

Brize Norton have a group of gardens coordinated by the gardeners themselves. Questions of opening dates, tickets, parking, etc. are therefore handled by the group.

Please read the attached NGS leaflet About opening your garden in this light so many of the topics mentioned on page 2 of the leaflet are already taken care of!

You can find us on [www.bncommunity.org/ngs](http://www.bncommunity.org/ngs)

# OPEN

Open your garden to raise money for charity and discover the joys of sharing your hard work.



## Are you interested in opening your garden?

The National Gardens Scheme is always looking for gardens of interest, quality and character which can be opened to the public to raise money for charity.

### Who we are

We were founded in 1927.

In the last 10 years alone we have raised over £22 million for nursing, caring and gardening charities.

Every year approximately 3,800 gardens open on our behalf across England and Wales and welcome over three quarters of a million visitors. We have a long and respected tradition of opening appealing and well loved gardens. New gardens joining the Scheme continue to broaden our appeal.

### All gardens great and small

From the small and quirky to the big and grand, the delights of undiscovered gardens await our visitors, who welcome the chance to meet the garden owners, to ask questions about plants,

vegetables and wildlife, before possibly relaxing with a cup of tea and excellent home-made cake. Most gardens open individually on chosen dates but some gardens are open in pairs. It is not unusual for smaller gardens to open as a group event in the community, so visitors can enjoy walking round a whole village with perhaps tea in the village hall. Many gardens also offer 'by arrangement' visits, giving garden clubs and tour groups an opportunity to visit at a convenient time.

Evening openings provide a relaxing way to visit gardens after work and perhaps enjoy a glass of wine. Most gardens now offer free admission to accompanied children of 16 and under. A variety of events may also be offered, such as hide and seeks trails or quizzes, to keep youngsters entertained. Other gardens sport a variety of animals and pets and some welcome dogs on leads.

### How to open your garden

Many different aspects of a garden can be interesting to visitors. Some of the largest and most prestigious gardens in the country open for us, but they are by no means typical. The size of the garden is not the priority and many gardens are normal back gardens. Most of our gardens are less than one acre and may include allotments, organic, wildlife and other speciality gardens.

Each garden is supported by a team of volunteers. The local County Organiser will arrange to visit you to talk about what's involved in opening for the NGS and answer any specific questions you may have. Their experience is invaluable in ensuring that your garden will attract visitors and reward your efforts. When they visit your garden, the County Organiser will consider:

- are the plants, landscaping and design interesting and attractive?
- is the garden well maintained?
- are you happy to welcome and chat with visitors?
- can you organise adequate car parking space?



- can you provide teas and/or plant sales as an added bonus?
- It is a good idea to visit other NGS gardens to get an idea of what is involved.

The team will also brief you on:

- how to register your garden with us
- how we will support you to promote your garden with posters and local press coverage
- the supply of direction signs, tickets etc
- how to look after the financial side
- aspects of health and safety both for the garden and if applicable food preparation
- insurance cover, as we provide this for you on the days that you are open on our behalf

There are some lovely gardens which are not able to open because it is simply not practical. We very much appreciate all contact from potential garden openers and will do our best to include you in the scheme.

## Volunteering

The NGS has a small team of employees but the volunteers ensure the charity operates across the country. Nearly 400 volunteers form the backbone of the county teams, sharing the fun and the work involved in organising the thousands of garden events. The NGS Trustee board includes elected representatives from our county volunteers.

We welcome new volunteers to join our county teams. They may not open their own garden but can help in other ways. Help and training is given to all new volunteers. Although knowledge of gardening is always helpful, the main requirement is for good organisational skills and for people who enjoy working as part of a team. Many who open their gardens also join our teams and offer their support and experience to

other new gardens, forming a network of support.

## Where the money goes

The NGS is a registered charity. In 2014 we donated £2.5 million to the charities we help support. Our donations go to highly respected charities including:

- Macmillan Cancer Support - we are their largest ever donor
- Marie Curie Cancer Care - providing help to people who want to spend the end of their lives at home
- Hospice UK - our regular donation helps train hospice nurses and make the case for better public funding of palliative care
- Carers Trust - a major donation helps them provide practical support and training for carers and their families.

We keep up our tradition of funding the improvement of nursing care through the Queen's Nursing Institute and we help horticultural workers and their families through Perennial. Each year we give money to National Trust and the RHS to fund training in gardening skills.

## Contacts

For further information about your County Organiser and Team, finding a garden near you, and for details of Head Office, use one of the following:

- **Visit our website [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)** and look up details for your county team or email [ngs@ngs.org.uk](mailto:ngs@ngs.org.uk)
- **Find your county in The Yellow Book** or the local booklets distributed to garden centres, nurseries, libraries and information centres
- **Telephone Head Office: 01483 211535** or fax 01483 211537 or email [ngs@ngs.org.uk](mailto:ngs@ngs.org.uk)
- **Write to The National Gardens Scheme at:** Hatchlands Park, East Clandon, Guildford, Surrey, GU4 7RT