

Gardening FOR YOUR Health

Yorkshire-based horticulturalist Georgina Bordewich talks to us about A Bright Prospect – workshops designed to educate us on the importance of garden maintenance and reconnecting with our natural spaces



For those of us lucky enough to have them, gardens represent our own personal slice of nature – an escape into green spaces, and if we are lucky, lots of local wildlife. However, it's far too easy to let these spaces fall into neglect, allowing our green spaces to become unkempt and unloved. Georgina Bordewich, alongside her business partner Cathy Kitchingham, has set out to remedy this. Working alongside local charities such as Marie Curie and Dementia Forward, Georgina and Cathy are using their love for gardens to create A Bright Prospect Garden Workshops, a community-focused gardening class that's lending a green thumb to the people of Yorkshire.

'A Bright Prospect leads small groups of people that want to learn to get their hands dirty on a regular basis, running courses that can be tailored to the specific requirements of what they need from their own gardens,' Georgina explains. 'Thanks to Covid people found themselves stuck at home staring into nature, and a garden is a terribly good way of putting problems into perspective – just having time out and watching things grow help to keep you sane. We found that a lot of people wanted to do beautiful things with their gardens but lacked the confidence – and that's how Bright Prospect came about.'

Georgina is a wizard with a trowel, and took up professional gardening shortly after having her children.

'I started mainly through contacts with friends, I then qualified in gardening and gradually started working more and more through word of mouth,' Georgina explains. 'I've done seven years now working professionally in bigger gardens, I even had a great opportunity to work on a very large estate. It was a house that had been turned into a hotel, now being turned back into a private space and garden with a beautiful four-acre plot but with the typical restraint of a small budget – it was great for me to find lots of innovative ways to manage different parts of the garden.'



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Georgina's belief in the power gardening has to enrich our lives and bring us together is infectious, evident in her deep appreciation for the local community and wildlife.

'Gardening is such a richly rewarding experience, mentally especially so. You get so much back in terms of visual stimulation, relaxation, and reintroduction of wildlife. You begin to notice all the birds and the butterflies and it's so enriching. As well as courses focusing on key skills such as pruning and propagating, we also have a florist that comes in. We grow the cut flowers from our courses and then she will come and give a demonstration on how to arrange them. She's a local florist so it's lovely and symbiotic as we all work together alongside each other and we can share our plants with the courses or garden plans here and there. It all feeds into our community which is really nice.'

Although Georgina is a big believer in the power gardening can give back to us, A Bright Prospect shares this responsibility of empowerment by contributing to various community-focused charities. Some of these charities include Marie Curie, who receive

'We're chemical free and pro-wildlife. If you're a professional gardener there's no other way to be'

a percentage of profits from A Bright Prospect; Dementia Forward who have catered for events that A Bright Prospect work alongside; and the Yorkshire Cancer Federation, which has found support within A Bright Prospect's team. 'We try to get everyone involved. We give back as much as possible to the local community.'

Caring for our planet's greenery through gardening intrinsically gives back to our local community by making our natural environment more beautiful, healthy and safe for wildlife to reintegrate into our lives. However, Georgina doesn't want people to underestimate the deeply personal benefits gardening holds for our minds and well-being – helping her first time gardeners overcome garden anxiety.

'There's a lot of unloved plants that can start to look a bit grey, a bit depressing. Suddenly when you start to inject colour in, it generates a bit of brightness and a bit of order into your life. It's something you've created, it's your personal achievement – that is deeply satisfying if you're feeling a bit powerless. Throughout

the lockdowns we couldn't go out, but we could always grow things. We could plan a border, trim and maintain plants and reintroduce some purpose and control into your life.'

The ability to nurture life is a rewarding prospect, but it can also be a daunting one. This was one of the biggest factors encouraging A Bright Prospect to impart their knowledge of gardening, allowing everyone to blossom in horticulture. 'People have a huge fear of doing something wrong. You see it when people buy books and they get daunted by some of the terminology. If you haven't grown up with your parents gardening then these things can seem very daunting. We make sure we don't just tell you what to do – you're going to do it. You're going to feel what it's like to get your hands in the soil, feel the tiny seeds, dig up and divide a plant, and push past the nervousness of giving it a go.'

A Bright Prospect Garden Workshops will be running monthly experiences through spring to summer. Follow @abrightprospect on Instagram to find out more