

Christine Leung and The Taproot Guild

Christine Leung was introduced to gardening by her grandparents, originally from China, who grew food in their Liverpool allotment-style back garden and made friends with neighbours through a shared love of food and fresh produce.

Christine worked in journalism before completing her Level 2 RHS Qualifications and setting up her horticultural consultancy Lotus Brook in 2012. In 2015 she became the co-ordinator of the community growing project - Taking Root in Bootle - in collaboration with Regenerus, a Bootle based development trust. She continues to work with the South Sefton community and stakeholders to consult, advise and together alter public spaces to encourage engagement in nature and improve biodiversity in this industrial area of Merseyside.

Christine has played an important role in creating community gardens, and working with Regenerus in delivering 10 urban meadows in partnership with Richard Scott (Director of the National Wildflower Centre at the Eden Project and Founder of Scouse Flowerhouse), improving high street areas and mobilising 140 households to take up front yard gardening and community composting. Other projects include woodland development and community alleyways delivered in collaboration with landowners, social landlords, policymakers, local authorities and Public Health.

After a visit to the RHS flower Show at Tatton Park in 2018, Christine and the Taking Root in Bootle volunteers were invited to create a show border which went on to win gold in 2019. Another gold followed in 2021. In 2022, Christine progressed to a small garden and won a bronze medal for her bicycle and nature friendly urban front garden.

This year's Elements Terraced Garden is brought to you by Christine's Taproot Guild, a Liverpool-based collective of a wildflower expert (Richard Scott), horticulturalist (Anna Robertson), artist and welder (Ian Colligan), gardener (Wes Dryden) and publicity specialist (Iga Kowalska-Owen) who share Christine's passion for sustainable and naturalistic urban garden design. Many of the plants have been grown by community groups and volunteers will once again help create the garden and assist with its relocation to a public site in Bootle.

The name of Christine's business, Lotus Brook, is the name of the village that her grandparents came from in Canton, China. When she visited the area in the 1990s, she received a very warm welcome from the residents who still remembered her grandfather. She recalls seeking shade under a tree in the heart of the village and everyone chatting, eating and drinking. To her that is the essence of green spaces – people coming together to grow, socialise and live in harmony with nature.

RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park accolades:

- 2019 'Our Space' blooming border – gold medal
- 2021 'Culture Clash' community border – gold medal
- 2022 'Could Car Less' front garden – bronze medal
- 2023 'Elements' terraced garden – TBC