

Garden Post



Perennial's warm front

With the rising cost of food, transport and domestic heating, surviving on a low income has never presented a greater challenge for many of the people who are turning to us for help. Now as the winter months approach, Perennial is working hard to help all horticulturists who are facing the prospect of fuel poverty.

Last year massive rises in the cost of domestic energy coincided with the coldest December for over 100 years. Worst hit were those in rural homes without a gas supply who faced a huge 70% increase in the cost of oil, which is predicted to rise a further 14% in the coming months. These clients' problems are compounded because those on low incomes must pay for oil in advance; if the tank runs dry when there is no money it means going without, whatever the temperature. Pensioner's difficulties will be compounded by a reduction in the state Winter Fuel Allowance of £50

for those under 80 and £100 for those aged 80 plus.

We fear fuel poverty will force many low paid and pensioner horticulturists into debt, and a significant icy spell could herald a real crisis, so we are already making provision to provide help wherever possible – in particular for elderly clients and others who are housebound due to ill health or vulnerability. Last year Perennial spent £23,485 on energy grants to 101 people (averaging £232 per person); this year we anticipate that the number of applications will rise along with the average amount and that we will have to provide around £30,000 – but we will ensure that the necessary support is provided for all those who need it.

Please help us to ensure a safer, warmer winter for vulnerable people like John. Make a donation to Perennial by using the slip on the back page, by calling 0845 676 0640, or visit our website, www.perennial.org.uk

How Perennial helps...

John* is a college trained gardener in his 40's who had been working at a garden that opens to the public. John turned to Perennial for help in 2009 after he had to stop work because of a serious illness. Last year he was undergoing renal dialysis and awaiting a kidney transplant and it was desperately important that the family home was kept warm so John could stay clear of infection, just in case a donor organ became available. John and his family live in a rural Yorkshire village with no gas supply, and are reliant on oil heating. They had no disposable income so saving to pay for a delivery of oil when the price had increased so enormously was impossible. Putting off the fuel order was not an option - John was prone to infections and the oil tanker would not be able to access the village in snowy conditions, so Perennial paid for a delivery of oil before the bad weather set in.

Happily, John is now recovering from his transplant but it is essential that he continues to keep warm and free from infection because of the risk of organ rejection. Perennial has already provided grants for other disability essentials for John and we are now fundraising from other sources for a delivery of oil. By next year he hopes to be back at work and no longer in need of Perennial's financial support.

*Name has been changed to protect our client's privacy.



David (right) receives his award from Mike Hirst



The front garden, York Gate (Image courtesy of John Whitaker)

Recognition for York Gate gardener

Congratulations to David Beardall, gardener at Perennial's York Gate garden, who has been honoured by his colleagues in the Professional Gardeners' Guild for his outstanding contribution to horticulture.

Anyone who has visited York Gate will be aware of David's considerable talents. The photograph of the garden above, taken in late July this year, bears testimony not just to his amazing abilities as a horticulturist and plantsman but also his artistic sensibility, which does so much to enhance visitors' understanding and pleasure of the garden.

David was presented with his award

at Greenhead Park, Huddersfield where the AGM of the Northern Branch was held. The Award is given "to a professional horticulturist based within the Branch's geographical boundaries who, in the view of the Branch Committee, has made a contribution to horticulture worthy of wider recognition." The Chairman, presenting, is Mike Hirst, former Head of Horticulture at East Durham and Houghall College.

York Gate has now closed for the winter months but will reopen in April 2012.

Visit www.perennial.org.uk or call 0845 230 1839 for details.

Make your Will power work for Perennial

One of the most important sources of funding for Perennial is the income we receive from legacies.

Over the years Perennial has received legacies of all sizes and it is this money that has enabled us to make big investments in services that are relevant and helpful to the people we are here for. In the past this has included a residential care home and sheltered accommodation; these days our help is mostly provided through our casework team – which is in itself a sizeable investment.

We don't know what the future will hold or how we will be best able to help those in need in years to come but we do know that we have to be ready to adapt and grow our services in response to the demands and problems of the day – whatever they are.

Your legacy can help us do this so please, if you are thinking of making or changing your Will, do remember Perennial. We won't forget your kindness and neither will the people we help.

