

# YOUR GARDEN

With David Domoney

## LIVING A CALMED LIFE

**G**ETTING out in the garden can do wonders for your state of mind. So as we come to the end of Mental Health Awareness Week, here are five proven ways gardening can ease anxieties.

**1 CONNECT WITH OTHERS**  
ONE in four adults struggles with mental health issues. But making connections in a supportive network can help us when the chips are down.

Lucky for us, gardening is a great community pursuit. Perhaps the best way is to rent a plot on an allotment. Old hands are often willing to share tips with newbies, exchange produce with one another, or just chat while tending plants in the sunshine.

Plots are generally rented on a yearly basis from autumn to autumn, designed to enable you to improve soil before Christmas, ready for spring.

But plots often become available now and usually come at a 50% discount. You're looking at around £50 a year for a mini plot and £110 for a large one. Just think of all the free vegetables you could get out of that.

A lot of places offer big discounts for gardeners over 65. Check out your council's website for details of the allotments in your area. Or, for more community gardening advice, go to cultivationstreet.com.

**2 BE ACTIVE**  
**E**XERCISE has amazing mental health benefits. It boosts alertness, energy, mood and self-esteem and reduces levels of stress and anxiety.

A gardener will bend, lift pots, push mowers and move about, which makes muscles and joints supple.

Unlike circuit training, gardening is low intensity and puts less strain on the joints. But there are still up to 200 calories to burn for every hour you do.

The key is to make gardening a regular part of your routine. So grow plants that excite or matter to you.

The sight of childhood plants, such

as sweet peas, or delicious raspberries out your window will give you more motivation to care for them.

There is no better place to find peace and head space than outside in the garden with your wellies on and a trowel in hand

**3 KEEP LEARNING**  
**S**TARTING out on a learning journey will see you make progress, achieve goals and find out new and interesting things to boost mental wellbeing.

With gardening, there is always something to learn. As a beginner, start small, with achievable goals you can keep ticking off as time goes by.

Peas are a fuss-free crop that don't need to be started off indoors. Simply sow the seeds in the ground from March and watch them grow.

For seasoned gardeners, challenge yourself with different fruit and veg.

**4 GIVE TO OTHERS**  
**G**ROWING something for someone else will inspire you to clock up the hours outside. Set yourself a goal. Does your best friend love apples, onions or strawberries?

Grow these so you can give them homemade food they adore.

When your confidence is peaked, why not offer to water your neighbour's plants while they are away, swap your produce with others at the allotment or offer to lend

### Innovative, eco-friendly and smart: six gardening products of the year

**FROM** eco-friendly home composters to super quick pizza ovens and inventive garden lighting, **Hannah Stephenson** looks at some of the finalists for the RHS Chelsea Product of the Year title:

**Obelisk Composter and Obelisk** (£39 composter, £59 obelisk, wilstone.com)  
A GALVANISED steel compost bin which you put directly on your flower bed or vegetable patch, and an elegant obelisk which goes over it. Waste goes into the drum and the resulting compost feeds the growing plants directly into their roots without you having to move the compost anywhere.

**Cuba LED lantern and combined Bluetooth speaker** (£249, lightinnovation.com)  
THIS new lantern and combined Bluetooth speaker is highly portable and can be used indoors or out, recharging in six hours. The dimmable LED light works for up to eight hours on one charge and the lantern will connect to any Bluetooth device.

**Swan Watering Can** (£8, madewithhusk.com)  
THE swan-shaped indoor watering can is biodegradable and made from 75% waste bamboo powder collected directly from farms. Outdoor testing has shown the product can last up to seven years.

**Bamboo Pots and Seed Trays** (£3.99-£6.99, haxnicks.co.uk)  
MADE from bamboo and rice, these pots can be used indoors or outdoors and are reputed to last for five years or more. They're also biodegradable and compostable.

**Ooni Koda Gas-Powered Outdoor Pizza Oven** (£244.99, uk.ooni.com)  
IF you love eating pizza in the open air and you don't want to wait too long, you may invest in this smart, sleek



pizza oven which you can assemble in seconds, place on your patio and connect it to a gas tank. It reaches temperatures of up to 500°C, which is why it cooks your pizza so quickly.

