lord Leicester' and 'Yorkshire Hero' peas. We also added 37 varieties to the collection. Growing our varieties and saving seeds are 350 dedicated volunteer Seed Guardians – 31 new guardians joined this year. Saving and swapping seeds is key to sustainable growing and to getting communities involved. We supplied seeds to 38 seed swaps and are now developing plans to establish a national seed swap network.

More than 150 HSL vegetable varieties were grown at the Organic Kitchen Garden at Audley End, which we manage. Our partnership with English Heritage enables us to display these rare varieties to the thousands of visitors to this wonderful Victorian garden, renovated by Garden Organic.

### CONSULTATION

We participated in the Food & Environmental Research Agency's (FERA) consultation on proposed changes to EU seed regulations. These changes aim to simplify regulations on conservation and registration of amateur varieties. We cautiously welcome the changes, but are concerned about accurate naming, record keeping and maintaining the integrity of heritage varieties.

### INTERNATIONAL

Our work with Kenyan partners, MOOF continues with plans to work with the Nanyuki community. Small-scale farmers will be trained

in organic agriculture, natural pest and disease prevention and control, and organic certification.

Meanwhile in Uganda, we are in discussions with partners to establish and deliver international development projects at reduced financial risks. Due to the ongoing military situation in Afghanistan, our project there remains on hold.

During 2010, we scaled down our overseas advisory service, as demand has declined. The majority of information is now available on our website.

### RESEARCH & EXPERIMENTS

Our continuing projects include:

- the environmental footprint of sustainable UK food production
- analysis of social, health, environmental and food security benefits of organic gardening
- green manures.

We also delivered seven specialised training events for farmers and

produced a range of publications to share findings and best practice in organic horticulture and agriculture.

### Members' experiments

We are always very grateful to our enthusiastic members who undertake experiments to help develop our research. In 2010, these included:

- comparing growing media
- cultivating tree spinach
- using slug barriers
- a garden butterfly survey.



### NEW PROJECT: Sowing New Seeds

In 2010, we launched Sowing New Seeds to record, celebrate and share resources and expertise between growers of exotic vegetables. And so far the project is flourishing. We've been on 40 allotment site visits, hosted stands at community events and conducted a grower survey. In this our first year, we've collected and evaluated over 110 exotic seed samples, many of which out-performed commercial varieties. We also evaluated 50 accessions for possible inclusion in the HSL collection. We held our first Exotic Crop Fair at Ryton Gardens in October, which certainly enthused plenty of cooks and growers.

In 2011, Sowing New Seeds is focusing on benefits for a wider audience, and is working together with refugee groups, housing associations and schools. We also plan to establish an Exotic Food Garden at Ryton Gardens.

## Promoting, celebrating and sharing the benefits

Garden Organic wants everyone – members, local communities, schools and allotment holders – to share the benefits of organic gardening. We bring people together to share experiences – the highs (and occasionally the lows) – in many different ways.

### ENGAGEMENT

We kept up our extensive involvement in policy consultation and attended national conferences and high profile events, not just in the UK, but in Australia too. Our Chief Executive Myles Bremner went ‘down under’ in October 2010 to give the keynote speech at the Community Garden Conference, as a guest of the University of Canberra. While he was there, he visited HDRA Australia – 25 years old and still going strong.

We have received a promising endorsement of the influence of our work; policy makers have identified our volunteer engagement programmes as best practice in Big Society engagement.

### RYTON GARDENS

In February, our new relationship with Webbs Garden Centres began. Webbs is leasing our restaurant, shop and conference facilities, and offering a green and sustainable garden centre experience.

We welcomed more than 22,000 people, including 3,000 school pupils, to Ryton Gardens. We aim to inspire each and every visitor with what organic growing can achieve. In 2011, our 25th anniversary year at Ryton Gardens, we will be redeveloping and extending areas of the garden, including the Allotment Garden and a brand new Exotic Food Garden.

### MEMBERSHIP

The ongoing support of our members is invaluable, helping us to bring many of our plans to fruition. We are eternally grateful not only for the financial support that membership brings us, but also the knowledge and time our members dedicate to encouraging others to get growing.

