

# FIELD NOTES

Impact Report 2019



**HIGHLIGHTS**  
from 2019

**Garden Competition  
Growth &  
Seed Distribution**



# Celebrating gardens in more displaced communities

“Over the past four years we have come to realise what makes the work of Lemon Tree Trust so appealing, both to the people living in the temporary and emerging communities in which we work, and to the supporters committed to helping them. The act of gardening and the creation of gardens – both ornamental and productive – are powerful statements of hope in what can often be viewed as hopeless situations.

In 2019 we cemented our commitment to celebrating gardens and gardening in as many displaced communities as possible, with annual garden competitions in a record number of camps. We streamlined our administrative operations in order to invest more in our projects and I was fortunate enough to make two trips to Kurdistan to meet our team and visit gardens in camps across the region. This report offers a snapshot of our activities in 2019 and looks ahead to how we plan to continue to expand in 2020 and beyond.”

**Stephanie Hunt, Founder & CEO,  
Lemon Tree Trust**



Pictured: Subhi Batal, Garden Competition winner in Domiz 2 camp and overall garden competition winner 2019.

## SPOTLIGHT ON:

### Aveen Ibrahim, Operations Manager, Lemon Tree Trust



Aveen Ibrahim is originally from Damascus in Syria. When civil war broke out in 2011, threatening the long term stability of the country and forcing many people from their homes, she made the difficult decision to move her family across the border to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). Aveen, her husband and her three children, arrived in Domiz 1 camp in early 2012, when the camp was still a tented community.

Aveen has been involved in the work of Lemon Tree Trust since we first arrived in Domiz 1 camp in 2015. She is a keen gardener and a community builder. She immediately saw the potential for using gardening to offer people a way to grow fresh food and flowers for both mental and physical health.

“The majority of our gardeners say that they come more for psychological comfort than a need for food. When they are here in the garden they put aside all their daily problems to enjoy the view and the act of gardening. Just by looking at all this green, we can forget our soreness and pain.”

In December 2019, in recognition of her commitment to the gardening community of Domiz 1 camp, and the wider community of

gardeners brought together by Lemon Tree Trust in Iraqi Kurdistan, Aveen took on the role of Operations Manager. In this role she will oversee all Lemon Tree Trust operations in the region, helping us expand our projects in other camps and recruiting a network of camp facilitators to enable us to reach more people at their homes.

“It’s like we’re a big family now. Knowing that people on the other side of the world are interested in our situation and want to help us create gardens and improve our future is so comforting for everyone involved. I love it here, there is always something happening and every day I can see how this garden – and all our Lemon Tree Trust activities – are helping people adjust to their new lives here.”





## Garden Competitions 2019



The annual Lemon Tree Trust garden competitions in the KRI continue to go from strength to strength. Competitions took place in a record seven refugee and IDP (Internally Displaced People) camps in 2019, with nearly 1,500 gardens in the running for prizes. This was a huge increase on the 2018 competitions, which ran across

five camps and received 1,000 entries. A combination of cash prizes and gifts of seeds and plants, with certificates for all the winners, were awarded at celebrations in every camp.

The garden competitions are a great way for us to meet people in their homes and



identify other potential areas of work in individual camps. Gardens create communities and by establishing community garden spaces within refugee and IDP camps, Lemon Tree Trust is empowering people, particularly women, to improve their environment and create opportunities for their families.

Stephanie Hunt (pictured left), helped judge some of the competitions and said: **"I continue to be inspired by the creativity and ingenuity of people living in situations of forced migration. Their love of plants and gardening and their keen desire to bring beauty to their surroundings is what drives us at Lemon Tree Trust. I loved visiting some of the winning gardens this year and look forward to watching them continue to grow and flourish over the coming months."**



## Azadi Community Garden

**Our flagship community garden in Domiz 1 camp continues to flourish.**

The Azadi Community Garden in Domiz 1 refugee camp in the KRI continues to gain momentum. Throughout 2019, the garden received daily visits from more than 50 women to take tea, socialise and spend time cultivating vegetables, herbs and flowers for their home cooking and to distribute to vulnerable families in the camp. It is a place where children can play safely and learn about growing.

A community bread oven was added to the garden, and is now used daily by a number of women who provide vulnerable families with traditional fresh bread.

In addition, we scaled back our plant and tree production in Azadi to enable us to grow more ingredients for our own blend of herbal tea. Around 8kg of herbal tea was distributed to people in Domiz 1 camp and we plan to extend this in 2020. We will continue to offer herbal tea as a gift to people in camps and in time we hope to market the tea for sale to a wider audience.

Pictured: LTT Community Garden Coordinator, Zhian, supervises a team of volunteers to package LTT herbal tea. Bags of tea are distributed to the community in Ashti neighbourhood, Domiz 1 camp.





## Garden of the Month Award



Following the success and high levels of participation in our annual garden competitions, a new Garden of the Month initiative was established in Domiz 1 camp. This enables us to celebrate camp gardens and shine a light on

innovation and creativity throughout the year. Every month, in a different neighbourhood in the camp, a garden is selected to win seeds and tools, which are presented to the winners, along with a plaque for their wall and a sign to



display in their garden.

Pictured: Garden of the Month winners in Rizgari neighbourhood in September 2019 (left) and Ashti neighbourhood in October 2019.

## Spreading the word

Lemon Tree Trust returned to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, London, in May 2019 with a Gala Evening fundraising dinner, generously sponsored by Andrea and Quinten Dreesmann. Funds raised on the night will support our ongoing seed distribution programme in refugee and IDP camps in the KRI.

