

horticap

Growing Together



SCAN ME

Supporting and educating
at Bluecoat Wood Nurseries

www.horticap.org

Issue 3 2026

Welcome to our third newsletter of 2026

What a hot, dry summer we are having and we know that gardens have suffered with the intense heat and lack of rain. It has been demanding for our students to keep up with the watering, and our water storage capacity has definitely been tested to the full.

However, our plants have continued to look wonderful, and our customers have appreciated the quality we like to offer. Our shop and Hopkins have had a good season, with our beautiful garden and shaded Nature Trail being very popular to relax in or explore.



Being part of our community is important to us, and this edition has plenty examples of how we engage with other organisations, and individuals. These collaborations enhance the working lives of our students in so many ways, from raising valuable funds to extend facilities and equipment, through to social engagement.



This edition shows us having a presence at the Great Yorkshire Show, and the MG and Classic Car Show at Pateley Bridge. These kinds of events are a great platform for our students and volunteers to highlight the charity, the work our students do, and encourage new visitors to Horticap.

We have included a lovely piece about Bryan and his Granddaughter Lydia, who are helping us in a rather wonderful way, and news of a community connection with a local high school.

We also tell of us being out and about in Harrogate planting up flower beds and pretty planters to enhance our beautiful town. These plants have all been grown here at Horticap by our students, who also maintain our own garden and kitchen garden, which are looking absolutely fabulous!



It was our pleasure to host a special celebration for The Banks Group for their 50th Anniversary. Several of our students enjoyed being Waiting On staff for the evening, with Hopkins providing delicious nibbles and fizz. They also served Afternoon Teas for a U3A choir Songs and Scones occasion, which went down very well!

Developments on our own site are continuing apace, with the Boot Room taking shape. This has been a large undertaking with the floor being raised, underfloor heating installed then fully concreted. And this could not be done until the framework of the building, including the roof, had been improved. This renovation really will make such a difference to the facilities our students have here, in order to support their work. We just hope the unexpected item on the new blue floor leaves quietly!

Being able to do these improvements shows just how important community connections are to us. Contributions from organisations such as Harlow Hill Allotment Association, who gave us a donation after their plant sale, help us to continually develop and provide better facilities for our students. We really do appreciate the generous contribution from their plant sale!

We look forward to sharing lots more of our news later in the year, but until then, continued thanks to all of you who keep supporting us, and happy gardening!

The Horticap Team



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The 2026 Great Yorkshire Show

We had great pleasure in having our usual presence at this prestigious event, and the students in Erica's group had a great time creating the planters for the President's Box. The work for these is always student led as they choose the plants, and how they should be arranged. Our students have spent months growing them, and take great pride in their work, knowing that their creations will be enjoyed by thousands of visitors to the show.

Both Hannahs, pictured with instructor Erica, enjoyed starting the process off one Wednesday, and what fun they had!



This year we were proud to receive a Silver Award for our pretty, and rather stylish show garden. Our ever-helpful volunteers said that it was very popular with visitors who took lots of photographs of it. We're not surprised!

It is down to the constant support of our volunteers that we are able to have a presence at these events, and we would like to thank each and every one of them!

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We are always grateful that we get so much support from our students' families and friends, which come in a variety of ways. Hannah has regular family orders to fulfil for wreaths at Christmas, and hanging baskets in the summer. Here she is making the basket for her cousin's pub, The Deramore Arms in Heslington, York. Hannah loves doing these orders, and puts a lot of thought into the designs. She also loves that her Aunt and Uncle come to pick them up, and they often share a tasty treat and a good catch up with her in Hopkins.

Hannah is one of quite a few students who work a regular shift in our Horticap shop, which is packed to the rafters with all nature of gifts, cards, houseplants and bird food. It is a hub of activity, and the first port of call for many of our customers.

All of the students who work in there love to give the warmest possible welcome to visitors. But they do much more than that!

They can be seen checking orders in, unpacking items, weighing bird food out and pricing up. They might help with displaying our giftware and giving our newsletters out. But their priority is to be there for our customers, and we think they do this very well!



Shop work does not stop in the shop itself, as customers may be offered some help with carrying their purchases to the car. They also ensure that the displays of plants at the front of the shop are tidy and well-watered.

