

2025-2026

CREATIVE GARDENS, CONNECTING COMMUNITY, NATURE, AND ART

Dawson Park Community Garden X Morwenna King //
Fruitbowls Community Garden X Kit Martin //
University of Dundee Community Garden X Suzanne
Scott (WhimSicaAL Lush) // Room to Be X Manuela de
los Rios // Victoria Gardens X Gillian Adair McFarland

Facilitated by the Art and Nature Collective, Grow
Dundee, and Dundee Climate Fund



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Photography: *Morwenna King, Sue Black, Kit Martin, Suzanne Scott, Manuela de los Rios, Room to Be participants (anonymous), Gillian Adair McFarland.*

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FOREWORD

Kevin Frediani, Co-Director, Art and Nature Collective

In a world where the pace of crisis outstrips the pace of policy, where the lines of sight toward resolution feel obscured by complexity, it is tempting to believe that the answers must lie somewhere “out there”, in distant institutions, in abstract strategies, in the next grand plan. Yet again and again, I am reminded that the most enduring forms of wisdom are already here, rooted in the living systems that sustain us and in the communities who tend them with care.

This publication, *Creative Gardens: Connecting Community, Nature and Art in Dundee*, is a testament to that truth. It emerges from a simple but profound proposition: that creativity and cultivation are not separate domains, but intertwined ways of being human in a more-than-human world. When artists step into gardens not as instructors but as companions, and when growers open their spaces not only for food but for imagination, something powerful happens. New forms of connection take root. New ways of seeing become possible. New futures begin to germinate.

Across these pages, you will meet gardens that breathe with their own character, artists who listen deeply, and communities who show what it means to build belonging through shared acts of care. You will also meet the other beings - the lavender, the butterflies, the soil organisms, the shifting light - who shape these collaborations as much as any human hand. Their presence reminds us that creativity is not solely a human endeavour; it is a property of life itself.

At a time when many feel overwhelmed by the scale of ecological and social challenges, these stories offer something vital: hope grounded in practice. Not the fragile hope of wishful thinking, but the durable hope that grows from doing, from tending, noticing, making, and imagining together. The kind of hope that is composted from real relationships and nourished by the slow, steady work of community.

As Co-Director of the Art and Nature Collective, I am proud of what this project represents. It shows that when we honour the value of both art and nature, not as luxuries, but as essential ways of navigating a changing world, we create spaces where people can reconnect with themselves, with each other, and with the wider living systems we depend upon.

This book is more than a record. It is an invitation. An invitation to slow down. To listen differently. To recognise the intelligence of the land and the creativity of community. To imagine what becomes possible when we allow ourselves to be shaped by the places we care for.

May these stories inspire others to cultivate their own creative ecologies, in gardens, in neighbourhoods, in institutions, and in the everyday spaces where life unfolds. The challenges ahead are real, but so is our capacity to meet them with imagination, humility, and collective courage.

If we are to find our way through this moment, it will be by growing it — together.

Nicola Macnee, Community Growing Network Facilitator

Grow Dundee is the city's network of community growing spaces. We exist to nurture and develop community food growing whilst developing a wider understanding of climate and growing in a sustainable way. Through this we have found that people nurturing is a major factor in our network and something we feel passionate about. This project perfectly reflects the types of things we are trying to achieve.

Having read Kevin's words I must wholeheartedly echo what he writes. This publication teaches us to really look at the simpler things in a garden which we often take for granted and to realise our untapped creative potential. Each chapter takes a different project. The artist at each community garden is led by the initial discussions with the group as to how they handle the project. Despite having a similar brief each group comes up with a very different outcome. We are treated to many different communities working together in many different ways.

From Dawson park working together in nature.... to Fruitbowls stopping and looking and trying..... to the university showing the potential for what it can become.....to the Maxwell garden a catalyst for connection and the act of gathering, and finally to Victoria garden with the printmaking. Each page makes you smile. We learn a little of the different communities: the multicultural local community, the students, the LGBTQI plus community and the families. All working together to share ideas and inspiration.

It teaches us to take time to consider others and our wider environment and to really appreciate what's around us every day in nature. The projects are written about with love and care and each chapter instils in you a sense of hope and well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Creative Gardens grew from a simple but powerful idea: that art and growing share common ground. Both are slow, relational practices. Both rely on care, patience, experimentation, and trust. And both flourish best when rooted in community.

Creative Gardens brings together two Dundee-based collectives, the Art and Nature Collective, and the Dundee Network of Community Gardens (aka Grow Dundee). Funded by the Dundee Climate Fund, this project brought five artists into five community gardens across the city. Each residency unfolded differently, shaped by the character of the garden, the artist's practice, and the people who showed up week after week. There was no single model to follow—and that was the point.

This book reflects that diversity. It captures moments of connection, challenge, learning, and joy, and offers insight into how creative practice can meaningfully support wellbeing, environmental awareness, and community resilience. We hope it serves not only as a record of what happened, but as an invitation—to imagine what else might be possible when creativity is allowed to take root in shared green spaces.

Community gardens are already places of care: for land, for people, for futures. They hold space for learning, recovery, social connection, and climate action at a human scale. *Creative Gardens* set out to explore what happens when artists are invited into these spaces—not as external facilitators delivering a fixed outcome, but as collaborators working alongside existing communities.

Across five residencies in Dundee, artists and garden teams co-developed projects that reflected their shared interests, capacities, and contexts. Some focused on making permanent artworks, others on process and participation. Some engaged families and children; others worked with small, consistent groups. What united them was a commitment to inclusivity, creativity, and care.

Rather than attempting to directly compare these residencies, we embrace their differences. In doing so, it offers a more honest account of socially engaged, place-based creative work—one that values lived experience as much as measurable outcomes.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Positive collaboration is the key to climate action.

When addressing climate change, we need to think and work in more creative ways and engage people from all walks of life. To combat climate change and encourage relationships with the natural world, we need to nurture, celebrate, and support the individuals who volunteer and work in this sector who often feel overwhelmed by the pressures of “doing enough”.

Bringing together artists and community growers, *Creative Gardens* set out to:

1. Support collaborative learning and increase the confidence of both community environmental initiatives and environmentally engaged artists.
2. Offer interactive creative and caring nature-based activities within community growing spaces, creating and establishing new ways for communities to connect with nature and engage with environmental action.
3. Increase the visibility and impact of the Art and Nature Collective and Grow Dundee, engaging more people in sustainable living through art and community growing. We are all here for the long run!

Real change demands swift, comprehensive action across entire systems. *Creative Gardens* has connected communities, with nature, and art in a positive and productive way to highlight the critical need for collaboration between all areas of society; producing inspiring examples of successful partnerships to help drive positive change.

Dawson Park COMMUNITY Garden

ARTIST: Morwenna King

GARDEN: Dawson Park Community Garden
(Chrysalis & Growing Chrysalis)

LOCATION: West Ferry, Dundee

FOCUS: Collaborative making, wellbeing, connection
through art and nature

Dawson Park Community Garden is home to **Chrysalis** and **Growing Chrysalis**, initiatives rooted in nature-based support for mental health and wellbeing. The garden provides structured, long-term horticultural engagement alongside open, inclusive community activities, welcoming people of all ages and backgrounds.

Creative activity was already recognised as valuable but difficult to sustain alongside the practical demands of garden management. The residency created space for focused artistic engagement without placing additional pressure on garden staff or volunteers.

"IT IS ALWAYS a DIFFICULT BALANCE...
WHILST ALSO TRYING TO MANAGE THE
GARDEN ITSELF AND THE DIFFERING
NEEDS OF EVERYONE WHO ATTENDS,
SO GREAT TO HAVE SOMEONE COME IN
WITH THE ART FOCUS."

- SUE BLACK, DAWSON PARK



X MORWENNA KING

Morwenna King's practice draws on imagery from nature — plants, animals, and landscapes — and is usually developed through solitary studio work. This residency marked a shift toward a more collaborative, socially engaged way of working.