In addition, we spoke at the RHS Chatsworth Flower Show in Derbyshire, England and Gardening Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland to extend our 'gardener to gardener' conversation and further raise awareness of our work. This kick-started our ongoing campaign to increase voluntary funding to expand our work and offer gardening activities to more communities of people forced from their homes in 2020.



Pictured: RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2019 Gala Dinner. From left to right: Hunter Hunt, Tatiana Blatnik, Andrea Dreesmann, Stephanie Hunt, Quinten Dreesmann.



Pictured: RHS Chatsworth Flower Show 2019, where Lemon Tree Trust presented its work alongside Becky Crowley, Chatsworth's cut flower gardener.

## Seed distribution

In spring 2019 we secured the first phase of private funding to enable us to distribute food and flower seeds in more communities in the KRI. In partnership with Mr Fothergill's and the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) in the UK, we shipped 11,000 packets of seeds to the region in autumn 2019 for distribution as part of our 2020 spring gardening competitions. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the RHS to bring a range of children's gardening activities to families in camps during 2020 and to fund more seeds through our ongoing partnership with Mr Fothergill's.

In December 2019, we visited Bardarash camp to distribute some of these donated seeds. Bardarash is a remote camp that was reopened in November 2019 to accommodate a new influx of people displaced by the Turkish invasion of Northern Syria in autumn 2019. We intend to do more in this camp, which lacks basic infrastructure and offers little in the way of opportunity for the families who are living there.



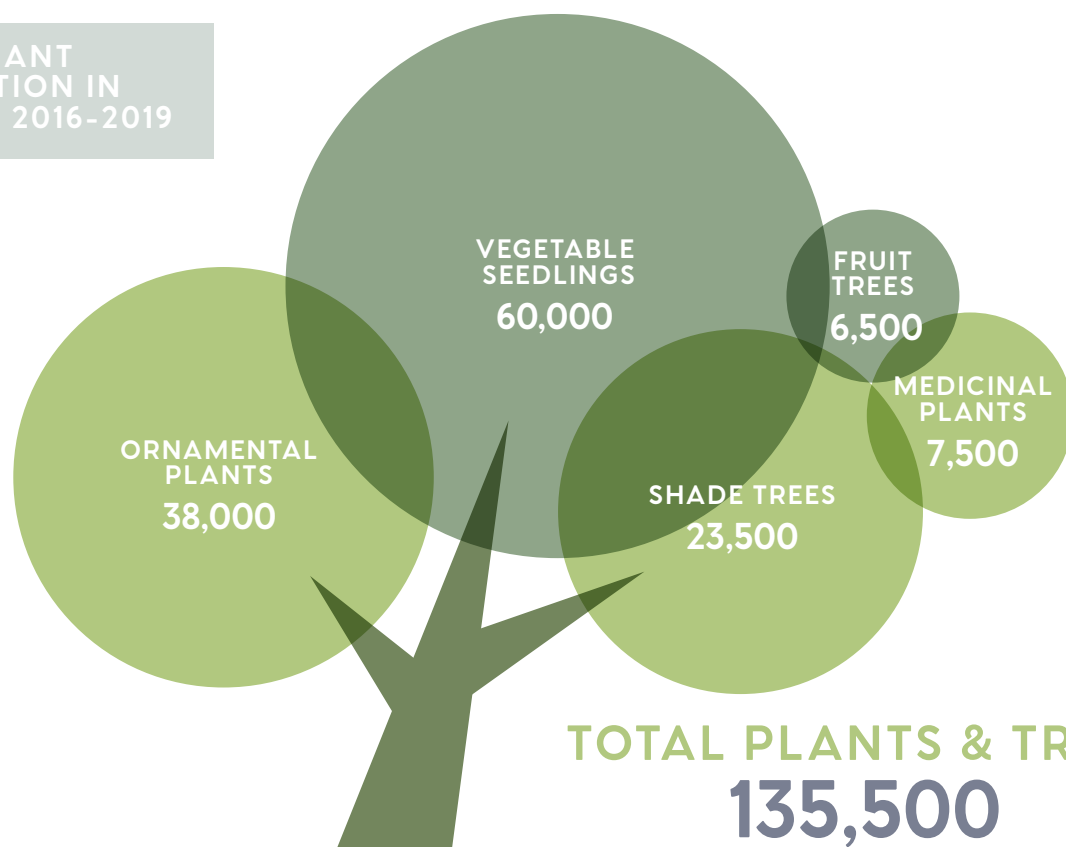
Pictured: Our first informal seed distribution in Bardarash camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.





Pictured: *Anemone coronaria* growing wild on the Ninewa plains in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

## TREE & PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NUMBERS 2016-2019



### LOOKING FORWARD:

Over the next five years we will focus on distributing seed and essential gardening materials to all refugee and IDP camps in the KRI. In 2020 we will expand our Garden of the Month programme to six more camps and we will further extend the reach of our gardening competitions. Working in partnership with like-minded organisations in the region, we will create more community gardens, ensuring that

they are built and maintained by the communities they will benefit. Our partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society continues to go from strength to strength and in 2020 we will create family-friendly gardening activity sheets for families and schools to enjoy. Furthermore, we will continue to partner with Mr Fothergill's for our seed distribution programme.



Pictured: Community gardens have been established by residents in unused space between shelters in Kawrgosk camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. We visited this camp in November 2019 for an informal seed distribution.

We support gardening initiatives in refugee camps and communities of people forcibly displaced by war and persecution as a way to restore dignity, purpose, and cultural identity. We help bring people together through the provision of seeds and plants, garden competitions, and education projects.

To find out more and to support our work:  
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In the USA, the Lemon Tree Trust is managed as a fund under The Dallas Foundation. In the UK, the Lemon Tree Trust is a restricted fund under the auspices of Prism the Gift Fund, registered charity 1099682.



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