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## **NEW TECHNOLOGY HELPS NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY OF ITS GARDENS**

- **Funds raised from the Trust's ROOTS subscription used to improve composting and help reach its carbon negative targets by 2031**
- **Part of the £100,000 raised through the gardening subscription service invested in new technology to help significantly cut down on energy use to produce compost**
- **National Trust for Scotland praises compost as the 'unsung hero' of the garden**

The National Trust for Scotland is taking advantage of new technology and composting processes to improve the sustainability of its gardens, reducing its carbon footprint and electricity usage to meet its carbon negative goal by 2031.

A healthy and prosperous garden begins with the soil and a valuable, yet often overlooked, component to enhance garden health is efficient and effective composting of green waste. The conservation charity has been exploring new ways to measurably improve the sustainability of its garden operations and is placing a focus on improved compost production by employing new, innovative technology at the special places in its care across Aberdeenshire such as Crathes Castle, Leith Hall, Haddo House and Pitmedden, thanks to part of the £100,000 raised from the Trust's ROOTS subscription. The Trust is embracing new technology to refine its composting processes with some of the funds raised from the ROOTS initiative, a gardening subscription service that helps the flora in its gardens to thrive, alongside a generous contribution from an individual supporter.

At Crathes the team use garden materials to make their own sowing and potting growing media. Traditionally they sterilise it to kill harmful bacteria, requiring significant electrical input, before introducing beneficial bacteria and ultimately returning nutrients back to the garden. Implementing technology akin to an autoclave used in hospitals, they are now able to sterilise larger quantities of soil in a more energy efficient manner through the use of steam under pressure. Elsewhere, the team at Leith Hall have been using advanced thermoregulation technology to optimise their composting processes. Maintaining the correct temperature for the correct length of time ensures the beneficial bacteria can flourish while targeted harmful pests and diseases are killed off.

**Chris Wardle, the National Trust for Scotland's Gardens & Designed Landscapes**

**Manager for the North East, said:** "Improving the sustainability of our gardens is a key focus for the future of the Trust. Starting from the ground up, the soil component is one of the hardest workers we have in our gardens. A healthy compost heap and efficient and effective composting processes enable our biodiverse array of plants to flourish and vastly improves our carbon capture. In a way our compost truly is the unsung hero of the garden. We've made significant steps in refining our compost facilities in the North East by embracing new technologies in thermals monitoring and soil sterilisation. The money pledged from the ROOTS subscription has been an enormous help in our journey to measurably improve the sustainability of our gardens and we're grateful for all of our generous supporters that have helped raise this money."

Improving energy efficiency through new technology is helping to increase the yield and value of compost that will benefit our carbon storage, help conserve the biodiversity of the gardens and also reduce the Trust's carbon footprint at the same time. This complements gardeners' efforts in the North East to reduce the number of pots sent to landfill each year, by potting plants in handmade biodegradable paper pots. The work done by the gardens team to bolster sustainability supports the Trust's garden strategy, which includes objectives to improve the condition of the gardens in its care, and create healthier, more biodiverse and biosecure gardens to encourage nature to flourish. It also supports the Trust's goal of being carbon negative by 2031.

Christina Morrison, National Trust for Scotland's Fundraising Manager, said: "We're delighted that the funds raised through our ROOTS subscription is helping to have a positive effect on the gardens in our care, improving our composting production, conserving their biodiversity and assisting in our goal to reduce our carbon footprint. The ROOTS subscription is the perfect Christmas gift for both garden novices and green-fingered enthusiasts to support their gardening skills and conservation of Scotland's nature and heritage at the same time. It's thanks to our subscribers, members and supporters that we're able to continue our work to care for, protect and share Scotland's nature, beauty and heritage with everyone, now and for future generations to enjoy."

A ROOTS subscription provides subscribers with a package every six weeks containing useful tips and info from the Trust's team of expert gardeners, educating them on the diverse range of flora which flourishes in Scotland to help improve their own gardening activities. Additionally, subscribers will receive a package of Scottish seeds to grow at home six times per year to add to their plant collections.

The ROOTS subscription is one of many initiatives led by the Trust as part of its ten-year strategy, Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone, with a mission to conserve Scotland's heritage and the stories that each of its gardens hold. The subscription enables the charity to carry out the essential work to its gardens while acting as an accessible guide for anyone at any stage in their journey looking to enjoy the natural beauty and heritage of Scotland's plant life.

To find out more or purchase a ROOTS subscription, please visit:

<https://www.nts.org.uk/roots>.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors**

**Images** - <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/u02493902y>

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022, the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031. The Trust's Gardens Strategy 'Connecting People, Plants and Places 2023-32' sets out the Trust's ambition for its gardens during the Corporate Strategy period.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work. For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk).

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.