Morwenna went to Dawson Park Community Garden every Tuesday from 8th July - 12th Aug 2025, undertaking 6 sessions with the staff, gardeners, kids and visitors to the park.

The brief was open, focusing on creative projects and collaboration that could contribute colourful and inspiring works that reflect the spirit of Dawson Park Chrysalis Project - nature, mental health, healing, community.



WHAT WAS THE PROJECT ABOUT FOR YOU?

"CONNECTION, CREATIVITY, COMMUNITY AND NATURE. NURTURING A CONNECTION BETWEEN ART AND NATURE, FORMING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TWO SEPARATE GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS, AND SHARING SKILLS AND IDEAS."

- MORWENNA KING

The sessions encouraged playfulness and freedom, allowing participants to enjoy art without pressure for perfection.

A central challenge was navigating the balance between offering direction and making space for others' ideas. Morwenna's approach helped participants overcome uncertainty and engage confidently in the making process.

"I LEARNED THAT IT CAN BE HELPFUL TO OFFER A STRONG STARTING POINT FOR IDEAS TO SPRING FORTH FROM, RATHER THAN LEAVING THINGS COMPLETELY OPEN."

- MORWENNA KING



Finished artworks were installed in the garden, creating visible, lasting traces of the collaboration and a sense of shared ownership.

Was there a meaningful or memorable part of the project?

"Watching the group work together around the table, sharing ideas, inspiring one another and collectively coming up with a plan."

- SUE BLACK

"There is no one moment that stands out, I remember feeling such warmth from the group at Dawson Park Gardens - it really felt like I had been welcomed into a big family, with nature and healing at its heart."

- MORWENNA KING





Emergent themes:

Process over product

While permanent artworks were created, the shared experience of making was equally valued.

Creative space as wellbeing support

The residency reinforced the role of community gardens as places of healing, contribution, and purpose.



Connection & care

Art-making functioned as a social glue, supporting conversation, trust, and mutual care within the garden. Strengthening a sense of belonging and connection.

Structure with flexibility

Clear creative prompts helped participants develop skills and increase confidence and enjoyment around creative activity, thus allowing for individual expression.



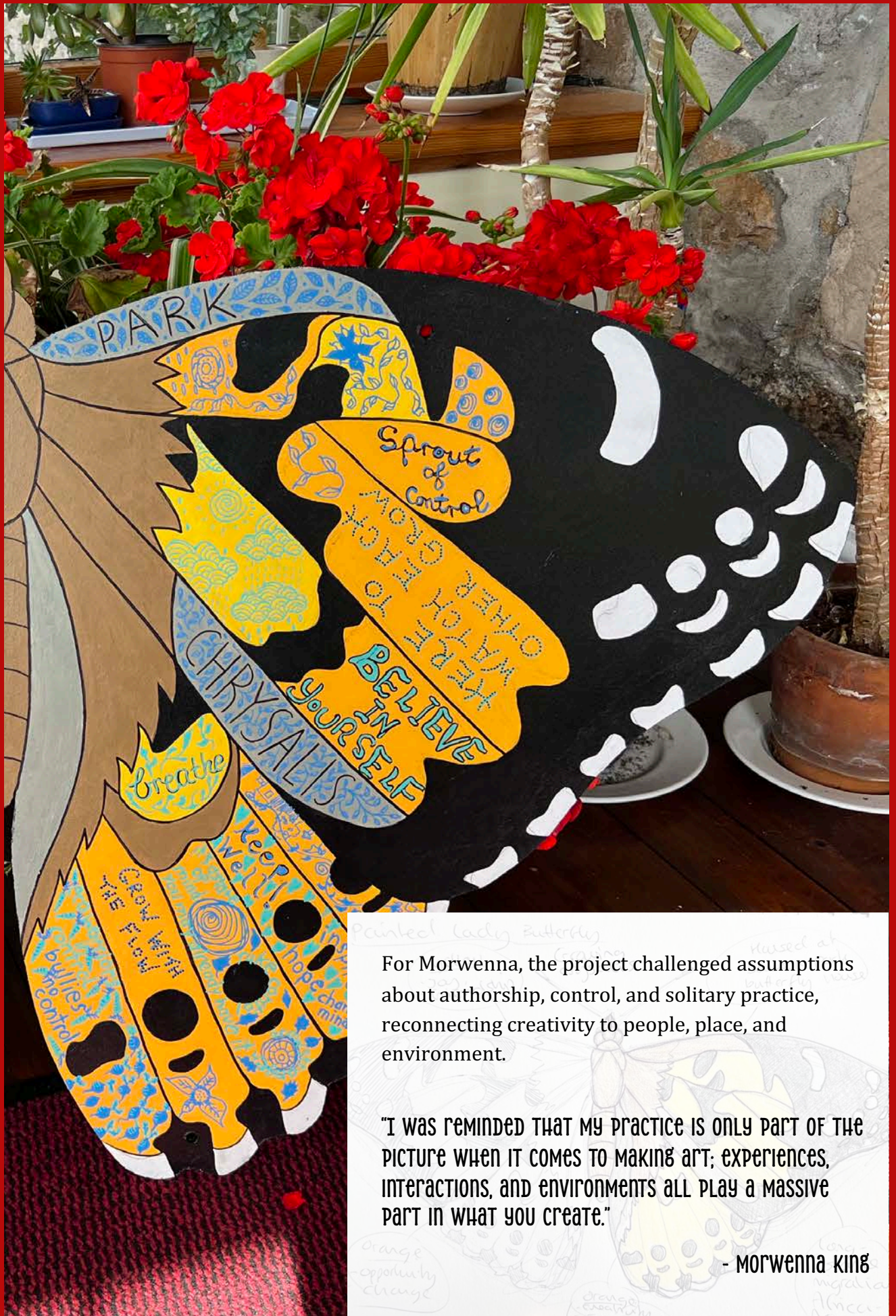


For the Dawson Park Community Garden, the residency reaffirmed the value of working with artists and strengthened ambitions for future creative collaborations.

"[THE PROJECT] GAVE A WIDER COMMUNITY FOCUS GOING FORWARD. WE HOPE THAT KIDS AND FAMILIES CAN CONTINUE TO ENGAGE IN ADDING TO THE ART INSTALLATIONS."

- SUE BLACK





For Morwenna, the project challenged assumptions about authorship, control, and solitary practice, reconnecting creativity to people, place, and environment.

"I WAS REMINDED THAT MY PRACTICE IS ONLY PART OF THE PICTURE WHEN IT COMES TO MAKING ART; EXPERIENCES, INTERACTIONS, AND ENVIRONMENTS ALL PLAY A MASSIVE PART IN WHAT YOU CREATE."

- MORWENNA KING

For Dawson Park Community Garden, the residency reaffirmed the value of working with artists and strengthened ambitions for future creative collaborations.

"THE GROUP LEARNED LOTS OF NEW SKILLS... THIS IS SOMETHING WE WOULD LIKE TO DO AGAIN."

- SUE BLACK



Both Morwenna and the garden team emphasise the importance of informal, shared moments: conversations while working, laughter, and the sense of warmth within the group. These interactions supported connection as much as the creative activity itself.

For Morwenna, the project challenged assumptions about authorship, control, and solitary practice, reconnecting creativity to people, place, and environment.

"I HOPE MY INVOLVEMENT HAS 'PLANTED SEEDS' OF IDEAS THAT WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND FLOURISH."

- MORWENNA KING



There is a desire from both Morwenna and the garden team to build on this experience. There is hope that the artworks will continue to evolve — inviting children, families, and future visitors to add to them — and that the residency has planted seeds for further artist-garden collaborations at Dawson Park.

FRUITBOWLS COMMUNITY GARDEN

ARTIST: Kit Martin

GARDEN: Fruitbowls Community Garden

LOCATION: Lochee, Dundee

FOCUS: Photography, observation, play, community connection through nature

Fruitbowls Community Garden is located beside Lochee Park on the site of two former bowling greens. The space includes a pond, orchard, fruit bushes, raised beds, a polytunnel, and open grassed areas. Each raised bed is allocated to an individual or group, enabling people to grow what they choose, supported by shared tools, seeds, and infrastructure.

