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GARDENING LEAVE
Horticultural Therapy
For The Armed Forces Past And Present

‘Walled Therapy’

Saturday 17th May to Sunday 8th June 2014

*Come and get your own piece of ‘Walled Therapy’ during
Chelsea Fringe 2014. Reflect, Relax and Dig in!*

2014 sees the centenary anniversary of the start of The Great War. Our plant nursery is set within the historic Tongswood Estate. 14 men from Tongswood lost their lives in The Great War. We invited 14 primary schools in the High Weald to design their own poppy wreaths to remember these men. Our Chelsea Fringe event is supporting ‘Gardening Leave’ a fantastic charity who ‘tend to the invisible wounds of conflict’, using horticultural therapy in walled gardens.

Emma Davies, The Walled Nursery, Water Lane, Hawkhurst, Kent. TN18 5DH

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'Gardening Therapy'



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'An estimated 20% of veterans carry a mental wound; and these need as much healing as any physical wound. Symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, increased levels of anxiety, hyper-vigilance, insomnia, inability to concentrate, mood swings, intrusive thoughts, depression, possible psychosis, and substance misuse/self-medication. As a result many veterans become socially isolated, staying indoors and unable to work.'

Gardening Leave uses horticultural therapy within walled gardens to support troubled veterans on their journey to good health and their transition to civilian life. The enclosed or walled nature of the gardens they work in provides ex service personnel with the opportunity to work in a safe, enclosed space.

So how can gardening heal invisible wounds?

Physical Regular digging or weeding reduces heart rate and improves fitness levels including muscle and strength.

Cognitive The outdoor environment is better for cognitive learning than traditional classroom, improved concentration, improved attention and memory.

Emotional Improvements in self-esteem through becoming a care-giver rather than receiver and through successful food-growing. Reduction in anxiety & depression with a safe release of anger and frustration.

Social Providing services to a wider community reduces social isolation and working with others encourages teamwork skills, co-operativeness, social interaction and communication skills.

At The Walled Nursery, we have an infamous '**Bed of Hope!** This bed is smothered in Couch Grass, Ground Elder and even the dreaded Mare's Tail...but we have hope! We are encouraging visitors to our nursery throughout Chelsea Fringe fortnight to grab their own bit of horticultural therapy...take a fork or spade and dig in!

Within the 'Bed of Hope, will be all the tools to enable you to 'dig in' along with words of encouragement, reflection and information about the therapeutic qualities of gardening, all to spur you on!

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Schools

There were 14 men from our Tongswood Estate killed in the The Great War. 2014 is the centenary anniversary of the start of The Great War.

14 primary schools in the High Weald were each given 7 wooden Poppies, one for each year group, from reception to year 6. We asked each class to create a design to decorate their class Poppy; thinking about how war can affect people and how gardening can heal the invisible wounds of our ex service personnel.

The children had free reign to create what they liked, be it in paint, glitter, material, the only rule was that the designs must be in black and red and 2 dimensional. Head Teachers from each school judged the winning design for each year groups Poppy. The schools will deliver their poppies to us week commencing 6th May 2014. The seven poppies from each school will be made into a wreath to represent that school.



The 14 Poppies created by the schools will be displayed either side of the Poppy Wreath sculpture which was given to us by the artist Vivian Pedley . This sculpture was used in Vivian's art exhibition 'A Memorial to a Memorial' held in our nursery back in 2012 .

<http://www.vivianpedley.com/>

Behind the 14 School Poppies will be 14 crosses with the names of the 14 men from our estate who lost their lives in the Great War.

There will be an exhibition of the schools Poppy designs showing the thought processes behind their Poppy Wreaths.

Hastings and Bexhill Wood Recycling have designed a bench especially for this centenary anniversary and have kindly donated this to our nursery for visitors to sit and reflect in peace and tranquillity.

<http://www.recyclingwood.org.uk/>

The poppies will be on display in our nursery for the next four years at least, to remember the anniversary of the four years of The Great War.

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Poppies

Anyone who works in our 'bed of hope' will not only get their own bit of 'Walled Therapy', they will also be given a *Papaver rhoeas* plant, the classic Field Poppy or Flanders Poppy to plant in their own garden as a thank you for their contribution.

We have donated Poppy seeds to all of the schools who take part in our 'Walled Therapy' project and have encouraged them to plant as many Poppies in their school as they can.

We will be giving away Poppy plants to our visitors and asking them to make a donation to our chosen charity, 'Gardening Leave'. Surrounding our Poppy Wreaths and the Bed of Doom, will be hundreds of red Field Poppies.

We will be serving Poppy Seed cakes and Poppy Seed Snacks throughout the Chelsea Fringe event and we are donating a percentage of the sales of refreshments and plants to Gardening Leave.



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