

GROW NORTH 2025

Askham Bryan College, York
Wednesday 19th November

New Skills for a New Era

Time	Session	Details
9.30	Check in	Please arrive in good time to network with other delegates and plan your day.
10.00	Welcome	Please take your seats in conference room for the welcome and housekeeping messages.
10.05	Opening speaker	Jason Williams (Cloud Gardener) Talks about his experiences as a Churchill Fellowship Award winner and his work on urban green space.
Session One - 10.30 - 11.25 Please choose one of the following options		
Stepping Back - Why ditching technology can be good for your business - Join John, Owner of Holden Clough, a family run nursery since 1927 and former young gardener of the year to hear about his experience of retail horticulture in the 21st century and why he took the surprising decision to do things the 'old fashioned way'		
Tree Health and Maintenance - Dr Luke Hailey, PhD, is a Researcher and Diagnostician at the UK Bartlett Tree Research Laboratory. As a researcher his interests include the management of honey fungus (Armillaria) and biological control of tree diseases.		
Yorkshire Wildlife Trusts with Leigh Morris , (International Director for the Wildlife Trusts) will talk about the potential value of horticulture for conservation and the areas of work that aspiring horticulturists could engage with as a career.		
Demonstrations - There will be technical machinery demonstrations happening throughout the day at the rear of the conference centre		
Networking - An opportunity to meet and talk to our industry guests and sponsors for the day.		
Session Two - 11.30 - 12.25 Please choose one of the following options		
Specifying Trees in the Landscape - Join Barcham Trees as they discuss how to select and specify trees for landscape design schemes.		
Grow With Charlotte Business Mentoring - Charlotte is an award winning garden designer She recently launched her professional mentoring programme and will be talking about the finer points of setting up and running a gardening business.		
Demonstrations - There will be technical machinery demonstrations happening throughout the day at the rear of the conference centre		
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Lunch Grab Bag lunches available in the conference centre

Session Three - 13.15 - 14.10 Please choose one of the following options

SUDs in Landscape Management - Seraya Sigsworth is a Product Specification Manager from Green Tech and will be highlighting the importance of water management in landscape design

Non Native Species Threats to UK Horticulture - Courtney Graham from APHA will be hosting this session on the non native species threats to UK Horticulture

Demonstrations - There will be technical machinery demonstrations happening throughout the day at the rear of the conference centre

Networking - An opportunity to meet and talk to our industry guests and sponsors for the day.

Session Four

14.10	Michael Perry (Mr Plant Geek) - Michael will be talking about his career in Horticulture and his views on the future of the industry.
14.35	Question and Answer Panel - Hosted by Martin Fish and our expert panel will be on hand to answer all your horticultural careers questions.
15.00	Finish - Please feel free to visit and chat with our trade supporters and industry experts before you leave.

Perennial would like to invite college staff and employer representatives to a short information session at 12.30 to talk about how Perennial can help those working in the industry and find out what issues are faced by students at the start of their careers.

Speaker Biographies

Jason Williams
(Key Note
Speaker
Opening)



Jason Williams aka Cloud Gardener UK aims to inspire a new generation of urban gardener by sharing his expertise of container gardening and encouraging more urban residents to maximise on their unique growing spaces like a balcony garden.

It's his belief that everyone deserves access to greenspace and that living in the city doesn't mean that you should not be connected to nature. His Churchill Fellowship research trip took him to Milan, Barcelona, Singapore, Hong Kong & China studying urban greenspace and the positives and negatives of eco-tourism

John Foley
(Holden Clough
Nurseries
Session 1)



When John was only twelve years old he collected crocosmias, so it is perhaps not surprising he went on to be crowned **BBC Young Gardener of the Year** in 2012.

A family business run by the Foley's since 1978 John and his wife Kate have run Holden Clough Nurseries in Bolton by Bowland since 2009.

John will be talking about the skills needed to run a retail plant nursery and why he decided to take a more old-fashioned approach to managing the business in the technological age.

Dr Luke Hailey
(Bartlett
Trees Session
1)



Luke Hailey, PhD, is a Researcher and Diagnostician at the UK Bartlett Tree Research Laboratory. As a researcher his interests include the management of honey fungus (*Armillaria*) and biological control of tree diseases. As diagnostician, he identifies a wide range of tree and shrub health issues, providing advice on their management to Bartlett Tree Experts staff and beyond. These combined roles touch on many areas of biology, such as plant physiology, ecology, soil science, entomology, and microbiology.