The garden places strong emphasis on openness, informality, and care. Alongside growing food, Fruitbowls regularly hosts social events including barbecues, live music, and creative activities, making it a lively hub for connection as well as cultivation.

"WE LIKE TO THINK THAT ANYONE CAN JOIN IN GROWING PRODUCE IN THE GARDEN AND WELCOME NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR GARDENING GROUP ALL THE TIME. "I FELT THAT THIS PROJECT WOULD GIVE PEOPLE THE CHANCE TO DISCOVER THE GARDEN IN NEW WAYS."

- HAROLD MEIKLE



X KIT MARTIN

Kit Martin's practice centres on photography and printmaking, with the natural world acting as inspiration, material, and sometimes collaborator. During the residency, Kit worked with both digital and large-format cameras, experimenting with techniques such as double exposure and exploring ways of seeing the garden that highlighted texture, sound, and subtle change.

Kit was on site at Fruitbowls Community Garden from the 9th August till the 14th September 2025. During that time the work unfolded through informal sessions, seasonal events, and moments of shared activity, including food, music, and making, for gardeners and members of the Fruitbowls garden. Attendees ranged from teenagers to adults.

"THIS PROJECT WAS ABOUT CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE IN DUNDEE WHO CARE ABOUT COMMUNITY, GROWING, NATURE AND CREATIVITY."
- KIT MARTIN



WAS THERE A MEANINGFUL OR MEMORABLE PART OF THE PROJECT?

"IF I HAD TO CHOOSE ONE THEN I WOULD SAY THE TIME WHEN PEOPLE SAW THEIR ART WORK CHANGING JUST BY PUTTING IT OUT IN THE SUN. THE EXPRESSIONS ON PEOPLES FACES AND WHAT THEY SAID WHEN THEY WERE ABLE TO SEE THE ART WORK"

- HAROLD MEIKLE





The garden environment encouraged Kit to adapt her technical approach while deepening her engagement with people and place. While the workshops shaped participants' experiences, Kit reflected that the residency was equally formative on a personal level, strengthening her connection to Dundee and reinforcing the value of community-based work.

"EVERYONE WHO ATTENDED THE EVENTS HAD A REALLY GOOD TIME...LOTS OF SMILING FACES AND ENJOYMENT THROUGHOUT BY ALL."

- HAROLD MEIKLE

"THEY DISCOVERED NEW WAYS OF SEEING/NOTICING THINGS IN THE GARDEN AND ALSO LISTENING TO IT."

- KIT MARTIN



Participants were encouraged to slow down, notice details, and engage with the garden as a multisensory environment — listening to the pond, observing insects, and responding creatively to what they found.

"IT GIVES ME HOPE BEING INVOLVED WITH PEOPLE WHO GROW AND THEREFORE CARE."

- KIT MARTIN



"THERE WERE A LOT OF PHOTOS TAKEN BY KIT, BOTH OF PRODUCE THAT WAS GROWING IN THE GARDEN AND OF VOLUNTEERS WHO SPEND THEIR TIME IN THE GARDEN. THESE PHOTOS ALLOWED US TO SEE OURSELVES AND WHAT WE GROW IN GREATER DETAIL"

- HAROLD MEIKLE



Themes that emerged:

Exploration & noticing

Photography and creative exercises encouraged people to observe the garden more closely — visually, sonically, and seasonally.

Creativity embedded in everyday life

Art-making was woven into existing garden activities rather than treated as a separate or specialist event.



Social connection through informality

Food, music, humour, and shared labour played a central role in building trust and participation.

Hope & care through growing

Both artist and garden reflected on the emotional impact of being around people who grow, care, and contribute together.

For Fruitbowls Community Garden, the residency revealed new dimensions of the garden — showing that creativity could deepen engagement and attract people who might not otherwise see themselves as gardeners.

"THE PROJECT HAS ENABLED US TO SEE MORE OF WHAT WE DO, AND TO SHOW THAT THERE IS MORE TO THE GARDEN THAN WE THOUGHT. IT HAS SHOWN US THAT PEOPLE SHOW AN INTEREST IN THINGS AROUND THE GARDEN AND ARE WILLING TO BE PART OF SOMETHING DIFFERENT, ENABLING THEM TO HAVE A DIFFERENT TIME IN OUR SPACE RATHER THAN JUST GARDENING."

- HAROLD MEIKLE

For Kit, the project reinforced a commitment to community-based practice and highlighted the breadth of what photography can offer.

I REALLY ENJOY WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN DUNDEE AND I HAVE PLENTY TO OFFER WITHIN PHOTOGRAPHY AND BEYOND IT."

- KIT MARTIN

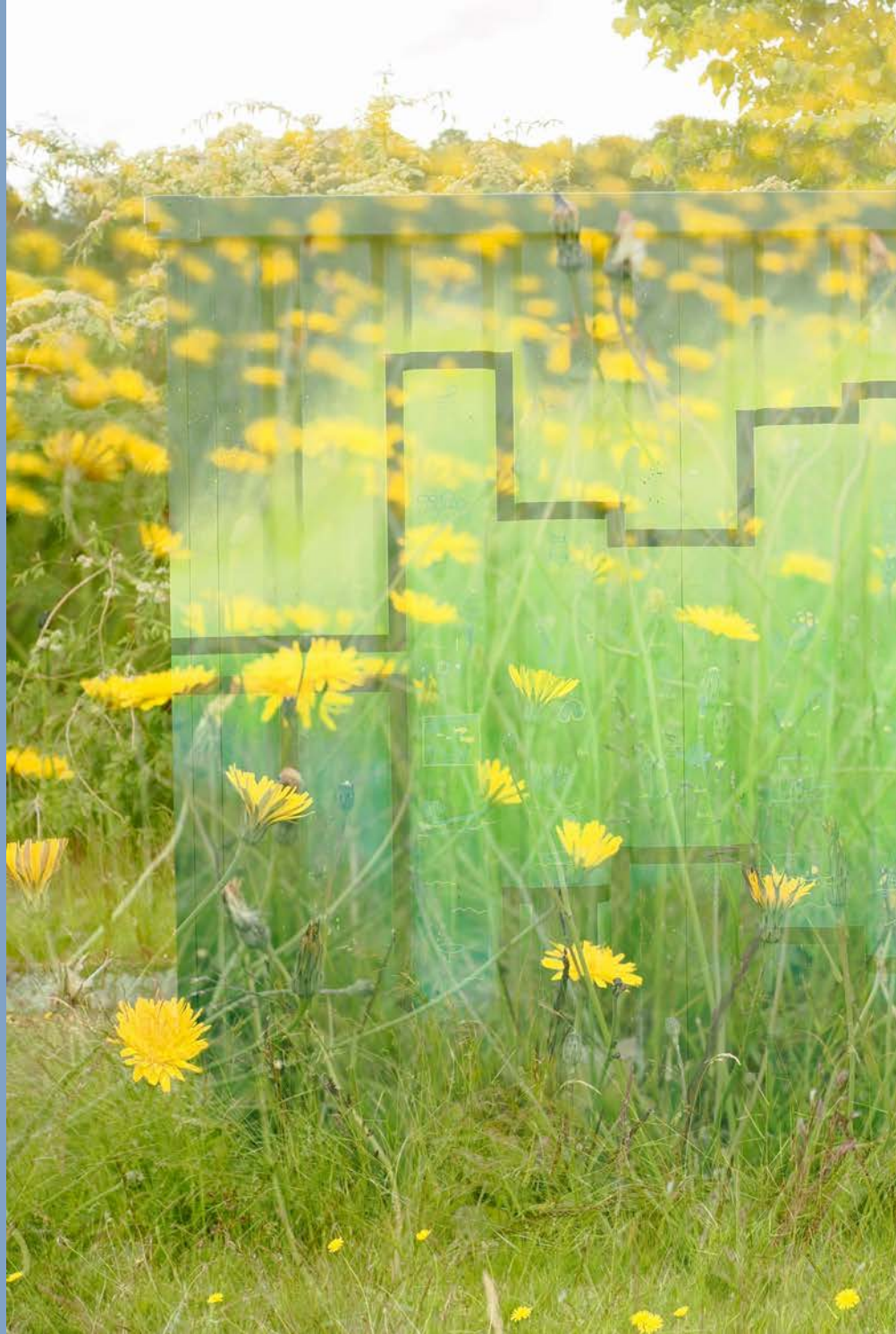


Both Kit and Fruitbowls expressed enthusiasm for future collaboration. Ideas discussed included returning for further creative projects, exploring the garden at night through camping or nocturnal observation, and continuing to use the space for art, learning, and shared experience.