They achieve this, and much more, with the support of the shop team who make sure that whichever student is working with them, has the best possible time whilst serving our customers.

Garden Hints and Tips for the Season

The weather patterns at the moment can make it tricky to know what to do next in the garden, and our off-site teams have found it very hard at times. However, we always take pleasure in seeing all the beautiful blooms and green around, so here we share a few seasonal hints and tips that are helpful to us in our own garden work.

September

- Divide herbaceous perennials to ensure that plants remain healthy and have a more vigorous growth next year.
- Collect seeds as they dry, store in labelled paper bags and try sowing them next year.



- Keep up with watering as necessary, and try to use 'grey' water from your washing up and your water butt.
- Keep a look out in our shop and greenhouse for our usual spectacular range of spring flowering bulbs. Such beautiful colours in the garden will be a welcome sight come the Spring!
- Sow Sweet Peas and keep in cool conditions to give early summer flowers next year.

Top tip – If your garden needs new perennials, this is the perfect time to plant them. The soil is still warm, and there is an increasing chance of rain. As a general rule, our students care for our plants for several years before we put them out for sale, so you can be sure of their quality. Come and see our fabulous range in our sales greenhouse. We are sure you won't be disappointed.

October

- Keep an eye on the temperature falling, and move tender plants to a more sheltered position. They will enjoy being in kinder conditions with plenty of light.
- Cut back perennials that have died down, but don't be too tidy. Birds will feed from the seed heads and wildlife will appreciate a few places and corners in the garden to overwinter.
- Continue to divide herbaceous perennials and collect seeds for propagation.
- Prune climbing roses to encourage plentiful blooms next year.

October – continued

- Harvest ripe apples, pears and other fruit and vegetables. Store them carefully to prolong their shelf life, or just eat them!



Plant some bright winter flowering plants such as Heathers and Pansies to fill those gaps left from summer bedding, and don't forget those Spring bulbs!

Horticap, where we grow people and plants



November

- Rake up fallen leaves from lawns and water features and pop them into bags or pile them up to become leaf mould, an excellent and free, soil conditioner. Leaves on flower beds can be left as they will rot down and nourish the soil over the winter.
- Ensure that pots and planters are raised off the ground, and consider removing plant pot saucers, to prevent pots becoming too wet through the winter and damaging the plant and their roots, particularly if the freezing cold gets to them.
- Compost as much of your garden waste as possible. The nutrients in all these trimmings are full of valuable nourishment for your compost.
- Have your garden fleece, bubble wrap or hessian sacks at the ready to protect your plants from the cold.
- Whilst gardens are personal places and plants can be chosen for individual reasons, there are many plants that our students grow and sell here at Horticap every year, simply because they are brilliant! We thought it would be interesting to share some of the plants that have been particularly popular this season, and that our customers just get enough of!



- Hydrangea – we have so many varieties, shapes, colours and sizes for sale, with the white ones being particularly popular.
- Salvia – a plant with spikes of jewel-coloured flowers that will satisfy the needs of any pollinator.
- Brunnera – an absolute must for shady corners where the silvery leaf edging adds a touch of elegance.
- Erigeron – a wonderful plant for groundcover which produces an abundance of pretty, daisy-like flowers.

Edgeworthia chrysantha (paperbush)



We are sure that all our visitors would agree that the range of plants in our greenhouses is pretty impressive, and we do love to introduce the odd, unusual plant that we feel would look great in gardens. Timothy would like to present one such plant, Edgeworthia chrysantha Red Dragon.

Edgeworthia chrysantha, originating from the woodlands of China and the Himalayas are celebrated for their unusual and scented flowers. This plant has an interesting use, with the common name 'paperbush' being an important clue. In Japan, the bark fibres are traditionally used in making Japanese tissue, called 'mitsumata' paper.

Mitsumata is used in the making of banknotes due to its high quality and durable properties. Along with parts from the paper mulberry tree and gampi plant, this bark is used in the production of Japanese paper, washi.

The roots, flowers and bark are used in traditional Chinese medicine where the root and bark are believed to have properties that relieve pain and inflammation.