Easy access to debt advice

Reliable, free advice on debt is becoming increasingly difficult to find but fortunately for any gardener facing this situation, Perennial has recently increased its debt advice team to three full time debt advisers, able to provide free, confidential and impartial advice on all aspects of personal debt and budgeting.

Sheila Thomson, our Director of Services said: "Many of the advertised money advice services can involve quite hefty charges that end up exacerbating and prolonging the debt, so I would like to stress that our services are completely free to anyone working in horticulture – and usually we can start helping a client just as soon as they have contacted us."

Perennial's debt advisers can be contacted directly by telephone on 0800 2 944 244 or by emailing debtadvice@perennial.org.uk

WIN a subscription to Grow Your Own magazine!

Packed with growing tips, ideas and advice for gardeners of all abilities, Grow Your Own is the UK's leading kitchen gardening magazine. With practical projects, growing guides, seasonal recipes, gardening news, competitions and shopping pages it's an indispensable magazine for anyone growing their own fruit, veg or herbs.



For your chance to win a year's subscription worth £44.40 simply send a postcard with your name, address and contact details on to Grow Your Own / Perennial Competition, Freeport RLZL-TLLC-XKUY, 21-23 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY. Entries must be received before 30th November 2011.

Or for a sneak peak of the magazine and lots more visit www.growfruitandveg.co.uk

Sunshine and showers

Despite some indifferent and downright dreadful weather, there were some notable scorchers amongst our 2012 calendar of special events, including a guided tour of the gardens of Blenheim Palace (right), Lady Portsmouth leading a tour of her wonderful gardens at Farleigh House, a Head Gardener's tour of Chatsworth House gardens, a visit to Derry Watkins' garden and nursery, and a tour of Oxford University's college gardens (below). Unfortunately we had to cancel a few events due to low ticket sales, so apologies if you were disappointed.

Next year's events will include lunch and a tour of Prue Leith's gardens in Gloucestershire and a visit to garden designer Arabella Lennox Boyd's gardens at Gresgarth Hall near

Lancaster. Friends scheme members will be able to purchase tickets from February and booking will be open to all from March onwards.

For details of our Friends of Perennial or Friends of York Gate schemes, please telephone 0845 676 0636 or visit our website.



Perennial's help with long term care

Anyone who has had to go through the exhausting process of looking for long-term care for a relative or friend will know just how difficult it is to find good, affordable and appropriate services, so we would like to remind you how Perennial is able to help horticulturists and their families in this respect.

Perennial's casework team is able to provide advice and information for any horticulturist who is facing the prospect of needing long term care for themselves or a partner/spouse. Typically, that might entail help researching suitable homes, advice on benefits or clarifying the

obligations of statutory authorities. In 2010 we created a Long Term Care Fund, which in certain circumstances may provide extra help, either by way of 'top-ups' to fees in care homes or to help pay for care at home when the statutory authorities will not pay.

Most importantly we would urge anyone in this situation to get in touch; it is so important to have the right information when you're making this difficult decision, and we're only too happy to help. Find out more by visiting our website or call us on 0845 230 1839.



John Grimwood: a true friend of Perennial

We were very saddened to learn of the death of John Grimwood, who has been a great supporter, volunteer and ambassador for Perennial for many, many years. John regularly attended shows and events to sell goods and raise funds, and also gave freely of his time as a member of our speaker panel.

John started his horticultural working life in 1959 as a garden boy, and his 30-year career with Redbridge Council took him from school gardener to Technical Manager. He was also branch secretary for his local horticultural society and gardening association, and an active member of the Institute of Groundsmanship.

John had been ill for some months so had been receiving support from Perennial's casework team, prompting him to write this letter to 'The Groundsman' magazine:

Sir – I am writing as both a Perennial supporter/volunteer and Perennial client to let you know that the charity does indeed look after its clients...

...In early January this year I was diagnosed as having lung cancer. Subsequently, I contacted Perennial to see what help or advice they could offer. A caseworker visited me and suggested that as my current income was above a certain level that no practical [financial] help could be offered but advised me what services and allowances I could apply for.