There is also interest in future nature-focused activities, such as pond life studies and moth trapping, building on the residency's emphasis on curiosity, care, and ecological connection.

"WE LEARNED THAT THERE IS MORE TO OUR GARDEN THAN JUST PLANTING THINGS AND WATCHING THEM GROW."
- HAROLD MEILKE





"I WOULD LIKE TO HOPE THAT THIS PROJECT COULD BE OFFERED TO OTHERS AND WOULD HOPE THAT THEY HAVE AS MUCH ENJOYMENT TAKING PART IN IT AS WE ALL DID." - HAROLD MEIKLE



"I'D LOVE TO GO BACK AND WORK WITH THEM AGAIN. WE DISCUSSED SPENDING A NIGHT IN THE GARDEN... CAMPING! EXPLORING IT AT NIGHT."
- KIT MARTIN

UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE COMMUNITY GARDEN

ARTIST: Suzanne Scott

GARDEN: University of Dundee Community Garden

LOCATION: University of Dundee Campus

FOCUS: Illustration, wayfinding, visibility, community-building through design

The Walled Garden sits at the heart of the University of Dundee campus and was established to support learning, wellbeing, sustainability, and community connection. With raised allotment beds, an adjacent edible garden, orchard trees, and accessible growing areas, the space was designed as a shared resource for students, staff, and the wider community.

"THE GARDEN FUNCTIONS AS A TEACHING RESOURCE, A SPACE FOR INFORMAL LEARNING ABOUT FOOD SYSTEMS, AND A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT THAT CONNECTS PEOPLE ACROSS DISCIPLINES AND BACKGROUNDS."

"THIS PROJECT AIMS TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF A VALUABLE ON-CAMPUS AMENITY TO ENGAGE STUDENTS WITH NATURE AND FOOD THROUGH GARDENING."

- TRUDY CUNNINGHAM AND
MADISON SACRAMONE,
UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE



X SUZANNE SCOTT (WHIMSICAL LUSH)

Suzanne Scott's (WhimSicAL Lush) practice is rooted in nature-inspired illustration, storytelling, and community-based creative work. Her approach draws heavily on observing natural forms, textures, and patterns, while also focusing on how visual language can make people feel welcomed, curious, and connected.



WHAT WAS THE PROJECT ABOUT FOR YOU?

"THIS WAS A COMMUNITY GARDEN THAT NEEDED A COMMUNITY. IT ALREADY HAD HEART... IT JUST NEEDED MORE STUDENTS TO COME AND FALL IN LOVE WITH IT TOO."

- SUZANNE SCOTT

SUZANNE SCOTT, TRUDY CUNNINGHAM AND
MADISON SACRAMONE

The residency took place from June 2025 to January 2026. Rather than centring on workshops, the residency focused on creative infrastructure: developing signage, visual identity, and illustrated materials that could act as lasting invitations for students to discover, use, and care for the garden. The work created foundations for future engagement.

Following a period of reduced use after 2020, the garden retained its physical structure but lacked consistent student engagement. Reviving awareness, visibility, and a sense of collective ownership became a key priority for those stewarding the space.



Entering the Walled Garden, Suzanne recognised a space rich with potential but in need of a stronger identity — something that could help students notice it, feel invited in, and imagine themselves as part of its future.

The residency was shaped through deep conversation rather than formal workshops. Early meetings between Suzanne, Trudy Cunningham, and Madison Sacramone quickly evolved into long, reflective discussions about the garden's past, present, and future.



"WHAT WAS SCHEDULED AS A QUICK MEETING QUICKLY BECAME TWO HOURS OF CONVERSATION ABOUT GARDENS AND CREATIVITY."

- TRUDY AND MADDISON

leeks
 potatoes
 cabbage
 sprouts
 broccoli
 beans
 cauli
 sprouting
 broccoli
 pumpkin
 sweetcorn
 peas
 onions

apples
 pears
 rhubarb
 cherries
 plums

greens
 spinach
 radish
 red cabbage
 herbs

companion
 plants -
 calendula
 lavender
 - rosemary
 basil
 brambles
 gooseberries
 mushrooms
 asparagus
 aubergine
 turnip
 beetroot
 carrot
 parsnip



What to include?

illustration library

- posters
- logos
- calendars
- flyers

→ student projects

→ recipe cards? → social media

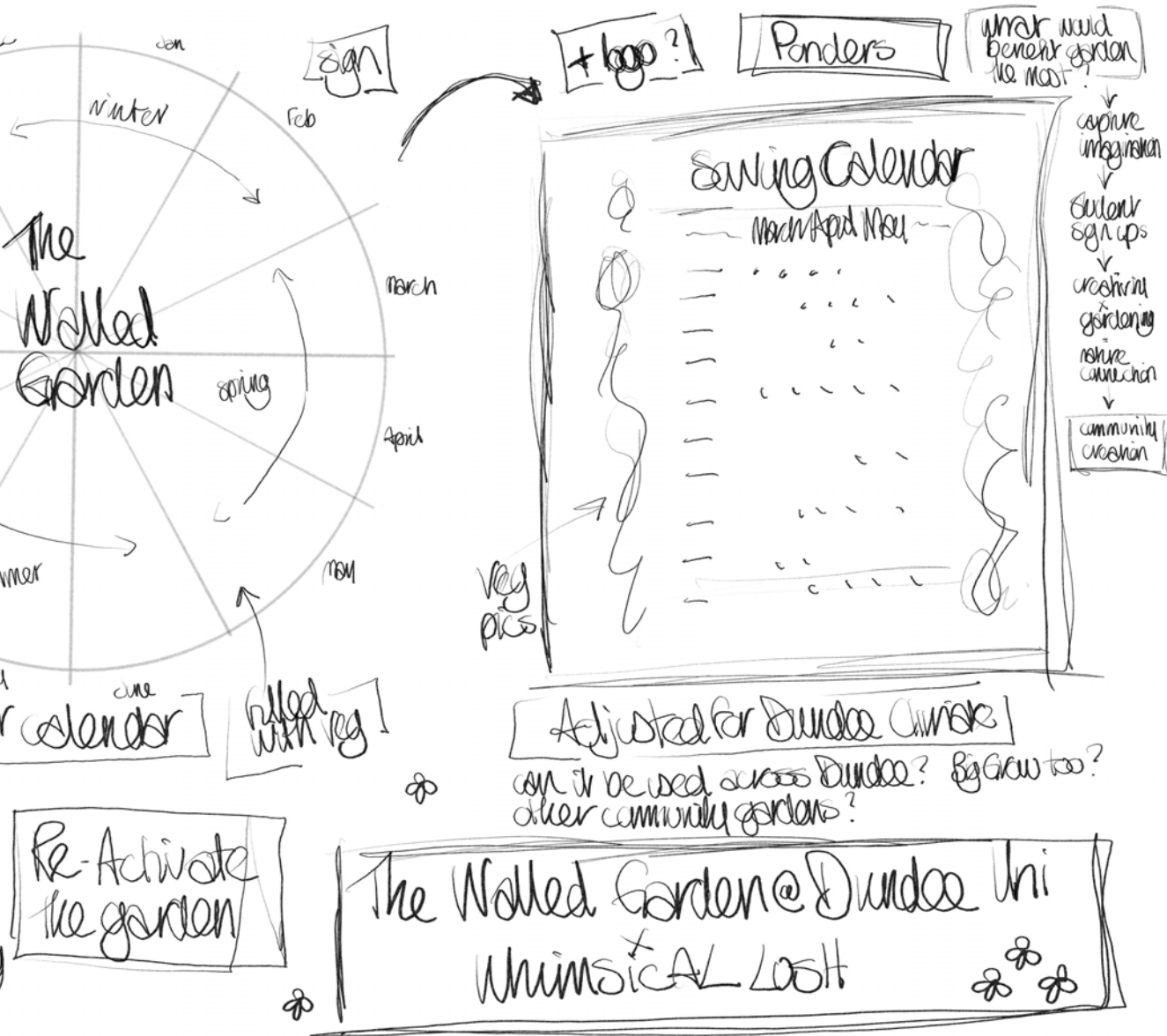
→ activation pack

→ Maddy can use illustrations beyond my time for advertising / highlighting garden

