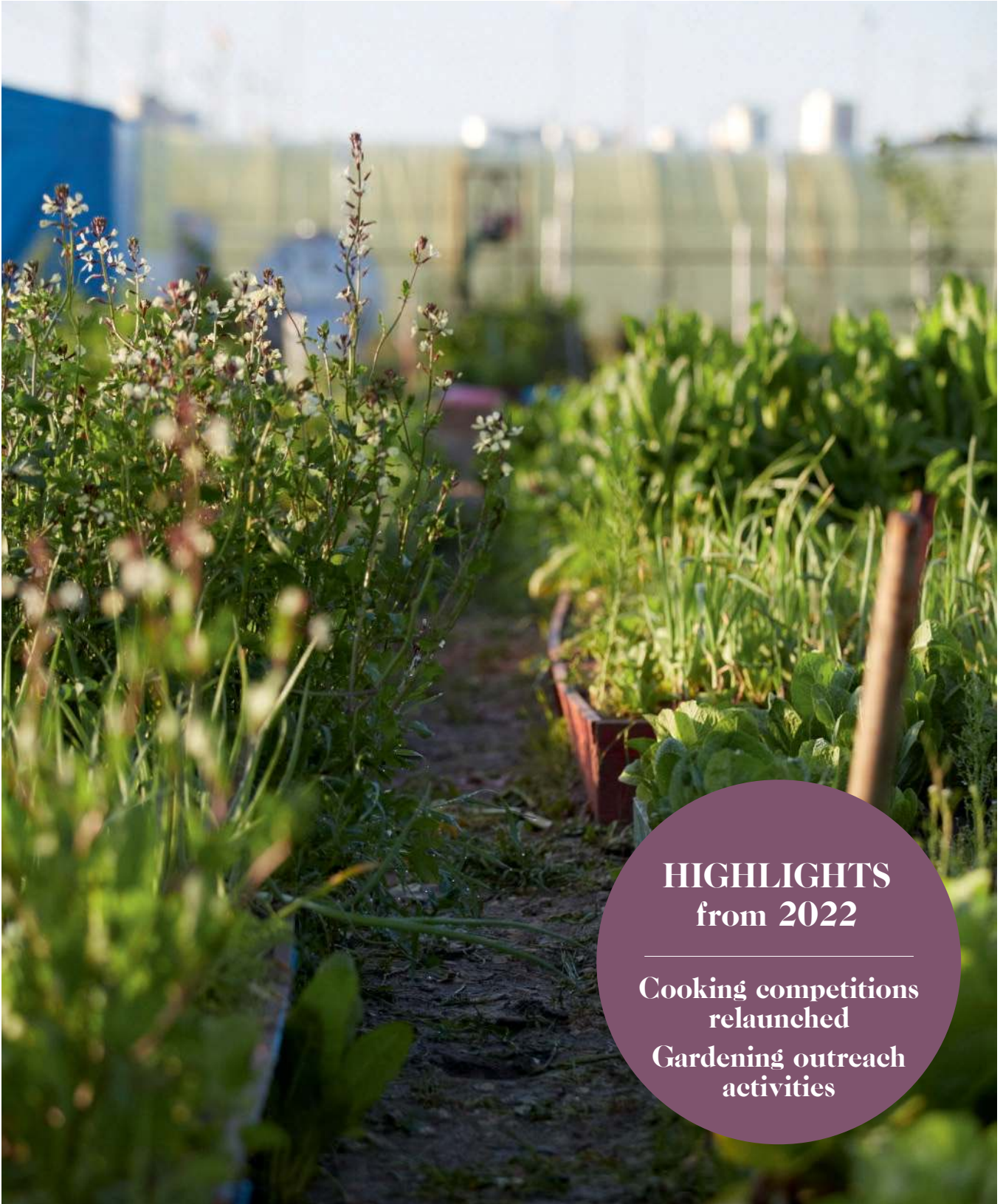


FIELD NOTES

Impact Report 2022



HIGHLIGHTS from 2022

Cooking competitions
relaunched

Gardening outreach
activities

A message from Stephanie Hunt

Too often, we see children's futures being the casualty of families who have been displaced by war. Our support for children and their communities to garden, with all the benefits we know it can bring, was exemplified this year in our work in schools. Seeing our garden coordinators working at Kobain School and Giyan School in Domiz 1 camp and Kwilan School, Afrin School and Jakar Hoan School in Gawaillan camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq made me so happy. I am always so grateful for our coordinators who are encouraging the next generation to nurture a seed into a plant and to enjoy the act of growing. This is at the heart of Lemon Tree Trust's work.

The resilience, energy and love our beneficiaries, supporters and the people who work for Lemon Tree Trust demonstrate every year is truly inspiring. In addition to our work in schools, we have made significant progress in 2022 with the development of our flagship community garden in Domiz 1, cooking competitions, garden competitions and creating a new garden in Bardarash. All of these activities are helping to create a future where gardening and people can grow. Read more on these on pages 4 & 5.

