



Growing the next generation of gardeners

An update from Lemon Tree Trust,
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Welcome

We are pleased to share an update on our work so far in 2026, with a special focus on children – the next generation of gardeners – across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Syria.

Thanks to your continued support, we have:

- provided plants to 26 children with special educational needs and disabilities
- reached 124 children across five schools
- delivered environmental workshops in Hêvî Community Garden
- created a new children's activity space at the Azadî Community Garden

With warm wishes,



Jennie

Communications & Operations Lead
Lemon Tree Trust



Gardening with children in Qamishli

In January, Operations Manager Aveen Ibrahem visited the Êriş Centre in Qamishli, Syria, which supports 12 children aged five and above with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The children planted cress seeds together and learned how to sow and care for seedlings.

Each child also received a plant grown at Azadî Community Garden in Domiz 1 camp, with their name written on the pot to encourage them to care for it at the centre.

A small celebration with a cake was held, giving everyone a chance to enjoy the day together.





Taking gardening into schools

This spring, Hêvî Community Garden Manager Othman Qewas visited all five primary schools in Gawilan camp, reaching 124 pupils.

Othman talked to the children about plants, gardening and the environmental benefits of growing.

Each child received seedlings to plant in their school grounds, including:

*Pomegranate · Fig · Grape · Dodonaea ·
Rose · Rosemary · Snapdragon*

All of the plants were grown from seed in the Hêvî Community Garden's polytunnels.





Learning about the environment

In June, Lemon Tree Trust and the General Directorate of Social Care in Duhok (DoLSA) brought children living in Gawilan camp to the Hêvî Community Garden for environmental workshops, supported by UNICEF.



The children explored ways to expand green spaces and improve their surroundings, including turning old vehicle tyres into planters.

They also planted seedlings, watered the raised beds and learned how to care for plants. Each child took home a seedling grown at Hêvî.



Plants to grow at home

Team members Othman and Hamid visited 14 children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) at their homes in Gawilan camp in July.

Each child received six fruit trees and flowering plants grown at Hêvî Community Garden to grow at home with their family.

Each child also received a pair of headphones and a Lemon Tree Trust badge.

[Watch our short film on YouTube](#)



With thanks to journalist Ronak Qewas for the film and photographs.



A new activity space for children

A corner of the Azadî Community Garden in Domiz 1 camp has been developed specifically for children.

Families visiting the garden to tend to their growing beds now have a dedicated space for younger children, with games, a slide and low tables for drawing and colouring.

The area builds on a modest library of books that the garden has offered for several years and adds a new strand to our work with children at Azadî, helping them to develop skills such as drawing and creative expression, alongside the gardening activities already on offer.

It also gives older children a reason to spend more time in the garden itself, learning the basics of growing and caring for plants alongside their families.





Ongoing programmes

Our core programmes remain active:

- **Community gardens** – Azadî and Hêvî in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and Ridgecrest in Dallas, USA, continue to bring people together through gardening.
- **Annual Garden Competitions** remain popular and took place across nine camps, with 500 residents participating.
- **Garden of the Month awards** offer year-round recognition of home gardens and creativity.
- **Seed, plant and tree distribution** supports home gardens and green neighbourhoods.

These initiatives remain central to our mission: improving wellbeing, empowering women and young people, greening local environments and supporting food security.





Growing more trees and plants

In April, we launched our **Tree & Plant Appeal** to help us grow and distribute thousands more trees, plants and seedlings across displaced communities.

£18,074 GBP | \$24,189 USD was raised by supporters

With match funding, this doubled to **£36,148 GBP | \$48,378 USD**

Our original fundraising target was £30,000 GBP | \$39,500 USD.

Thank you to everyone who supported the appeal. Your generosity is helping bring more green space, growing opportunities and hope to displaced communities.



What's next...

With your support, we are looking ahead to the next phase of our work:

- **Growing and distributing more trees and plants**, using funds raised through our Tree & Plant Appeal.
- **Continuing children's outreach**, including school visits and information sessions introducing children to gardening, nature and the environment.
- **Developing our community gardens**, including new beds at Hêvî, restoring raised beds at Azadî and exploring a new garden in Iraq. At Ridgecrest in Dallas, we are planning to recruit a local, part time Garden Coordinator.
- **Holding our Annual Cooking Competitions** and other activities that celebrate growing, sharing and learning.

Together, these activities will help create greener, more resilient communities while supporting wellbeing and food security.



Thank you

Together we are bringing beauty, dignity and opportunity to communities left ravaged by the effects of war.

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