each illustration a separate

"MADDISON AND TRUDY CLEARLY LOVE THE GARDEN, WITH SO MUCH POTENTIAL, AND WANT TO REBUILD A THRIVING STUDENT COMMUNITY WITHIN ITS WALLS. I WAS DELIGHTED TO TEAM UP WITH THEM TO SIGNPOST THE GARDEN, INCREASE ITS VISIBILITY AND HELP CREATE STARTING POINTS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS THAT THEY HOPE TO LAUNCH."

- SUZANNE SCOTT



The conversations had in the garden informed the tone, imagery, and intent behind the illustrations — grounding them in care, optimism, and possibility. Suzanne’s work focused on creating a visual “brand” for the garden: signage, illustrations, and assets that could be reused, adapted, and built upon by future student gardeners and staff.

"INSPIRATION, HOPE, POTENTIAL"

- SUZANNE SCOTT



Themes that emerged:

Visibility as access

Signage and illustration were treated as tools for inclusion — helping people notice the garden and feel welcome without prior knowledge.

Creative infrastructure

The residency invested in materials that will continue to support engagement over time.

"VIBRANT, ACTIVATING, ABUNDANT"

- TRUDY AND MADDISON

leeks
potatoes
cabbage
sprouts
broccoli
beans
cauli
sprouting
broccoli
pumpkin
Sweetcorn
Peas
onions

apples
pears
rhubarb
cherries
plums

greens
spinach
radish
red cabbage
herbs

companion
plants -
calendula
lavender
- rosemary
basil
brambles
gooseberries
mushrooms
asparagus
aubergine
turnip
beetroot
Carrot
PARSNIP



Potential & possibility

Both artist and garden focused on what the space *could become*, rather than what it currently lacked.

Care through design

Illustration and branding were used to communicate warmth, invitation, and shared ownership.



The Walled Garden @Dundee University

For Suzanne, the project reaffirmed the role of illustration as a catalyst for connection — capable of holding multiple stories and encouraging others to take part.

"I re-learned that my illustrations can be storytellers beyond me."

- Suzanne Scott

The Walled Garden @ Dundee University Outdoor Sowing Calendar

March - April - May - June - July - August



	March	April	May	June	July	August
Broad Beans	●	●	●			
Beetroot		●	●	●	●	●
Broccoli			●	●	●	
Broccoli (Sprouting)					●	●
Brussels Sprouts		●	●	●		
Cabbage		●	●	●		
Carrot		●	●	●	●	●
Cauliflower				●	●	
Chard			●	●	●	●
Leek	●	●	●	●		
Lettuce		●	●	●	●	●
Onion	●	●	●			
Parsnip	●	●	●	●	●	
Pea	●	●	●	●	●	●
Potato	●	●	●	●	●	
Radish	●	●	●	●	●	●
Spinach		●	●	●	●	●
Swede			●	●	●	●
Turnip	●	●	●	●	●	●



* Calendar based on information from RHS Crop Planner and Sow Seeds Calendar, adjusted by The Walled Garden to suit the climate in Dundee, Scotland 2026
Illustrations by Whimsical Lush

For the garden team, the collaboration reinforced the power of creative practice to activate spaces, reduce barriers, and communicate values such as wellbeing, sustainability, and openness.

“BY INCREASING AWARENESS FOR THE GROWING SITE WE HOPE THAT MORE ENERGY WILL GENERATE MORE CARE FOR THE LAND.”

- TRUDY AND MADDISON

The illustrated signage and visual materials will be installed around the Walled Garden, acting as daily invitations for students and staff to enter, explore, and participate. The assets are intended to support future workshops, growing projects, and student-led initiatives.



"THIS RECENT COLLABORATION WITH WHIMSICAL LUSH ADDED A NEW LAYER OF INTERPRETATION AND EXPRESSION. IT WILL SHIFT THE GARDEN FROM BEING NOT ONLY A PLACE TO GROW FOOD, BUT ALSO A PLACE TO TELL STORIES, SPARK CONVERSATION, AND INVITE PEOPLE IN WHO MIGHT NOT OTHERWISE ENGAGE WITH A GROWING SPACE..."

There is hope that the garden will once again become a lively, creative hub within the university — a place where students can connect with nature, one another, and themselves throughout their studies.



...There was a sense of openness and excitement around the collaboration, as the garden becomes a living studio as well as a shared resource... our beautiful signage will of course be at the forefront daily however, it has been lovely to collaborate and co-design what the future of our space may be able to provide as opportunities for staff and students."

- TRUDY AND MADDISON

ROOM TO BE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY GARDENING GROUP

ARTIST: Manuela de los Rios

GARDEN: Room to Be: LGBTQIA+ community gardening group

LOCATION: Various locations around Dundee

FOCUS: Queer safety, listening, collaborative art-making, nature connection

Room to Be is a community-led group offering LGBTQIA+ people and allies opportunities to connect with nature in accessible, flexible ways. Without a fixed garden site, the group focuses on tending multiple spaces while prioritising safety, inclusivity, and emotional wellbeing, centring people rather than place, making space for conversation, creative exploration, and collective reflection.

"THIS PROJECT WAS ABOUT INVITING QUEER IDENTIFYING FOLKS TO GATHER TOGETHER IN A SAFE AND NURTURING SPACE, AND EXPRESS THEIR INSIGHTS ON WHAT IT IS TO FEEL SAFE WITHIN COMMUNITY GARDEN SPACES. DOING THIS WITHIN A CREATIVE CONTEXT ALLOWED FOR DIFFERENT ROUTES TO EXPRESSION..."

- ROOM TO BE
PARTICIPANT



X MANUELA DE LOS RIOS

Manuela de los Rios' practice focuses on socially engaged art, human ecologies, and urban rewilding. This residency offered an opportunity to further develop collaborative methods within an outdoor, community-led context; while working closely with a group whose members brought their own creative, critical, and lived expertise. Manuela delivered three workshops and two installation painting sessions from October to the end of the year.



"WE DECIDED THIS WOULD BE A CO-CREATIVE PROCESS THAT WOULD BE MEANINGFUL FOR ROOM BE ... THE AIM WAS TO CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER AND THE GARDEN THROUGH DEEP LISTENING - USING THIS EXPERIENCE TO EXPLORE HOW THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY CAN FEEL SAFE AND NOURISHED IN NATURE AND COMMUNITY GARDENS...

...THIS PROJECT HAS OFFERED US A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO REALLY EXPLORE AND DEVELOP TOGETHER A CREATIVE PROCESS AND RESULT THAT CAN MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE"

- MANUELA DE LOS RIOS



LISTEN TO THE LAVENDER

Together, Manuela and the Room to Be community group developed *Listen to the Lavender*, a deeply collaborative, socially engaged art project exploring what it means to feel safe, welcome, and nourished in community garden spaces.



The project was structured around three interlinked phases of listening:

Listening IN

Connecting with oneself and garden life through printmaking, walking, writing, and mark-making.

Listening WITH

Sharing stories and assembling sound recordings exploring safety, comfort, and belonging.