Charlotte Pitcher
(Business
Mentor
Session 2)



Charlotte is a professional gardener, garden designer and mentor based in York. After starting her own business from scratch, she quickly built a thriving client base through word of mouth and community reputation. Now, alongside running her garden design business, Charlotte helps aspiring and early-stage gardeners turn their love of plants into sustainable businesses through her mentorship programme, Grow with Charlotte. Her approach is refreshingly honest and practical, combining real-world experience with encouragement, humour and a deep belief that there's room for everyone to grow.

At Grow North, Charlotte will share her story of resilience and growth - from single mum starting over to successful business owner - and explore how gardening can be both a livelihood and a source of calm in even the most chaotic seasons of life.

Courtney
Graham
(APHA
Invasive
Species
Expert
Session 3)



'Non-Native Species Inspectors aiming to protect our native species by conducting site visits, inspections, and enforcement whilst also tackling rapid response and outbreak issues. The Non-Native Species Inspectorate is a recent addition to APHA created as part of the solution to tackle the increased number of invasive species being introduced in the UK.'

Seraya
Sigsworth
(Suds Expert
Session 3)



Seraya is the head of blue green infrastructure at Green-tech, with over 9 years' experience in the water industry. Her work addresses the unique challenges of creating greener and more resilient cities through innovative, nature-based solutions. Passionate about combating climate change, Seraya champions approaches that boost biodiversity, enhance community wellbeing, and reduce flood risk through sustainable water strategies. Her combination of technical insight, collaboration and environmental commitment makes her a trusted partner in delivering impactful, future ready urban solutions.

Michael Perry
Key note
speaker
(closing)



Michael Perry (AKA Mr Plant Geek) is a TV presenter, speaker, hortpreneur and author of Hortus Curious. His area of focus centres on new plants and plant trends.

Michael got his start in new product development at Thompson & Morgan before quickly working his way up to becoming an authoritative voice knowledgeable in all areas of horticulture.

Martin Fish
FCI Hort
(Host)



Martin's horticultural career has been interesting and diverse since he started as an apprentice gardener almost 50 years ago!

He trained in both amenity and commercial horticulture and has been a head gardener, a college lecturer, ran his own nursery and soft landscaping business and was show director for the Harrogate Flower Shows.

For many years Martin was a gardening expert on BBC Radio and presented gardening features for the BBC & ITV.

He currently writes for three publications, presents Pots & Trowels podcasts and gardening videos and works at many flowers shows over the summer hosting gardening theatres and giving talks.

For the RHS Martin judges at all the RHS flower shows, he chairs the RHS Tender Ornamental Expert Group and is a Garden Advisor at Harlow Carr. He is also a Council member of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, representing horticulture.

Fiona Slight
RHS Harlow
Carr



My love of Horticulture comes from my mum, grandma and a great aunt, who were all very keen gardeners. When I realised that Horticulture was a career, I jumped at the chance. I started out in Horticulture straight from school when I was 17 completing a YTS with the National Trust for Scotland. I then studied for my Diploma and Higher National Certificate at SRGC Auchincruive in Scotland with my practical year being spent at RHS Garden Wisley. After that, and with a short summer stint in a wonderful garden on the Isle of Mull. I spent 8 very happy years spent in propagation at Johnsons of Whixley near York and 8 happy years as a lecturer in Horticulture at Askham Bryan College. The call of practical gardening came to me with a role at Mount St John Garden near Thirsk where I was the Kitchen Gardener producing fruit, vegetables and flowers for Provenance Inns. I then moved on to work for Ridding Park Hotel first as the Head Kitchen Gardener and then as Head Gardener, looking after the grounds and gardens, before then taking on the role of Garden Manager at RHS Garden Harlow Carr, where I have been ever since.

Tom Chilton
DTail Plants

Tom Chilton works for D-Tail Plants a fast-growing and well trusted trade nursery, supplying quality plants to the landscape trade including hotels, golf courses, racecourses and other related industries. He was recently nominated as a finalist for the Young Grower of the Year award. D-Tail plants takes pride in offering a personal and friendly service to all their customers and supplying high quality plants. Growing a vast range of their own stock and our close knit team work hard to deliver a good service to their customers.

