

# People to Meet

Introducing the gardeners and public figures we most admire in British horticulture



## Dr Olivia Chapple

The founder and chair of trustees at Horatio's Garden on the life-affirming powers of nature and the expansion of this unique charity project

My son Horatio sparked the idea for Horatio's Garden. He wanted to be a doctor, like me, and as a teenager he worked summers at a spinal unit in Salisbury. The idea of making a garden so patients, families and staff had somewhere to enjoy nature on site was his idea. We'd done some fundraising and had a rough plan before he was killed. At that point, the fundraising

really took off. People were so moved by his story and the fact that this idea had come from someone so young.

We realised we could do something extraordinary with the funds. Cleve West agreed to create a garden people could access at all times for distraction, beauty and life affirmation. Being outdoors is a human right, yet in healthcare we often ignore

this basic need when trying to help patients. People with spinal problems are in hospital for a long time and must contend with little privacy, artificial lights, lots of noise and smells. All this at a time when they are facing a life that looks very different from the one they were expecting.

The first garden opened in 2012, a year after Horatio died. The impact was phenomenal and we realised there was a massive unmet need. I now work full time to raise money for the charity so we can create more gardens and continue the existing ones.

So far seven Horatio's Gardens have opened in the UK and two more are in the making. They have subverted the way we think of hospital gardens, by offering just as much interest in November as they do in June. To make this possible, each one has a head gardener to tend it full time. It is as much a social project as a horticultural one, since it also requires volunteers and we offer garden therapy.

It meant an awful lot to be awarded an OBE for exceptional services to charity. Horatio's Garden involves a team of remarkable people, including donors, trustees, gardeners and volunteers. It was so wonderful to have the importance of our work recognised to show the benefits of gardens in clinical settings and beyond.

• Become a Friend of Horatio's Garden and receive a Horatio's Garden Emma Bridgewater mug by donating £10 or more a month. See [horatiogarden.org.uk/donate](https://horatiogarden.org.uk/donate)

### RECOMMENDED

## Olivia's favourite gardens to visit

### Serge Hill Gardens Hertfordshire

There are many parts to these gardens: wildflower meadows, water features, and the new Plant Library, which contains thousands of plants. Serge Hill opens for the National Garden Scheme, a charity that supports Horatio's Garden. [sergehillproject.co.uk](https://sergehillproject.co.uk)



### Horatio's Garden Midlands Shropshire

Bunny Guinness did a wonderful job designing this garden with a classic structure and beautiful planting. It is laid out and integrated expertly with the spinal care unit, and tours can be booked. [horatiogarden.org.uk](https://horatiogarden.org.uk)