During 2010, 2,068 new members joined us, bringing total membership to nearly 30,000. We look forward to welcoming many more members during 2011.



### NEW PROJECT: One Pot Pledge

In just nine months, 20,000 people pledged to grow their own food for the first time as part of our One Pot Pledge campaign. We promoted the campaign both online and at several shows including the Chelsea Flower Show, Real Food and Glastonbury festivals, Gardeners' World Live and HRH The Prince of Wales' START Garden Party. We offered simple growing advice to thousands of first-time growers and our downloadable growing sheets provided extra support: these can be found at [www.onepotpledge.org](http://www.onepotpledge.org).

Generously funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Laura Ashley Foundation, the campaign continues into 2011.



## 2011 and beyond

Over the last few pages, you've read about our efforts to share knowledge and resources, promote access to land and seeds, and to celebrate the joys of organic gardening. Along the way we've mentioned some ongoing projects and some burgeoning new plans, but that's just the start.

### GARDENING CONFERENCE

In 2010, we announced we would hold our first ever Gardening Conference in 2011. Running over three days, the Conference brings together members of the public, the gardening industry, members, volunteers and other stakeholders to discuss and debate the role of gardening for a sustainable future.

### WE DON'T DIG PEAT

Already 97% of the UK's raised peat bogs have been lost. Each year in the UK alone, the horticultural use of peat in growing media releases 630,000+ tonnes of carbon.

Facts like these don't make comfortable reading. We believe there is no place for peat in horticultural use. We want to bring about a positive change; during 2011, we will develop a policy-led campaign to address this issue.

### LITTLE GREEN FINGERS

We will continue our lobbying to embed food growing into schools. The huge benefits – for health, well-being and learning – of our school food growing projects support its inclusion. Leading a DEFRA supported education task force, we will work with key partners to develop plans, targets and recommendations to ensure every school can be a food-growing school.

As part of the Food for Life Partnership, we aim to enrol 3,800 schools by the end of 2011. We aim for 1,000 of these schools to attain the Bronze Food Award, which rewards leadership, food quality and

provenance, education and community involvement.

We've witnessed a growing demand for training, with our programmes selling out quickly. This has spurred us on to start fundraising to make a National Organic Training Centre a reality – it will be a place offering courses for professionals, students and the public.

### MENTORING MASTERS

During 2011, we plan to train a further 200 volunteer Master Gardeners across five regions. We also aim to deliver 14 in-service training days for our current volunteers. We will also continue to support our 550 active Master Composters, who promote home composting with schools, communities and households across nine UK regions.

### ORGANIC RESEARCH

We will continue with our existing research projects, and we are also seeking new opportunities, including a joint venture with the Centre for Agro-ecology and Food Security to draw together experts from around the world.

### RYTON GARDENS

Visiting our gardens is an inspiring and educational journey. In 2011, we will be reviewing this journey, so we can develop and improve our trails and gardens for all our visitors, of all ages.

With visitor numbers increasing, our existing reedbed system for sustainable treatment of waste water is under pressure. Therefore, we will be fundraising for the development of our reedbed to create a system able to cope with increased demand, but also to improve biodiversity in the reedbed, pond and wetland habitats – a priority for us as part of national and local Biodiversity Action Plans.



## Financial commentary

Overall our results show total income for 2010 was £3,640,816 and total expenditure was £3,288,172. Legacy donations generated over £500,000, and we are extremely grateful to those who kindly left a bequest to Garden Organic in their will.

For the second year running, we ended the year with unrestricted income exceeding our expenditure and our overall finances reflect an improved position. However, while current external economic influences remain uncertain, we must continue to work to strengthen our position.

We are very proud that 84p in every £1 raised is spent directly on our charitable work.