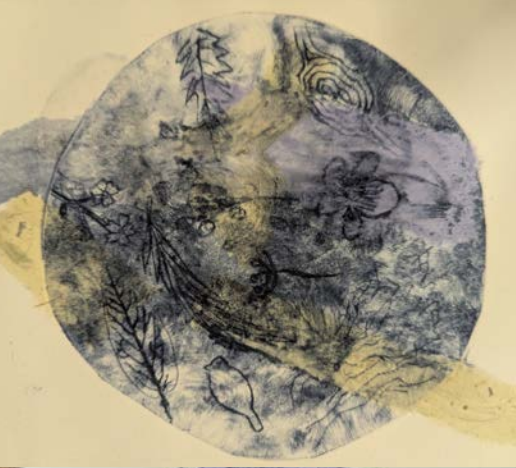
Listening OUT

Co-designing an interactive art installation and publication to invite wider communities into the conversation.

"ROOM TO BE WERE LOOKING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DEEPER CONNECTION WITH THE GARDEN ENVIRONMENT"

- MANUELA DE LOS RIOS





LISTEN TO THE LAVENDER

'Listening prints' workshop

Workshop 1: Listening IN: listen inward
Creating images through printmaking.



Connecting with garden life and oneself and expressing feelings through writing, walking and making a collective drypoint plate that was reused by each participant to make their own personalised print.

"IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE OFFSET WE'D BE BUILDING SOMETHING REALLY THOUGHTFUL."

- ROOM TO BE PARTICIPANT

The project created a nurturing environment for queer-identifying participants to gather, reflect, and express their experiences through printmaking, sound, conversation, and collective installation-making. Nature was not treated as a backdrop, but as an active participant — a space for listening, grounding, and shared care.

"I'VE LEARNT A LOT ABOUT PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK WITH A VISION THAT IS FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO SHIFT ITS SHAPE WHILST KEEPING THE ORIGINAL PURPOSE AND DESIRED IMPACT."

- MANUELA DE LOS RIOS

LISTEN TO THE LAVENDER

'Assemblage of garden sounds and stories' workshop

Workshop 2: Listen to each other: Listening WITH.

Assemblage of sounds and stories. Using sound recordings of nature in the garden, conversations about feeling safe, welcome, nourished in gardens and outdoor green spaces.



Gathering around tables became integral to the project's rhythm.

"THIS PROJECT PROMPTED SOME WONDERFUL CONVERSATIONS. GATHERED ROUND THE TABLE, SIPPING HOT TEA MADE FROM FRESHLY PICKED HERBS FROM THE GARDEN, AND SPEAKING FREELY TOGETHER ABOUT OUR NOTIONS OF SAFETY AND COMFORT - IT'S A RARE THING TO BE ABLE TO SHARE AND FEEL GENUINELY LISTENED TO."

- ROOM TO BE PARTICIPANT

These moments demonstrated that the act of gathering — showing up, listening, and caring — was as important as the final artworks themselves.





LISTEN TO THE LAVENDER

Workshop 3: to listen, and be listened by, the wider communities we are part of Listening OUT.

The participants and Manuela are co-designing an interactive art installation and publication to invite wider communities into the conversation.

Both artist and participants emphasised the care and intentionality embedded in the process. Workshops were shaped as welcoming, attentive spaces where participants were actively encouraged to share their thoughts, needs, and boundaries — and to see these reflected in how the project evolved.

One particularly meaningful moment involved a small group painting chairs for the installation in lavender tones, surrounded by conversation, tea, and shared presence.

“THE FACT THAT THERE WERE SIX OF US TO DO A JOB THAT PROBABLY JUST TAKES ONE PERSON WAS HEART-WARMING.”

- MANUELA DE LOS RIOS





"INSIGHTFUL - NURTURING - COMFORTING"

- ROOM TO BE PARTICIPANT



"LISTEN - LIFE - LOVE"

- MANUELA DE LOS RIOS



Themes that emerged

Listening as creative practice

Listening — to oneself, to others, and to more-than-human life — functioned as both method and outcome.

Safety & inclusivity

The project foregrounded emotional safety, clear communication, and proactive inclusivity as essential conditions for creative participation.



Care over efficiency

Time, slowness, and shared responsibility were embraced as values rather than constraints.

Art as community infrastructure

The residency demonstrated how creative practice can support dialogue, belonging, and long-term connection across communities and spaces.

For Room to Be, the project reinforced the importance of actively communicating inclusivity and creating structures that allow people to contribute on their own terms.

"THIS PROJECT HAS REINFORCED MY AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATING INCLUSIVITY."

- ROOM TO BE PARTICIPANT



Listen to the Lavender will continue to develop beyond the residency period.

"We are FINALISING THE SOUND PIECE IN COLLABORATION WITH ARTIST LANA AL KHATEEB ... IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY WILL FINALISE THE ART BOOK. MARCH WILL BE THE TIME TO GET OUR RESOURCES ONLINE AND FINALISE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE INSTALLATION TO TRAVEL ACROSS GARDENS IN DUNDEE BETWEEN APRIL AND JUNE 2026."

- MANUELA DE LOS RIOS

VICTORIA GARDENS

ARTIST: Gillian Adair McFarland

GARDEN: Victoria Gardens

LOCATION: West End, Dundee

FOCUS: Process-led creative practice, community engagement, noticing and care

Victoria Gardens is a place of nourishment in multiple senses: growing food, redistributing resources, and supporting a diverse local community. Formerly a bowling green, the garden has evolved into a shared space where volunteers, families, and visitors of all ages gather — particularly on Saturdays, when food collection, play, and social time overlap. The garden operates as a caring ecosystem, balancing practical growing with hospitality, resilience, and openness. Creative activity sat naturally alongside these values, offering another way for people to engage with the space without pressure or expectation.

I SAW THIS PROJECT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE AND INTERACT WITH MEMBERS OF OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY TO FOSTER CREATIVITY ... THESE EXPERIENCES ULTIMATELY WORK TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER AND INSPIRE.

- KATELYN VERGIEN, COMMUNITY GARDENER AT VICTORIA GARDENS

"I WAS EXCITED BY THE BUILDING OF CREATIVE COMMUNITY THAT THIS COLLABORATION BROUGHT AND THE CHANCE TO WORK WITHIN A COMMUNITY GARDEN."

- GILLIAN ADAIR MCFARLAND



X GILLIAN ADAIR MCFARLAND

Gillian Adair McFarland's practice is deeply process-led, informed by interests in materiality, time, embodied learning, and the everyday act of noticing. Working across art therapy and socially engaged art, she approaches creative engagement as a form of care — one that values listening, holding space, and honouring each person's contribution.

The residency was shaped through repeated, full-day engagements from July 2025 through to April 2026 that allowed Gillian to work with different groups as they moved through the garden. Families collecting food from the community larder, children exploring play areas, volunteers tending plants, and staff coordinating activity all became part of the creative field.





The residency unfolded slowly over several visits across the growing season, allowing time for relationships to develop and creative processes to emerge in response to the rhythms of the garden.

Early sessions were intentionally open, introducing a range of printmaking processes suitable for different ages and abilities — from foam printing and nature stamps for young children, to drawn line printing and lino cutting for adults. This initial exploratory approach revealed a strong shared interest in printmaking across the community.



"When it first began, I realised how many different avenues there were for us to take in terms of themes and art in the garden. I was grateful for Gillian's expertise in things like lino and print making which served as a perfect meeting ground and foundation."

- KATELYN VERGIEN

Rather than working toward a single, fixed outcome, the residency prioritised process, presence, and participation. Creative activity was shaped by weather, seasonality, and the people present on each day — embracing flexibility, responsiveness, and the garden’s ethos of “make do and mend.”

“IT GAVE ME BACK ALL MY SENSES – TOUCH, SMELL, TASTE, SOUND AND SIGHT – AND REMINDED ME HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO BE PART OF A COMMUNITY THAT IS ACTIVE IN ITS CARING.”

- GILLIAN ADAIR MCFARLAND

Entering the garden environment reawakened a sensory richness in Gillian’s practice, reinforcing the importance of working slowly and attentively within a living system.