**Hotbin mini** (£150, hotbincomposting.com)  
FOLLOWING in the footsteps of the award-winning Hotbin which can transform your food and garden waste into rich compost within 30-90 days, its smaller sister, the Hotbin mini does the same thing but in smaller gardens. It reaches temperatures of 40-60°C which allows the efficient composting of all food, and garden waste can be added in, including cooked food, small bones and perennial weeds.



Hotbin mini is a rapid composter for small gardens



Growing your own vegetables in an allotment or garden is a good way to keep active



Renting a plot on an allotment is a great way to feel part of a community



Peas are a fuss-free crop. Sow the seeds in the ground from March and watch them grow



Stay still and watch the wildlife all around



OUR EXPERT ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

**Q** SHOULD I lay turf or sow seed for a new lawn? What is best?

Phil

**A** BOTH are great ways to establish a lawn but bear in mind that, although cheaper, sowing grass by seed will take longer to come into fruition. If you are short on time but are prepared to spend extra cash, laying turf is definitely the better option. If you go for seed, make sure you peg netting over it to stop birds feasting on your new lawn.

**Q** WHAT veg can I grow in shade?

Andy



**A** WHILE most vegetables do require a full sun position, there are some tasty veggies that do just as well in the shade. You should try planting lettuces and rocket for some delicious shade-grown salads and fragrant mint for a herb that will add spectacular flavour to sauces and desserts.

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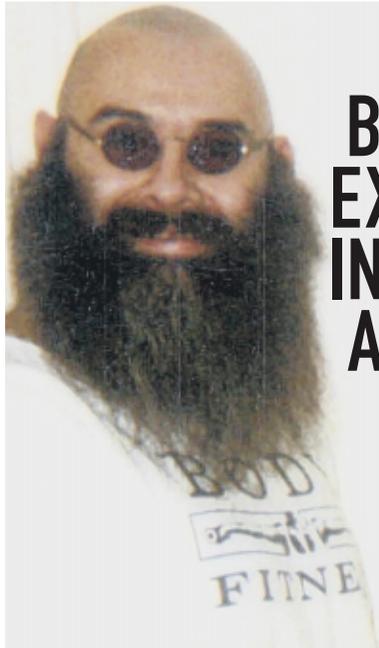
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SEE PAGES 10&11



## THE WEEKEND

The latest BBC TV drama filmed in Yorkshire: **Secret diary of Anne Lister retold**

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**Expressing how we feel from an early age will help break down the stigma of mental health**



**MEET THE MUM WHO BROUGHT UNITED STATES SCHEME TO LEEDS TO AID MENTAL HEALTH FIGHT: SEE PAGES 6&7**



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# Mum's mission to make sure the kids are alright

## Scheme helps physical and mental health

HEALTH

Paul Robinson

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FOR LEEDS mum Hannah Corne, looking after children's mental health is more than just a job - it's a very personal labour of love.

Hannah, from Moortown, is the driving force behind the UK arm of Mini Mermaids, a scheme that works to help young girls improve their physical and mental well-being.

She was inspired to bring it to this country from its original home in the United States after her daughter, Flo, was diagnosed with selective mutism, a condition that makes it hard for her to speak to adults and other children.

Hannah noticed that when Flo was outside and being active, her anxiety levels decreased and, while doing follow-up research, she discovered an American initiative called Mini Mermaids.

It runs courses that teach girls about the value of exercise and the part it can play in building their self-esteem, resilience and confidence.

Hannah's Mini Mermaids story saw her starting out as a lone coach operating from Moor Allerton Hall Primary School in 2015.

Four years on, the community interest company she founded is going from strength to strength, organising six-week programmes for hundreds of youngsters in cities including London, Sheffield, Derby and Cardiff as well as Leeds.

And, speaking to the Yorkshire Evening Post as part of our coverage of 2019's Mental Health Awareness Week, Hannah told today how her own experiences - both as a child and later as a mum - continue to shape her work.