This is a shrub with a beautiful structure, that sits perfectly with evergreens, grasses and wildflowers. The unusual looking blooms are highly fragranced, flowering from late winter to early spring and making it a perfect addition to the winter garden, and very attractive to pollinating winter insects. With buds that are covered with silky white hairs, and pretty blooms that flower over a long period, they are a stunning and interesting addition to any garden.



Student Focus – David

David joined the Horticap team in July 2014 and loves working here! His constant smile and willingness to engage in any task asked of him is a joy to see. Attending with his Personal Assistant from Leeds Autism Services, his particular needs are accommodated, allowing him to work at his own pace and to take breaks where and when he needs them.



David helped to lay the paving stones that we all walk along when going between the greenhouse and the garden. It has stood the test of time and still looks great!



David enjoys art work too, with an eye for colour and composition. The lovely colourful picture that David decided to paint, shown bottom left, became an art theme that students decided to copy, and display on the wall. David was very proud!



And there is that smile again, which means the world to us at Horticap. David has developed skills that are really impressive, and we hope that he continues to come here for years to come.

For further information regarding Leeds Autism Services:

www.leedsautism.org.uk

And just like that, it's that time again when we take delivery of our young perennials. It is always an exciting time for us, as it starts the cyclical process of our nursery work, and caring for these small potted plants that will be for sale in several years' time. We are a plant nursery, and one of the most important roles that our wonderful students have is to nurture these plants by feeding, watering and potting them on as they grow.

“We aim to help students extend their knowledge and skills, through structured training using professionally qualified staff and volunteers”



We are currently in the process of replacing an old, well-used greenhouse that has served us very well over the years. It was built in 1992 by the team of students who worked here at that time.

The preparation work has been extensive as it was full of plants, benches and other equipment which have needed to be moved, then the whole thing had to be dismantled before beginning the preparation work for a new one to be erected.



As illustrated above, our perennials arrive in small pots. When they need repotting, they go into a slightly larger pot, with the majority then planted into the large pots that many of our plants are sold in.



Our nursery team start planning at least a year in advance, keeping a close eye on trends and new plant varieties. This goes down very well with many customers who will tell us that we often have plants they have not seen before, or anywhere else.

Quality is crucial to us and these young perennials are sourced from highly reputable growers. Some orders come from the Netherlands, with others being from Hampshire and Oxfordshire.

These young plants will be carefully housed and looked after until they are ready to sell. The health and quality of the plants we sell is important to all of us at Horticap, and our students take pride in giving them the best start in life.



We are grateful for the support we receive for this new project, and it will come as no surprise that our students have embraced this work and developing new skills. They are also relishing the idea of working in a less draughty working environment, and a specialised area for keeping our plants healthy while they are being prepared for sale.



A labour of love, across the generations

We are incredibly lucky here at Horticap that we are often the recipients of unwanted, but useable tools. Our volunteer William has often refurbished these onsite with students, and then kindly sold them at car boot sales for us.

We have also had several very successful tool sales onsite, which have brought much needed funds for our work, to benefit the work done with our students.

Many of these tools were refurbished by Bryan and Lydia, an impressive Grandfather and Granddaughter team, and we cannot thank them enough.



Bryan tells us:

***"I am a retired engineer** and good tools have been an integral part of my work. I enjoy bringing back to life old and neglected tools, so I was delighted when Horticap asked me to do just that. I get a great deal of satisfaction in the work, particularly when the results end up in donations to such a worthwhile charity as Horticap."*

Sheffield steel is respected worldwide for its quality, uniformity and strength, and for its importance in the Industrial Revolution. This means that tools made with Sheffield steel are perfect for bringing back to life to work again.

Bryan says *"I get a buzz when I find 'Sheffield' hidden under the rust! Lydia, my granddaughter, loves supporting me and helping in painting the tools after cleaning."*

Thank you so much Bryan and Lydia for your dedicated work for us, here at Horticap.

It is appreciated!



Friendship

Our students mean the world to us, and it is always sad when we see them leave us, for whatever reason. Such close and lovely friendships are built up over time, and we all miss those we have spent so much time with.

Two students who have now left Horticap to benefit from more specialised care are David and Andrew, and it is great that we are able to visit them from time to time.