Also, Leigh Morris (The Wildlife Trusts) and Helen Waddington (Perennial)

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We are idverde. We harness the power of nature to develop green spaces that benefit communities, protect biodiversity and help cities manage climate change. We are Europe's leading landscape creation and maintenance provider, with more than 150 branches in six countries and approximately 10,000 fully committed employees.

At idverde, we create the green spaces that breathe life into our cities, towns and villages. We're pioneering the creation and maintenance of climate-resilient, biodiverse places where people and nature can thrive together. <https://www.idverde.co.uk/>



BALI is the UK's leading trade association for the landscaping industry. Since 2017 it has been the driving force behind GoLandscape which works with employers, school, colleges and other training provider to promote the sector as a rewarding career choice.

<https://www.bali.org.uk/home/>



The North of England Horticultural Society is the parent charity behind the staging of the successful twice yearly Harrogate Flower Shows. All profits from each event are returned to the charity for use in promoting and supporting horticulture throughout the north of England. To find out more about Harrogate Spring and Autumn Flower Shows, visit www.flowershow.org.uk.



We are a membership organisation that helps to preserve Yorkshire historic gardens and designed landscapes. We conduct original research (published) about the history of Yorkshire gardens and designed landscapes. A significant element is to comment expertly on planning applications that effect or could affect gardens and landscapes. A wide range of events are organised each year with visits to gardens and landscapes, these often include private estates and are guided by experts relevant to the site. A programme to work with schools and a small grants programme is also part of the organisation.

Full details www.yorkshiregardenstrust.org.uk



Established back in 1979, around the same time that the UK coal mining industry began to decline, ATM was charged with the task of reclaiming the land, seeding, planting and beautifying the mine environment and other redundant sites across Yorkshire and North East of England. Fast forward to today and ATM has become one of the UK's leading providers of Vegetation Management, Fencing, Landscaping and Ecology services; providing award-winning solutions tailored to meet client's needs. With an extensive inhouse resource of directly employed personnel and an impressive range of wholly owned vehicles and plant, ATM has evolved into a company with the infrastructure to handle large, complex and demanding projects. <https://atm-ltd.co.uk/>



We are a family-run, Yorkshire based company, with a worldwide customer base. Our company is a leading supplier of long-life propagation trays. Supplying both the commercial propagator and the amateur grower. Our propagation trays are injection moulded in uv-stabilised polypropylene and are recyclable. We have many examples where our trays are still in use after 20 years, having been used three times a year. The extensive range of propagation trays are available in varying cell volumes and cell counts. Therefore, catering for a wide variety of crops from vegetables, flowers, nursery stock, salads and tree production. We pride ourselves on providing excellent customer service to all our customers. <https://containerwise.co.uk/>



Since 2000, TCE has been specialising in cutting-edge horticultural engineering, particularly in the design and installation of LED grow light systems in glasshouse and vertical farms across the UK. We stand at the forefront of agricultural technology, providing tailored lighting solutions that enhance growth and optimise production for our clients.

<https://www.tceelectrical.com/>



Lantra is a charity dedicated to developing the agriculture and land-based workforce, to ensure that people have the skills to work safely, productively, and sustainably. We actively promote entry routes and pathways into a career in the sector, highlighted the diverse and rewarding opportunities that are on offer. <https://www.lantra.co.uk/>



Barcham Trees has specialised in the production of containerised trees for 35 years and has supplied two million trees across the UK. We have over 225,000 trees in production every year, in our nursery based in Cambridgeshire.

Our nursery holds over 500 varieties to give you best choice for your project or garden. We do not purchase from 3rd parties to supplement orders. Barcham are passionate about our accreditations, and the importance of biosecurity is paramount. We are also proud to be certified 'Plant Healthy' for our strict biosecurity procedures that we have in place.

<https://www.barcham.co.uk/>



Först is a global brand, born and bred in the United Kingdom but servicing professional tree care companies, landscapers and others who require a high performance woodchipper all over the world. <https://forstglobal.com/>



Palmer Nurseries Ltd based in Calverley, Leeds, West Yorkshire has been growing plants for over 40 years. Palmer Nurseries has diversified over the last decade and is now a business with 4 product service offerings through The Horticultural Hub:

- Fibo click and collect concrete & mortar plant.
- A Recycling centre for Green waste, timber, wood and rubble.
- The Horticultural trade supplies counter along with Trees & Plants
- Property letting.