"There were LOTS OF DIFFERENT GROUPS WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS AND IDEAS ...
IT BECAME CLEAR THERE WAS A STRONG SHARED INTEREST ACROSS THE GROUPS IN PRINTMAKING
WHICH COULD BE USED AS A PROCESS FOR MAKING SIGNAGE."

- GILLIAN ADAIR MCFARLAND



Later workshops deepened these skills, with participants producing prints that began to function as visual mapping of the garden and its community.

These workshops also encouraged participation across age groups, which has meant young folks interested in art got to meet and engage with green spaces and gardening. The project saw these interactions in real time.



"BEING IN BALANCE WITH WHAT PRESENTS ITSELF, THE IMPACT OF THE WEATHER, THE LIFE FORCES OF PLANTS AND THE REDISTRIBUTION OF FOOD AND SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITY MAKE THE VICTORIA GARDENS A SPECIAL PLACE INDEED."

- GILLIAN ADAIR MCFARLAND

"GILLIAN HELPED TO REMIND ME THAT I CAN ALSO SIT AND BREATHE IN THE GARDEN. SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, THE GARDEN (AND WHAT IT MEANS TO ME AND HOW I INTERACT WITH IT) HAS CHANGED FROM WHEN I FIRST STARTED VOLUNTEERING THERE ... HAVING GILLIAN HERE REMINDED ME THAT IT IS OK TO SLOW DOWN AND TO NOTICE AGAIN. AND THAT ACTUALLY THIS IS SOMETIMES THE MOST PRODUCTIVE THING YOU CAN DO."

- KATELYN VERGIEN



Much of the work took place in and around the polytunnel, where making happened alongside growing. Participants returned week after week, building familiarity and trust, and allowing ideas to develop organically over time.

The sound of rain on plastic, the smell of damp soil, shared cups of tea, and moments of quiet focus were as meaningful as any finished artwork.



"There sometimes feels like there is a gap between the volunteers and those who use our pantry services. Hosting these workshops helped to bridge that gap by fostering more meaningful interaction between individuals."

- Katelyn Verghien

"TOGETHER, REFLECTIVE, INSPIRING"

- KATELYN VERGIEN



Themes that emerged:

Slowness & seasonality

Creative practice aligned with the garden's rhythms, embracing waiting, pause, and return.

Care as creative action

Making was treated as an act of care — giving time, attention, and space to others.

"THOUGHTFUL, HAPPY, SHARED"

- GILLIAN ADAIR MCFARLAND



Embodied noticing

Participants were encouraged to engage all their senses, deepening connection to place.

Shared authorship

Work emerged collectively, reflecting the garden's many voices rather than a single narrative.

For Gillian, the residency renewed a commitment to collaborative, participatory practice and reinforced the essential role of creativity in wellbeing, resilience, and community-building.

"THE EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN ONE OF FEELING SUPPORTED AND WELCOMED IN, FROM STEPPING OFF A BUSY ROAD AND CONCRETE PAVEMENT AND ENTERING THROUGH THE GATEWAY INTO A DIFFERENT WORLD OF EARTHINESS AND SHARED FOCUS."

- GILLIAN ADAIR MCFARLAND

The final stage of the residency (continuing beyond the funded period) focuses on translating these images onto metal foils, designed to weather outdoors as hanging elements, signage, or mobile forms integrated into new wooden structures within the garden.

"I HOPE THE WORK WE DO WILL ENCOURAGE MORE CREATIVITY, MORE PROJECTS, MORE WORKSHOPS IN THE FUTURE."

- KATELYN VERGIEN





For the garden, the project demonstrated how creative engagement can sit comfortably alongside food growing and redistribution — offering another way for people to contribute meaningfully to the space.

"I FEEL A RENEWED SENSE OF POTENTIAL COMING FROM COMMUNITY VITALITY AND STRENGTH. I'VE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE FIRST-HAND WHAT IS POSSIBLE WHEN RESPONSIBILITY IS SHARED ALONGSIDE CREATIVITY WHICH HAS REINVIGORATED MY PASSION AND VISION FOR VICTORIA GARDEN."

- KATELYN VERGIEN

"THE JOY OF SATURDAY'S AS FAMILY TIME IS A MEMORY OF MINE NOW. I LOVED THE INVENTIVENESS AND JOY THAT THE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS OFFERED UP. BEING CREATIVE REALLY IS ESSENTIAL TO HEALTH, RESILIENCE AND BUILDING COMMUNITY."

- GILLIAN ADAIR MCFARLAND



SHARED THEMES

WHAT CONNECTED FIVE VERY DIFFERENT RESIDENCIES?

While each *Creative Gardens* residency responded to a distinct community, garden, and artistic practice, a number of shared themes emerged across all five projects. These themes do not represent uniform outcomes, but recurring values and conditions that supported meaningful engagement.

1. CARE AS A FOUNDATION FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Across all residencies, care — for people, place, and process — emerged as a central organising principle. Whether through hospitality, listening, shared making, or attention to access needs, participants consistently valued environments where they felt welcomed, safe, and respected. Rather than positioning climate action as abstract or urgent, the residencies grounded it in lived experience: caring for soil, plants, shared spaces, and one another.

Climate engagement is strengthened when people feel emotionally and socially supported, not just informed.

2. PROCESS OVER PRESCRIPTION

None of the residencies followed a fixed template. Artists and gardens adapted to weather, attendance, energy levels, and seasonal rhythms. This flexibility allowed work to emerge organically and respond to real conditions rather than predetermined outputs.

Participants frequently cited the *experience* of taking part — slowing down, noticing, being together — as more valuable than any single finished artwork.

Allowing space for process builds trust, ownership, and long-term impact.

& Key Learnings

3. STRUCTURE WITH FLEXIBILITY

While openness was important, completely unstructured activity was not always accessible. Artists who provided clear starting points — prompts, materials, frameworks — enabled people to participate with confidence.

Gardens valued residencies that fitted alongside existing activity rather than competing with it.

A balance of clarity and adaptability supports inclusion and engagement.

4. GARDENS AS SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Across all five sites, gardens functioned as more than growing spaces. They acted as places of wellbeing, learning, mutual aid, and connection — particularly important in contexts of social isolation, inequality, and climate anxiety.

Creative activity amplified this role, offering additional ways for people to contribute and belong.

Community gardens are vital infrastructure for a just and resilient climate transition.

5. DIFFERENCE AS STRENGTH

The residencies varied widely in scale, focus, and output — from signage and illustration, to collaborative installation, to slow, process-led making. Rather than weakening the programme, this diversity demonstrated the adaptability of artist–garden partnerships.

Success should be defined locally, not comparatively.



CREATIVE & CARING PRACTICES :

APPROACHES THAT SUPPORTED MEANINGFUL engagement

This toolkit does not offer a single model, but a set of practices observed across the five residencies that can be adapted by artists, gardens, and organisations working at the intersection of creativity, nature, and community. By embedding creativity within community gardens, they support relationships and behaviours that sustain long-term environmental stewardship.

1. START WITH LISTENING

- Spend time understanding the garden's rhythms, people, and priorities
- Listen to what feels needed, not just what feels possible
- Build trust before introducing activity

Why it matters: Listening establishes respect and shared ownership.

2. CREATE WELCOMING CONDITIONS

- Offer food, warmth, and clear invitations
- Make expectations explicit and participation optional
- Design activities that welcome different ages, abilities, and energy levels

Why it matters: Inclusion is active, not assumed.

3. WORK WITH WHAT'S ALREADY THERE

- Embed creative activity into existing garden sessions and routines
- Use materials found on site or already familiar to participants
- Respect volunteer time and capacity

Why it matters: Integration supports sustainability.



A TOOLKIT

4. OFFER GENTLE STRUCTURE

- Provide prompts, examples, or starting points
- Avoid over-determining outcomes
- Allow people to adapt activities to their interests

Why it matters: Structure reduces anxiety and builds confidence.