Recently, Paul took his groups to see both David and Andrew in their respective homes, to catch up with them and re-establish friendships. They both had been at Horticap for many years and shared their friendship and knowledge with everyone. It was a real treat for other students to see them again, and to see them both looking so well too.

See you both again very soon!



Margaret Tutt

It is with great sadness however, that we share the news that one of our friends, Margaret Tutt has passed away.

Margaret began coming up to Horticap many years ago, with residents that she worked with. She supported them to help us with a myriad of tasks. It was such valuable work which helped us enormously, and gave real purpose to those she supported.

Our sincere condolences go to Margaret's family.

Nidd Green Hat Gardening

We are incredibly proud of our relationships within the community. Over the 40 plus years that Horticap has existed, the links created have played a crucial part in both its existence and continued success, and we were thrilled that a new partnership has been created with a local school, Nidderdale High School.

We were approached by them to offer advice and provide plants for an exciting new project they have started. They came to visit Horticap recently, and Heather Tuffs, their Outdoor Learning Tutor, tells all!

"Nidderdale High School's 'Nidd Green Hat Gardening' was developed in spring this year to support students to succeed and thrive beyond the constraints of the traditional curriculum model. A grant aimed at improving school grounds was applied for from The Ernest Cook Trust and £1000 was gratefully received.

The purpose of Nidd Green Hat Gardening is to empower students with true responsibility, a sense of purpose and to give them the feeling of doing a real and worthwhile job - very similar to the Horticap ethos. It was also intended to try and create pride in our school grounds. The project has already spread much positivity amongst both the school community and the general public, who pass through our grounds on the way to the leisure centre.



The welcome our students were given by Horticap staff and students was exceptional - it was a very special thing to witness Horticap and Nidd High students working together to load up our minibus with 590 begonias, which are now currently thriving back at school."

Horticap students Carl, Victoria and Matthew had a brilliant time helping Nidderdale High School students choose some pretty Begonias to brighten up their school project.



*"The link between **Nidderdale High** and **Horticap** is rapidly becoming a very special one - thanks to everyone at Horticap for their advice, guidance and understanding of the underlying educational aims of this project. It has been of the highest standard. Both establishments are doing very similar work and it seems highly fitting that we've purchased home grown Horticap begonias to plant in our 'NIDDERDALE' lettering, Stage 1 of the Green Hat Gardening project.*



Stage 2 of our project, the replanting of a large, neglected raised bed in front of school is well underway and we're very much looking forward to visiting Horticap again in September to purchase the plants for it.

Many thanks to everyone at Horticap for your continued support of the Nidd Green Hat Gardeners - it is very much appreciated!"

What a valuable and fun looking project this is. Everyone at Horticap is looking forward to seeing you all again, and to the continuing success of Nidd Green Hat Gardening!

Congratulations to our Art and Craft instructor, Jenny, who has graduated with a Bachelor of Art (Hons) in Textiles Practice. This is a fantastic achievement that reflects her creativity, dedication, and hard work throughout her studies. Completing this degree is a significant milestone, and Jenny's success is a testament to her passion for textiles and commitment to developing her skills.



Jenny's work with the students can be seen around the site, including some beautifully colourful murals alongside the greenhouse wall.



We wish Jenny every success as she continues to inspire others through her talent and creativity. We look forward to her next project as she works in collaboration with the textile artists, Gathered Threads and Horticap students. This will be a bee themed installation titled Pollinator Power which will be on display at the National Trust Nunnington Hall from September to December 2026.



If you are able to visit the exhibition, here is a little taster of the work that our students are doing for it. The colours look amazing!



A Room with a view for our Hortibees

There was a worrying start to the season for our bees this year, with some of the hive populations showing signs of stress, possibly due to the unpleasant and changeable weather conditions earlier in the year.

With the help of Judith, who has cared for our bees for years alongside her husband Mike, they have been nurtured back to health, and we are happy to say that we now have five hives, and that the bees appear very happy. They have also been given the Winnie the Pooh characters from the Spring Show in their area, which we hope will inspire them to produce an abundance of our award-winning honey!



Visitors to the Nature Trail might have seen a bank of Himalayan balsam right by the hives, amongst a large variety of other flowering plants.