Our work would not be possible without the financial contributions, the seed donations and the time people have so generously given. Thank you so much to everyone who has supported us in 2022. I hope you are inspired by the stories of the people we help and the impact we can make together. We have some really exciting plans as we head in to 2023 and we would love you to join us on our journey. Thank you so much.



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

How your donations help



Dozkin Said Amin

"For two years, I have been benefiting from and participating in Lemon Tree Trust's projects and activities. And my experience has been rich.

Gardening at the Azadi women's garden has helped to rid me of the mental health issues I had been suffering from. Cultivating the raised beds that Lemon Tree Trust has assigned to me is rewarding in so many ways."



Jumana Omar Suleiman

"Lemon Tree Trust helps to relieve the pressures of life. Over the last three years I have gained so much agricultural experience through the organisation's various initiatives, which I am truly grateful for.

This is also reflected positively on my children; they love gardening.

I often invite women to get involved with Lemon Tree Trust so that they can also benefit from the joy that gardening brings – whether that's a visit to the Azadi Community Garden or entering the annual garden and cooking competitions."



Jian Ahmed

"I love being a part of the Lemon Tree Trust family and my experience during the last five years has been beautiful and valuable. I have gained so much professionally in the field of gardening and administration, but personally, too.

And I want to tell all women that nothing is difficult to achieve with hard work and persistence; our experiences shape us."

“

We are growing in difficult conditions and with limited resources, but gardening brings us together and helps us all remember our former lives and tell new stories about our future. People have hope when they sow their very first seed at their home shelter; they are investing in tomorrow.

”



Pictured: Girls in Harsham camp take delicate flower bouquets home to their families.

Where we work

For displaced people globally, the simple act of gardening is a powerful therapeutic tool, addressing issues of isolation and mental health, producing beauty, belonging, food security, and promising economic stimulation.

Since 2015, Lemon Tree Trust has supported gardening initiatives in refugee and other forced migration communities to empower people from the ground up. We predominantly work in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), which has provided refuge for an estimated 2 million people who have been forced to flee their home towns and countries since 2011.

Our focus is on bringing people together by providing seeds and plants, supporting home and community gardens and running garden competitions and education projects. Our activities are focussed on four main impact areas:

1. Improving mental health and wellbeing
2. Community building and women's empowerment
3. Improving local environments
4. Independent access to fresh food

Our vision is a world in which every person who has been forced from their home has access to a garden either at their home or in their community and has the means and knowledge to grow.



Spotlight on: Cooking competitions



Pictured: 2022 cooking competitions in full swing in Domiz 1 camp.

We first held cooking competitions in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in 2018 as an extension to our annual garden competitions. After a two-year pause due to Covid-19, we were thrilled this year to relaunch our competitions. It is a great opportunity to showcase all the delicious produce being grown in home gardens with limited resources. They also offer a way to remember and celebrate people's culture and heritage – a connection to home. Food can be the conduit for keeping memories alive and bringing people together as a community. And similar to gardening, cooking is often a therapeutic activity, positively impacting our mental health and wellbeing.

Judging – it's a tough job, but someone has to do it!

Aveen and the team, together with camp management officials and chefs living in the camps, had the enviable reward of tasting and judging the many mouth-watering meals. In each camp we welcomed between 40 to 50 participants and in Domiz 1 camp there were 100 participants. We promoted different categories for savoury and sweet dishes; our judging criteria instructed that the winning dishes must combine the original taste and flavour of the traditional recipe with beautiful presentation.

Cooking competitions winners announced

Overall, we awarded 15 winners with cash prizes across the seven refugee and IDP camps. The first winner received \$100 and the second winner received \$50. Due to having such a high turnout in Domiz 1 camp, we awarded three prizes: \$100, \$75, \$50. Everyone who took part was gifted a consolation goodie bag containing kitchen utensils or a saucepan or mug set.



Pictured: Garden to table: delicious home grown produce, combined with ingredients bought locally in camp, are whipped up into mouth-watering meals by our many talented cooks.

Key projects:

Gardening outreach activities

As a way to mark the UN's World Children's Day, we visited five schools in Domiz 1 camp and Gawillan camp in November. During each school visit, we talked about the benefits of gardening and demonstrated how to nurture a

seed into a plant. We also shared our fun Mr & Mrs Cresshead gardening activity, created in collaboration with the Royal Horticultural Society. Hundreds of activity sheets and seed packets were gifted to the children of many different age groups.