The Horticultural hub will appeal to local landscapers, builders, fencers, farmers and more looking to save time by collecting concrete and plants and recycling garden waste without the need to travel to multiple locations or wait for deliveries. www.palmernurseries.co.uk



John Chambers Wildflower Seed has a 35 year history of supplying native British produced wildflower seed and mixes to landscape and garden lovers across the UK. John Chambers is one of the leading authorities on native wildflower seed, distributing a comprehensive range of products that protect, enhance and improve the landscape environment.

<https://www.johnchamberswildflowers.co.uk/>



Barnes Associates Ltd - Tree Consultants and tree surveyors providing Tree Risk assessments and advanced Tree Diagnostics. We undertake tree stability testing and tomography scans along with Tree Root Scans. Health and safety Tree reports, Tree Preservation Order advice and management plans.



Yorkshire Botanicals is a specialist grower of glasshouse crops for the pharmaceutical industry. With sites in East Yorkshire and West Sussex, they offer a variety of roles, from hands-on agronomy tasks focused on crops and trials, to technical roles such as collecting and logging samples for analysis or preparing finished products. Due to the nature of their products and customers, they do not operate a public website, but further information can be obtained through the MDS scheme of which they are members <https://www.mds-ltd.co.uk/members/yorkshire-botanicals-limited/>



We specialise in turnkey solutions for both new and used Glasshouse projects, as well as Garden Centre & Research structures, screening, irrigation, heating, benching, and container systems, incorporating the latest technologies and innovations in the field.

<https://ebtechenergy.co.uk/>



The UK's gardening charity, helping people and plants to grow. Founded over 200 years ago, we're a diverse community of gardeners, supporters, volunteers, visitors, students and scientists – passionate about spreading the joy of gardening.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/>



Wykeham Mature Plants grows mature trees, Instant hedges and specimen shrubs for the trade and retail markets

Visit: <https://www.wykehammatureplants.co.uk>



The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) will be in attendance with colleagues from the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate and the Non-Native Species Inspectorate. Our Agency aims to protect the UK from animal and plant-related threats to human health, the economy and the environment. We look forward to meeting you!

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency>



The Wildlife Trusts is a federation made up of 46 Wildlife Trusts across the UK, Alderney and the Isle of Man to: Bring wildlife back; Help everyone to take meaningful action for nature; and create an inclusive society where nature matters.

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/>



D-Tail Plants is a fast-growing and well trusted trade nursery, supplying quality plants to the landscape trade including hotels, golf courses, racecourses and other related industries. We take pride in offering a personal and friendly service to all our customers and supplying high quality plants. We grow a vast range of our own stock and our close knit team work hard to deliver a good service to our customers. In addition, we have an unrivalled weekly stock-list with around 70,000 lines to choose from, which we send out to customers on a weekly basis.

We supply everything from small domestic projects, to large commercial contracts and have a large, well stocked trade cash and carry. We carry everything from mature olive trees and topiary right down to bedding plants and alpines.



Reesink UK is the sole Toro distributor in the UK for golf and sports field equipment and irrigation products providing the Turfcare industry with an extensive range of professional equipment. Our largest division, Reesink Turfcare is a global leader in innovative Turfcare machinery and equipment offering golf clubs a full turf maintenance package including professional performance mowers, utility vehicles, bunker rakes, aerators, sprayers and topdressers.



If any of your staff have a problem they can pick up the phone to Perennial in the knowledge that we will make sure they receive the support they need – for not only themselves but also their direct family. We have almost 30 caseworkers and debt advisers all around the UK who work personally with the people who need our full support. Our main areas of support include Financial and Debt advice, Health & Wellbeing including Physio support, Benefits and free Legal Advice via our legal helpline, advice on careers and training and recently we have introduced advice and support for Carers in our industry. We are also ready to tackle those devastating situations that come at us unexpectedly such as bereavement and critical illness or injury. <https://perennialorg.uk/>



Bartlett is a tree service company that helps customers maintain healthy trees and shrubs through a rare mix of groundbreaking science, award-winning safety practices and the highest level of service.

With over 125 offices worldwide, Bartlett has been a family-owned leader in tree care for generations, the company remains dedicated to helping residential and commercial customers maintain beautiful, healthy trees. Today, members of the fourth generation continue this legacy while Bartlett develops environmentally sound products and promotes sustainable tree care. Through the Bartlett Legacy Tree Programme, the company provides tree seedlings for reforestation and educates communities on proper tree care.

<https://www.bartlett.com/>



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