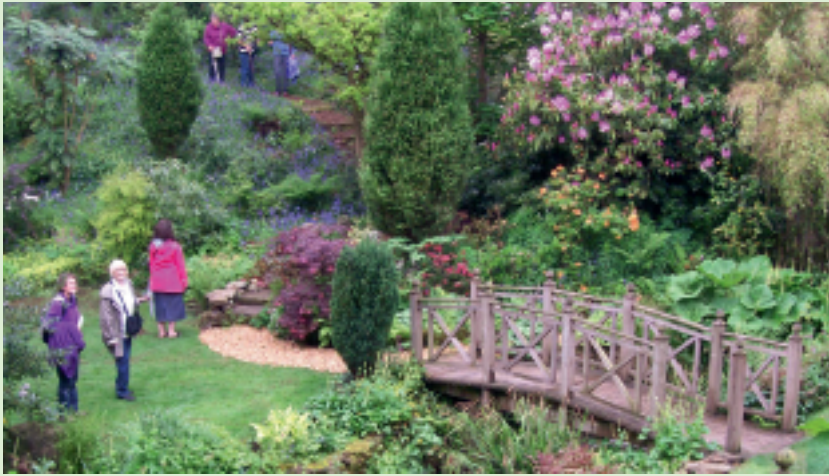
But Perennial does not forget even clients such as myself. I have since been contacted by my caseworker to check my condition and to check that all is still OK with me.

So, as an IOG member and a Perennial client, can I please ask all members to support this wonderful charity that does so much for horticulturists in times of illness, injury or other adversity.

Need more information? Telephone 0845 230 1839 or visit www.perennial.org.uk

Art for Perennial's sake

Greetings cards are one of our best selling items, both through our catalogue and from sales at shows and events, so we're always on the lookout for new artists to showcase in print. If you are an artist or photographer (particularly if your subjects are horticultural/botanical) and you would like to see your work reproduced please send some samples of your work to Kathy Stoffer, either by post to 115/117 Kingston Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7SU or email digital images to kstoffer@perennial.org.uk. We are unable to pay a fee but if we use your image we will include a credit and a few free packs.



With thanks...

Harrogate Flower Shows continue to provide vital donations to support our work. Our combined plant crèches at the Spring and Autumn Shows have this year raised a total of over £4,300 and required over 220 volunteers to man our busy facilities. Fantastic 'super' volunteers Maggie Mitchell and Janet Middleton also ran our charity goods stall at the shows, selling gifts from our catalogues to visitors and raising a further £1,300 for the coffers. Our warm thanks also go to the six garden owners who opened their beautiful gardens in Stone Rings Close (above) in Harrogate in aid of Perennial earlier this year. With a lot of hard work they raised over £1,400 – a fantastic amount!

Greetings card fundraiser



In the New Year we will be introducing a new 'box set' range of greetings cards which will give gardening clubs and horticultural societies the chance to raise money for themselves while helping Perennial. The cards are contained within a smart, portable display box costing around £100 and providing a profit in the region of £100-£150 for the club/society. The cards can be restocked throughout the year.

If your organisation is interested in taking part in the scheme, contact Kathy Stoffer on 0845 230 1839 or email kstoffer@perennial.org.uk for more details.

Please help. . . Your donation will enable us to reach more vulnerable people who are facing hardship or fuel crisis through the winter months - thank you.

I would like to help with a donation of:

£15 £30 £50 £100 Other £ GP11/2

NAME ADDRESS

POSTCODE DAYTIME TEL. NO.

EMAIL

Or telephone us with your credit/debit card details on 0845 676 0640

To join Friends of Perennial or Friends of York Gate please telephone 0845 676 0636

Please tick this box if you do not want to receive an acknowledgement

Are you a UK taxpayer? If so, the Gift Aid scheme enables us to increase the value of your contribution at no extra cost to you. Simply tick the box below.

I can confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and I would like Perennial to treat as Gift Aid all donations I make from the date of this declaration, until I notify you otherwise. I understand I must pay at least 25p tax for every £1 donated in the tax year of my donation.

SIGNATURE DATE

We would like to send you our gift catalogues, produced by our trading company GRBS (Enterprises) Ltd. Please tick this box if you do not wish to receive these catalogues. *Please return to: Perennial, PO Box 3029, Reading RG1 9TQ.*

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DONATION LINE – call 0845 676 0640 to make your credit/debit card donation