Annual Garden Competitions

A record-breaking 99 winning gardens were awarded in this year's garden competitions. To take part, residents simply needed to have a love of gardening and to want to share their love of plants with others. As usual, entries were judged by our camp coordinators in the region for their evident love of plants, creativity and passion for nature. Winners were presented with cash prizes and certificates signed by LTT and camp managers, as well as gifts of plants and seeds. All participants received packets of seeds as a thank you gift for taking part.



New community garden in Bardarash camp

We designed and built a new community garden at the SEED Foundation trauma centre in Bardarash camp. The community garden is a space for SEED centre clients and Bardarash camp residents to enjoy every day – Bardarash is home to more than 3,500 people displaced from Syria. Working closely with the SEED team, camp management and residents, our horticulture and landscape consultant, Hamid Abdullah, designed a formal garden with a lawn and paved area for group sessions. Along with the environmental benefits, the green is a welcome burst of colour in what is a largely grey landscape.

Distribution of seed and resources

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters and their donations of flower, vegetable, herb and fruit seed, we were able to distribute thousands of seed packets – along with our gardening activity sheets – to more than 20 refugee organisations and garden projects in the UK. We have also created additional language gardening activity sheets – Ukrainian and French join our English, Arabic and Farsi activities.

Garden of the Month award

Our 'Garden of the Month' prize continued in nine camps, celebrating the creativity and ingenuity of our gardeners all year round. The award remains popular with residents of the camps in which we work. Each winner receives seeds and a fruit tree, as well as a special plaque that can be displayed at their home shelter. A temporary sign is also displayed in the current month's winning garden for anyone passing to see.

Aid convoy in France for World Refugee Day

On 20 June, we joined O's Refugee Aid Team and others on an aid convoy in northern France where we donated much-needed everyday essentials. Sleeping bags, basketball hoops and balls, phone chargers and seed packets were gifted to specialist teams working directly with displaced people living in temporary camps in Calais and Dunkirk. The trip also gave us the opportunity to visit Secours Catholique's refugee day centre in Calais. We are working on plans to relocate our 2018 RHS Chelsea Flower Show Garden with the help of garden designer Tom Massey, Richard Curle at Landscape Associates, as well as O's Refugee Aid Team's Onjali Rauf and Caroline Cottet and the brilliant team from Secours Catholique.

Community urban rose farm

We took the first steps in creating our community urban rose farm which will help us expand our herbal tea production and the creation of ornamental rose gardens. We gathered rose cuttings from the nine camps in which we work and grew them on, before distributing young plants to residents to look after in their home gardens. In exchange, we have invited our rose custodians to harvest and donate their plant's petals to us at the appropriate times so that we can produce more of our herbal rose tea. The tea will be gifted and sold where appropriate and funds will be used to help more people in camps to create gardens and help support a viable circular economy.



Azadi Community Garden developments

We have further developed our flagship Azadi Community Garden to help improve daily life for our gardeners and residents in Domiz 1 camp. Since 2016, the Azadi garden ('azadi' means 'liberation' in Arabic) has been a busy hub of gardening activity, welcoming more than 50 women and their children every day. As well as tending to vegetables and herbs, it is a place to learn new skills and a safe space to meet and socialise. Some of the new features and improvements we've made this year include:

