

# Growing for growth

The Horticulture E-bulletin from Farming Connect – Winter/Spring 2024 edition.

Welcome to our dedicated E-bulletin for Growers and Horticulture Businesses.

## What's happening now?

### Lantra Cymru Awards

Lantra Wales, supported by Farming Connect, hosted an exclusive awards ceremony on Thursday, 18th January 2024 at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod Wells. The event brought together key representatives from the environmental and land-based sector in Wales, to celebrate the initiative, skill and enthusiasm of students and trainees, and the outstanding contributions of key members of the industry. The judging was made by a panel of experts including Kevin Thomas, Trefor Owen, Llinos Samuel, Debbie Handley, Amber Wheeler, and Benjamin Barnes. The winners and nominees for the Farming Connect Horticulture Award are listed below, all were congratulated afterwards by Welsh Government Rural Affairs Minister, Lesley Griffiths. For **full results** [click here](#).



### Farming Connect Horticulture Award Joint winner: Marie Pope, of Alfie Dans Market Garden, Brecon, Powys

Two years ago, Marie achieved her long-term ambition of establishing her own market garden having rented a small area of land from a local farmer. Alfie Dans is named after her grandfather, a keen horticulturalist who passed on to her his knowledge and love of growing vegetables.

Marie completed her City & Guilds Level 2 in horticulture at a local college and is now working towards her Royal Horticultural Society Level 2 Plant Growth, Propagation and Development course. She also taps into all available support from the Farming Connect horticulture programme. Inspired by her early success, Marie has already taken on additional plots of land enabling her to increase production and the scale of her business, which now runs to four acres. She is also starting organic conversion. The judges said that Marie's love of horticulture, and her determination to develop and grow her already successful enterprise makes her a worthy joint winner.

### Farming Connect Horticulture Award Joint Winner: Jonathan Tiller, of Trees for Tomorrow, Tenby, Pembrokeshire

Jonathan's longstanding interest in sustainability and safeguarding the environment led him towards a complete career change! He left his previous career within the oil and gas industries to start a 'not for profit' nursery growing trees commercially in Pembrokeshire. He took risks setting up a new woodland enterprise but did his research, identified his market and thanks to learning new skills from ongoing training through Farming Connect, the gamble is paying off. Currently investigating funding opportunities, Jonathan plans to work with schools, care farms, neuro-diverse groups and others who he hopes to inspire to take climate change action.

Jonathan completed various mandatory training courses including PA1, PA6, tractor and chainsaw handling and has also undertaken numerous business planning courses. The judges said that his clear commitment to building his knowledge base and promoting climate change makes him a very deserving joint winner of this year's horticulture award.

### Farming Connect Horticulture Award Runner-up: Andrew Gethin, of Kerry Vale PYO, Newtown, Powys

Andrew is a partner at the family-run arable, cattle and pig farm near Newtown. A flourishing diversified horticulture enterprise is also a key focus for Andrew. The family began with a 'pick your own' pumpkin field, grow sunflowers and have a flower field too.

Andrew studied agriculture and agri-mechanics at his local college but since then, has been learning all he can about horticulture. A keen fan of the Farming Connect horticulture programme, he has benefited hugely from peer-to-peer learning through being part of a 'Grower Network' group and has been on numerous study visits. The judges were



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impressed by Andrew's determination to find effective solutions to dealing with changing weather patterns and weed control. He's already looking at new crops to 'stay ahead' of the competition and retain the interest of the venture's loyal and expanding customer base, the judges were impressed by Andrew's ongoing commitment to learning.

For any further information contact Rachel Thomas on 01982 552646 or email [rachel.thomas@lantra.co.uk](mailto:rachel.thomas@lantra.co.uk)

### **Would you like a horticulture trade stand at the 2024 RWAS Smallholding & Countryside Festival held on 18 & 19 May 2024?**

We are calling all growers to join Farming Connect in the RWAS Members Centre for the 2024 Growers Market. Once again, we are back at the RWAS Smallholding & Countryside Festival, and we are pleased to offer our growers a fantastic opportunity to participate in this popular event.

We have a small number of **fully funded** trade stands available for Welsh Growers to join us over the weekend and sell their produce.

Growers will have the opportunity to showcase and sell their products and share their knowledge and expertise during the two-day event. The Members Centre is situated in a prime location near the entrance and exit for members of the public with the main car park situated to the rear of the building.

Due to the nature of this opportunity, fully funded spaces will be allocated through an application process. We will be looking for growers representing a cross section of the horticulture industry who have the capacity and resources to deliver the two-day event. Successful growers will be expected to work with us in the build up to the event to provide input and suggestions into the look and feel of the room. This is our opportunity to showcase the best of the Welsh Horticulture Industry, so let's work together to show what we can do! Our focus is to promote Horticultural Produce from across Wales. To attend with Value Added Edible Products e.g Chutneys, Oils, Wines and Ciders, you will be asked to exhibit within the Food Hall - contact [foodhall@rwas.co.uk](mailto:foodhall@rwas.co.uk)

To discuss, please contact Rachel Thomas on 01982 552 646 or by e-mail on [rachel.thomas@lantra.co.uk](mailto:rachel.thomas@lantra.co.uk) To apply, please follow this [link](#) by 29/2/24

and see here: <https://rwas.wales/smallholding-and-countryside-festival>

**Also note the Royal Welsh Show Horticultural Village 2024** is still gathering pace. If you are interested in getting involved or having an interactive stand or display, please contact [horticulture@lantra.co.uk](mailto:horticulture@lantra.co.uk)



## **Update your knowledge**

**Looking for more support?** You can have up to 12 hours of [horticultural business support](#) through the Farming Connect Horticulture Programme. You can also join as many Networks as you need, for sector specific advice. Click [here](#) .

**Growers Network Wales Facebook page** Join our closed group on Facebook 'Growers Network Wales' to hear about events and study visits, and to share peer-to-peer learning and experiences. see [here](#).

**Grant Support** Please take note of the [dates](#) for rural schemes. Contact your local Development Officer, or us at [horticulture@lantra.co.uk](mailto:horticulture@lantra.co.uk) for advice.

## **What's on?**

The 'holiday season' is quieter for some, but we ran 11 online and in person events from December to mid-January, including Welsh Flower Network meetings, workshops on how to get a website for selling veg and Vineyard Pruning. We have lots of great site visits and events planned. Don't miss out and sign up to more events [here](#) today.

## **Disclaimer**

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information and recommendations given in these notes. All applications of crop protection chemicals should be made in accordance with label recommendations, which should be consulted before spraying. The use of the pesticide is at the risk of the user and Farming Connect does not accept liability for any loss or damage caused by such use. The references to on-label approvals and EAMUs for use of pesticides are subject to change and approval may be withdrawn at any point. It is the grower's responsibility to check approvals before use of pesticides or beneficials. In if doubt a grower should seek advice from a qualified specialist. Please contact us to arrange an appointment – e-mail/telephone advice is also available. We do not warrant,

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