5. VALUE SLOWNESS

- Allow ideas to develop over time
- Accept pauses, dormancy, and change
- Let the season shape the work

Why it matters: Slowness supports reflection, care, and depth.

6. THINK BEYOND THE PROJECT

- Create outputs that can be used, adapted, or evolved
- Support gardens to continue creative activity independently
- Leave skills, confidence, or tools behind

Why it matters: Legacy strengthens impact.

The practices outlined here are not exhaustive, nor are they intended to be applied all at once. They can be picked up, adapted, and reshaped to suit different communities, gardens, and creative practices. In the context of climate action, these approaches point toward ways of working that value connection over urgency and care over extraction. What matters most is not the method, but the intention: to work with care, curiosity, and respect for the people and places involved.



OUTCOMES & EVALUATION

Creative Gardens was evaluated using a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach, recognising that the value of socially engaged, community-based work cannot be captured through numbers alone.

QUANTITATIVE OVERVIEW

Across the five residencies, the programme delivered:

- 5 artist residencies
- 5 community garden partnerships across Dundee
- Multiple facilitated sessions per residency, embedded in garden activity
- Engagement with diverse age groups and communities, including children, families, older adults, LGBTQIA+ participants, students, and volunteers
- Repeat attendance across all sites
- Creative outputs remaining in gardens or continuing beyond the funded period

QUALITATIVE OUTCOMES

FOR PARTICIPANTS

- Increased confidence and enjoyment in creative activity
- Strengthened sense of belonging and connection
- Greater awareness of gardens as places of care, learning, and climate action

FOR GARDENS

- Increased confidence hosting creative activity
- New ways to engage communities with green spaces
- Strengthened identity, visibility, or sense of purpose

FOR ARTISTS

- Development of socially engaged, collaborative practices
- Deeper understanding of working with communities and nature
- Ongoing relationships with partner gardens

EVALUATION REFLECTIONS

The residencies demonstrated that impact is often relational and accumulative rather than immediate. Creative engagement supports climate action indirectly by fostering care, agency, and stewardship, while trust-based, flexible funding enables deeper, more meaningful outcomes.

Creative Gardens shows that measuring success through difference rather than uniformity offers a more accurate and ethical understanding of community-led climate work.



CONCLUSION

WHAT CREATIVE GARDENS MADE POSSIBLE

Creative Gardens set out not to test a single model of artist residency, but to explore what becomes possible when artists and community gardens are given time, trust, and support to work together in ways that feel right for their specific contexts. Across five residencies in Dundee, artists and gardens approached this invitation differently — shaped by people, place, season, need, and curiosity.

What emerged was not a neat set of comparable outcomes, but a constellation of practices, relationships, and learnings that reflect the diversity of the city's green spaces and communities.

Some residencies focused on shared making and wellbeing, others on listening, safety, and inclusion, others on visibility, identity, and creative infrastructure. Some were highly social and celebratory; others slow, quiet, and deeply attentive. Together, they demonstrate that creativity in gardens does not need to look one way to be meaningful.

COMMON THREADS ACROSS DIFFERENCE

Despite their differences, several shared themes ran through all five residencies.

Care and connection were central. Whether through conversation around a table, shared food, collaborative making, or gentle observation, each project foregrounded relationships — between people, and between people and nature.

Process mattered as much as product. While tangible outcomes were created — artworks, installations, signage, publications — participants consistently valued the experience of taking part: the time spent together, the permission to slow down, the sense of belonging.

Structure with flexibility proved crucial. Artists who offered clear starting points while remaining responsive enabled participants to engage confidently without feeling constrained. Gardens valued residencies that fitted around their existing rhythms rather than imposing new demands.

Gardens functioned as social infrastructure. Across all sites, gardens acted as places of wellbeing, learning, inclusion, and care — particularly important in a context of climate anxiety, social isolation, and ongoing recovery from recent years of disruption.

LEARNING FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

Creative Gardens highlights the value of artist–garden residencies as relational work rather than extractive or outcome-driven projects. Key learnings include:

- The importance of time — for trust to build, for ideas to evolve, and for people to feel safe participating
- The need to honour difference, allowing each partnership to define success on its own terms
- The role of artists as facilitators, listeners, and collaborators, not just makers
- The benefit of investing in creative infrastructure that supports long-term engagement
- The potential for creative practice to support climate connection through care, rather than fear

These residencies suggest that small-scale, locally rooted projects can have meaningful impact when they prioritise people, place, and process.

SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

Creative Gardens did not end when the residencies finished. Many projects continue to grow — through ongoing collaborations, evolving artworks, repeat creative activity, and strengthened relationships. In several cases, artists remain connected to their partner gardens, and gardens feel more confident inviting creativity into their spaces.

The programme has planted seeds: of confidence, curiosity, care, and possibility. These seeds may grow slowly, in ways that are not always immediately visible — but they are rooted in lived experience, shared ownership, and genuine connection.

As climate challenges intensify, projects like *Creative Gardens* offer an alternative way of responding: not through urgency alone, but through listening, nurturing, and collective action. By bringing art and nature together in community contexts, this programme demonstrates how creativity can help people feel connected — to place, to each other, and to the futures they are shaping together.

Creative Gardens demonstrates how small-scale, place-based cultural activity can meaningfully support climate action by strengthening people’s relationships with local green spaces, food systems, and one another. By embedding artists within community gardens across Dundee, the programme supported behaviours that underpin long-term climate resilience: care for place, shared responsibility, inclusion, and wellbeing. The residencies increased engagement with growing spaces, encouraged low-impact creative practice, and activated gardens as sites of learning, connection, and stewardship. *Creative Gardens* shows that climate action is not only technical or infrastructural, but social and cultural — rooted in how people feel able to belong, contribute, and care within their local environments.

The legacy of *Creative Gardens* lies in the relationships it has nurtured — relationships that will continue to shape how people care for their environments, and for one another, in the face of a changing climate.

Here, climate action grows from the ground up.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Creative Gardens was made possible by the generosity, imagination, and commitment of many people and communities across Dundee.

First and foremost, we would like to thank the five artists, Morwenna King, Kit Martin, Suzanne Scott, Manuela de los Rios, and Gillian Adair McFarland who brought openness, care, and creative courage to their residencies. Your willingness to listen deeply, adapt responsively, and work collaboratively within living, growing spaces shaped the heart of this programme. You approached each garden not as a site for production, but as a community to join — and that ethos defined the work.

We are deeply grateful to the partner gardens who welcomed artists into their spaces, all the volunteers and staff at Dawson Park, Fruitbowls, University of Dundee, Room to Be, and Victoria Gardens. Community gardens are sustained by dedication, volunteer energy, and shared belief in what local green spaces can offer. Thank you for your trust, your hospitality, and your readiness to explore what creativity could add to your existing work. Your gardens are places of nourishment in every sense — ecological, social, and emotional.

To the participants — families, volunteers, students, LGBTQIA+ community members, children, and neighbours — thank you for showing up, for making, for sharing stories, and for allowing creative processes to unfold alongside everyday garden life. The residencies were shaped by your curiosity, generosity, and care. The work exists because of you.

Thank you to the coordinators and support staff who held the structure of the programme: arranging meetings, supporting artists, troubleshooting challenges, and ensuring that communication and logistics ran smoothly. Invisible labour makes visible projects possible.

We are especially grateful to the Dundee Climate Fund for recognising the value of small-scale, community-rooted cultural activity in responding to the climate emergency. Your support enabled artists and gardens to work slowly, relationally, and with integrity. By investing in connection, care, and place-based collaboration, you made space for climate action to be explored through creativity and community.

Finally, we acknowledge the wider network of growers, makers, organisers, and advocates across Dundee whose ongoing work sustains the city's green spaces. *Creative Gardens* builds on your efforts and sits within a broader culture of shared responsibility and environmental care.

This programme has planted seeds — of confidence, collaboration, and possibility. We look forward to seeing how they continue to grow.



University of Dundee



Dawson park

Community

Garden



Dundee Climate Fund 3.0