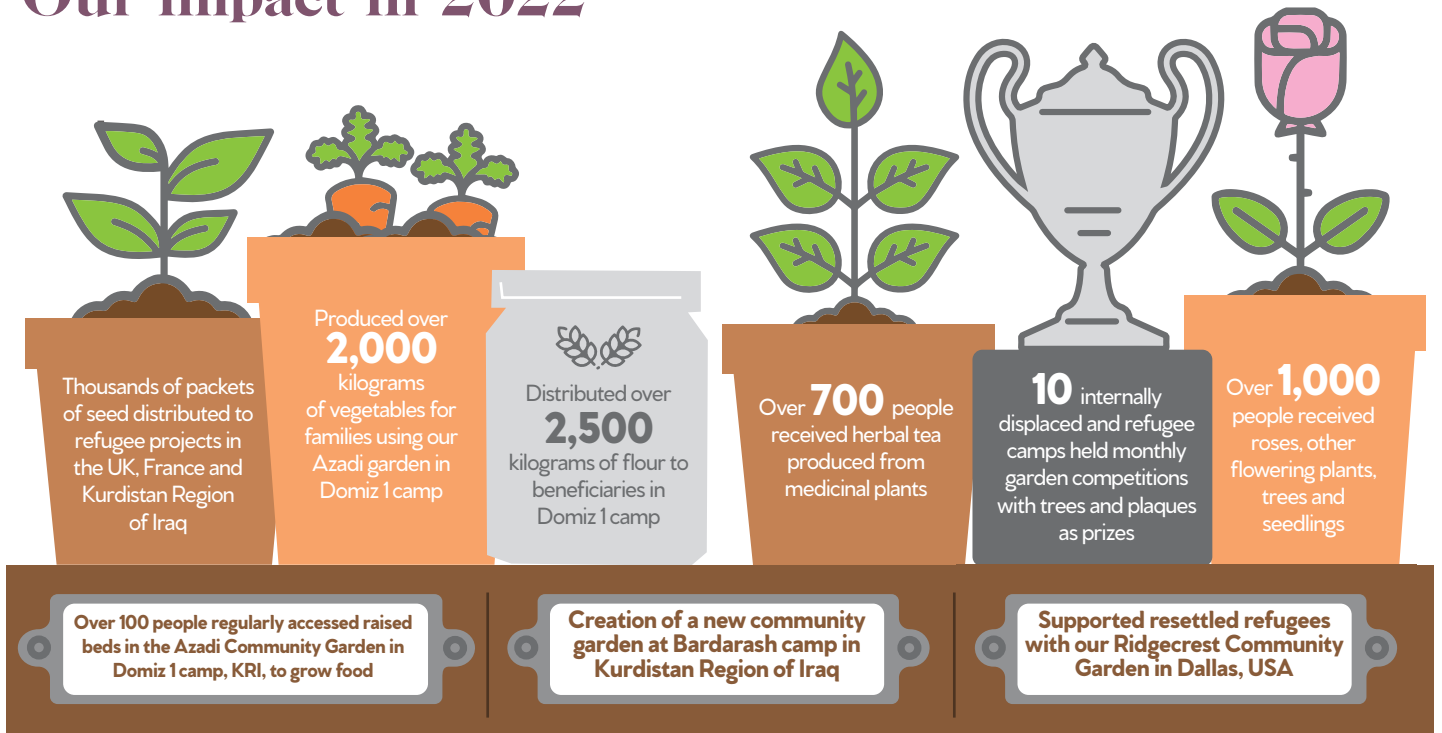
- Introducing a library, where children can enjoy some stories and practice their reading.

- Buying a pancake hot plate, which is being used on a regular basis alongside bread baking.
- 'Bringing home' a brood of ducklings, who join our chickens, rabbits and solo guinea pig, and will provide eggs for vulnerable families – in addition to entertainment for our young gardeners!



- Making a traditional quern-stone where residents can grind their own grain by hand – a much revered tradition in the Syrian culture (a quern-stone is considered a family heirloom and passed down the generations).
- Building a bespoke cannon flower planter and wheelbarrow planter, using found materials like old tyres, to bring additional beauty, interest and inspiration to the garden.
- Arranging emergency borewell repairs to ensure an ongoing water supply – our only water source in the community garden, the borewell draws water from deep underground.
- Organising essential maintenance works to resurface the roads that link the four sections of the garden.

Our impact in 2022



Looking forward

In addition to our regular ongoing gardening activities across the KRI, in 2023 we will expand our offering to residents of Domiz 1 camp by extending our Azadi Community Garden so that many more women and their children can visit us daily to grow vegetables and herbs to feed their families and community.

As part of this work, we also hope to establish a new marketplace where we can sell our herbal tea, fresh and pickled produce and more. Profits will be shared among gardeners, and used by the local team to support more people to garden. We want to help create a viable circular economy that spreads a little joy and happiness along the way. In addition, we are planning new community garden spaces in Gawillan, Bersive and Essian camps.

Finally, we will continue to seek partnerships with organisations in the UK and USA who are using gardening to support people who have been forcibly displaced, offering seeds and activities for families rebuilding their lives. Together we are bringing beauty, dignity and opportunity to communities left ravaged by the effects of war.



Pictured: 3D visualisation design of how the new garden extension will look with raised beds and space for a marketplace.

Special thanks

Our sincere thanks go to everyone who supported us in 2022 and continues to champion our work. There are a few wonderful people and organisations we would like to extend a special thanks to:

- Darren Abrahams at Art27
- Bristol Refugee Festival
- The Communities Foundation of Texas
- Linda Combi
- Richard Curle at Landscape Associates Ltd
- The Floralistas
- FLORXLzine
- Rachael Jefferies at the Centre for Minorities Research Podcast
- Emily Garthwaite
- Caroline Hood
- Garden Masterclass
- Grace Alexander Flowers
- Karin Bain and John Kukral Foundation
- Tom Massey
- Onjali Rauf & O's Refugee Aid Team
- Prism the Gift Fund
- Royal Horticultural Society
- SEED Foundation, Kurdistan Region of Iraq
- VIP Reading
- Britt Willoughby Dyer
- Young Propagators Society

Huge thanks to everyone else who has supported Lemon Tree Trust in some way.

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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www.lemontreetrust.org

In the UK, the Lemon Tree Trust is a restricted fund under the auspices of Prism the Gift Fund, registered charity 1099682. In the USA, all contributions to the Lemon Tree Trust Fund will be received, receipted and under control of Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organisation.