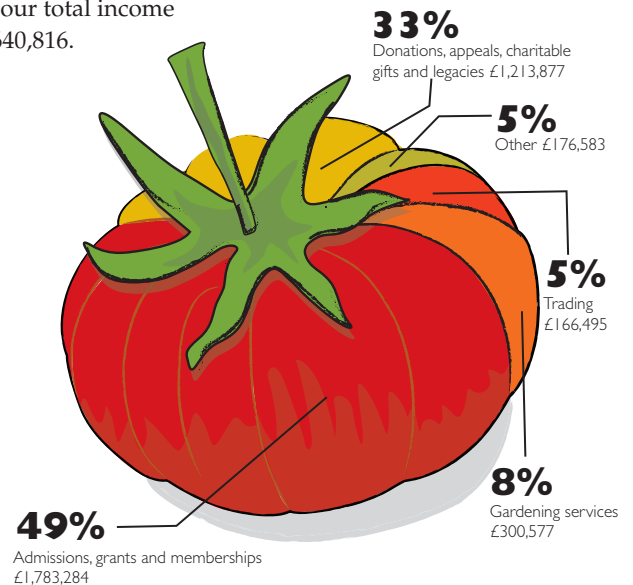
### With special thanks to our...

Members  
 Volunteers  
 Sponsors  
 Donors  
 Garden visitors  
 Seed Guardians  
 Master Gardeners  
 Master Composters  
 and all who support Garden Organic's work.

## Income 2010

### Where our funds came from

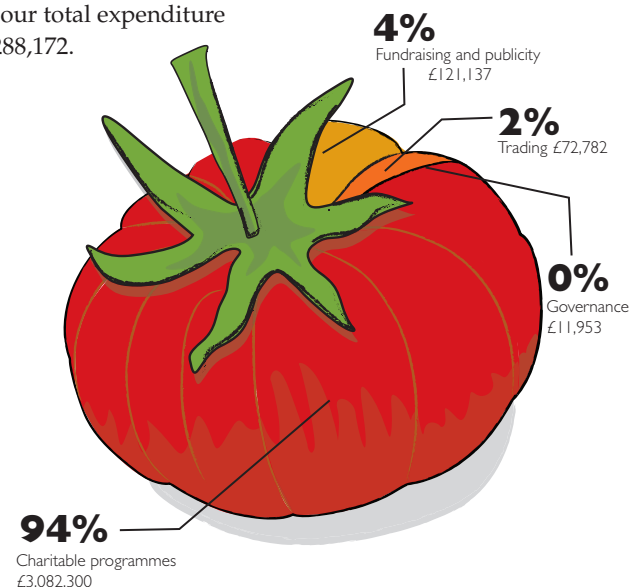
In 2010, our total income was £3,640,816.



## Expenditure 2010

### How our funds were spent

In 2010, our total expenditure was £3,288,172.



For our full accounts, please go to our website [www.gardenorganic.org.uk](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk)

Thank you all for your continued support. Without it, Garden Organic couldn't promote the importance of organic gardening.

Your donations, time, effort and enthusiasm enable us to share our knowledge, build collections, fund resources, spread the word and campaign for real and positive change.

# I would like to help Garden Organic bloom



Title  First name

Last name

Address

Postcode:

Tel no:

Email:

If you would like to receive the new Garden Organic e-newsletter, information on Garden Organic activities, fundraising, campaigns and gardening related promotions, please provide your email address above. You can unsubscribe at any time.

## Here's my gift to Garden Organic today.

£15    £30    £50    £105    £300

My own amount of £

I enclose my Cheque/PO/Charity Voucher made payable to Garden Organic

I wish to pay by MasterCard/Visa/CharityCard/Maestro (delete as applicable)

Card number (Maestro only)

Valid from:   /   Expires:   /   Issue no:

(Maestro only)

CCV code (last 3 digits on reverse of card)

Name on card

Signature  Date

**Thank you.** Due to costs involved, we do not usually acknowledge donations. If you would like an acknowledgement, please tick here. Funds raised will be used to support Garden Organic's vital work, wherever the need is greatest.

*giftaid it*

If you are a UK taxpayer, we could claim an extra 25% of the value of your donation or subscription from the Government at no additional cost to you.

**Yes,** I would like Garden Organic to treat all donations and membership subscriptions I have made going back four years and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations. I have paid an amount of income tax or capital gains tax equal to any tax reclaimed.

I am not a UK taxpayer

Signature  Date

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**www.gardenorganic.org.uk/donate**

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DON080

*Thank you*



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Printed on recycled paper using vegetable based inks.