She said: "When I was nine,



OUT AND ABOUT: Hannah Corne at the St Matthew's Primary event.

someone told me that I was 'big boned'. It was a throwaway comment that probably didn't mean anything to the person that had said it.

"However, that cemented the spiralling hatred that I had with my body and my sense of self-worth. "That was 30 years ago.

Could I have had a different, better relationship with myself if, when I was young, someone had helped me process and understand that statement, and why it affected me so much?

"Depression and anxiety are often talked about as the main mental health issues in children today.

"We also know that our childhood and its experiences can create powerful and lasting marks, both positive and negative.

"We must be willing to embrace and give children the space to talk about and share these experiences without fear of shame or judgment, to help them understand and address what they're experiencing, and provide the resources to help them manage whatever mental health challenges they face now and in the future."

Each Mini Mermaids course ends with the girls tackling a 5km run, putting into practice what they have learnt about concentrating on potential and possibility rather than fear.



EXPERIENCE: Hannah's daughter, Flo.



TOP TEAMS: A Mini Mermaids and Young Tritons event at St Matthew's Primary School in Chapel Allerton.

A sister scheme, Young Tritons, uses a similar approach to provide boys with an insight into the importance of sharing their feelings and working as a team.

Both programmes also encourage participants to have "open, preventative and proactive" conversations about mental and emotional health.

"We need to treat moments and events that shape our mental well-being with the same attention and kindness that we treat physical health," said Hannah.

"If a child came to us with a cut or a cold, we wouldn't dismiss or ignore it.

"Mental health is a critical part of a child's overall well-being and we need to treat it as such.

"We have the opportunity to engage with young children and create a destigmatised mental health approach that's open, preventative and proactive.

"This only happens when children are aware and can talk about their own mental health issues without fear of judgment.

"Expressing how we feel about ourselves, showing our

vulnerability and addressing what is going on in our lives from an early age, as well as encouraging our children to be active, will help to break down the stigma of mental health.

"We do that by ensuring that mental health issues are as easy to talk about as other physical aches and pains."

She added: "We weave physical activity into all of our lessons so girls start to feel first hand the connection between moving and overall well-being.

"One of our Mini Mermaids told us, 'I love running but I got other things out of it, too - I feel so much more confident in myself.'"

Hannah also paid tribute to the "fantastic support" that Mini Mermaids and Young Tritons have received from the Jane Tomlinson Appeal.

Together they are one of the four main projects now backed by the appeal, which aims to build on the charity legacy of the late Leeds mum and cancer heroine Jane Tomlinson.

For further information about Mini Mermaids, visit the [www.minimermaiduk.com](http://www.minimermaiduk.com) website.

CAMPAIGN

## Mental Health Awareness Week with YEP

THE YORKSHIRE Evening Post has won widespread praise for its own mental health campaign, called #SpeakYourMind.

First launched in 2016, it aims to raise awareness of mental health issues and combat the stigma that sometimes still surrounds them.

The campaign has received high-profile backing from the likes of Prime Minister Theresa May and Princes William and Harry.

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, the YEP has staged a series of events at its Whitehall Road offices in Leeds.

Former rugby league player Johnny Lawless paid a visit on Monday to give a presentation as part of his Minds Matter campaign.

And mindfulness and yoga sessions for staff have also been taking place in the paper's offices each morning this week.

There were also special talks

#SpeakYourMind #SpeakYourMind #SpeakYourMind #SpeakYourMind

held at our offices on Thursday to raise awareness.

A series of in-depth editorial features, meanwhile, has included a focus on the story of Emma Kirk, a Leeds Beckett University student from Wakefield who took her own life last October.

Her family has now set up a charity, Emma's Embrace, to try to ensure young people's voices are heard as they deal with the pressures of our social media-dominated society.

Organised by the Mental

Health Foundation charity, Mental Health Awareness Week runs until tomorrow and this year has a theme of body image.

Research has revealed that one in eight adults in Yorkshire and the Humber have had suicidal thoughts or feelings because of concerns about their body image.

E-mail [yep.newsdesk@jpimedia.co.uk](mailto:yep.newsdesk@jpimedia.co.uk) and let us know how you have been marking Mental Health Awareness Week.

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