We acknowledge that this plant is an invasive species, but we manage it carefully as we also appreciate the benefits of its rich source of pollen for our bees, and many other pollinating insects. We hope that this pollen rich source will give our bees the strength they need to live through the winter months.

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Student Focus – Stephen

38 years ago, Stephen joined the team at Horticap and since then, has not stopped! He is at the heart of everything we do, and keeps us all on track...and on our toes!

His most recent challenge has been joining the Hopkins team and, as expected, has excelled in his approach to this work. He has a meticulous attitude to work which suits the strict regulations that exist in a hospitality environment. Everyone in Hopkins hopes that Stephen wants to stay in there for a very long time!



Stephen enjoys attending events Horticap is invited to, and we love that he always turns up looking so dapper! He is an unofficial ambassador for Horticap and fulfils his role extraordinarily well.

His length of time here makes Stephen an ideal role model for our other students, who hold him in high esteem and appreciate his never-ending sense of humour!

But we all agree that Stephen has a particular talent for helping to create some of the wonderful

hanging baskets that are an important part of our business. We have been asked for Stephen to make hanging basket orders in previous years, as he is so accomplished at it!



In 1992, Stephen, along with other students and Ian, our Chief Operating Officer, helped to build a large greenhouse on-site, known as our Yellow Greenhouse. This is a student work area where our perennials are stored whilst maturing.

34 years later, Stephen is helping to dismantle it, due to it becoming obsolete, and preparing the whole area for the erection of a new one. The skills he has developed started here 38 years ago, and he takes great pride in using them to do the best job he possibly can. Thank you, Stephen!



Out and about

It was up with the lark for students Victoria, Mark, Jamie and Alistair and instructor Steve, as they loaded up the minibus with plants, and headed out to the MG and Classic Car Show at Pateley Bridge.

They all love attending this event and enjoyed seeing all the vintage vehicles. They also like to spread the word about Horticap,



and managed to sell a few plants in the process!

Whilst the fellas were chatting to vehicle owners, Victoria managed to 'adopt' Poppy, and enter her into one of the dog classes. She was over the moon to be awarded a Highly Commended rosette, and by the looks of it, so was Poppy!

Horticap students have also been working in Harrogate itself, as we have helped to brighten up the centre of the town as part of the Floral Summer Celebration. Organised by Harrogate BID, Harrogate Business Improvement District, and sponsored by Harrogate District Chamber of Commerce, this year celebrates 60 years of Harrogate International Festivals. It was our pleasure to replant the flower beds at Victoria Shopping Centre, and install

filled Horticap made planters by the old Post Office.

Jason Maxwell, CEO of Harrogate BID, seen here with our students, was delighted with the results.

As for our students, they just love being out and about and working hard. But they also like a good relax too, particularly when they find some comfy deck chairs!



GENERAL OPENING TIMES

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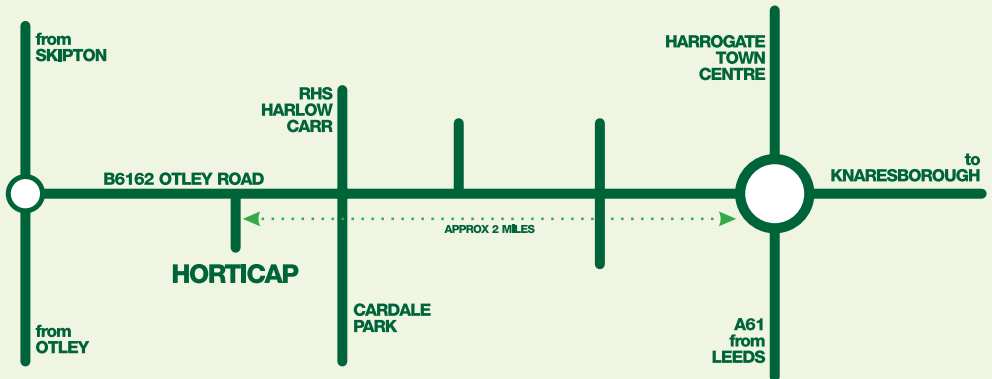
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Horticap Ltd

Bluecoat Wood Nurseries
Otley Road Harrogate HG3 1QL

Tel: 01423 522876

info@horticap.org

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