

Powered by Poetry, Rooted in History:

The Poetry Pharmacy Physic Garden

POETIC HEALING is on offer at this year's BBC Gardeners' World Live thanks to a poetry-inspired 'physic' garden in the Beautiful Borders.

Inspired by mediaeval 'physic' gardens and the literature that is woven into centuries of horticultural healing, the border has been created using plants with traditional medicinal properties. After the show, it will be moved to the Poetry Pharmacy in the border town of Bishop's Castle, Shropshire. The Poetry Pharmacy is a unique bookshop where customers are prescribed poetry and literature to ease their ailments.

The garden has been enabled by a Kickstarter campaign, supported by both the local and literary communities. Some of the rewards to generous donors include bottles of 'Poemcetamol' (bottles with poems hidden in each capsule), a writer's-block surgery, use of the writer's shed and poetry on prescription.

The garden was designed, grown and built by Esther Cooper-Wood, Liz Colebrook, Laura Clark and Alex Valk, who met on Winterbourne House and Gardens' RHS Level 2 Practical Horticulture course. The quartet are all retraining from earlier careers including design, bicycle engineering, acting and communications.

Esther Cooper-Wood, who led the design, said: "We created the structure of the border to mimic the geometric shapes found in mediaeval physic gardens. It's really important to us that the plants support both human and wild life, so we've made sure to include pollinator plants as well as plants at different stages of their life cycle. While it is important the border looks beautiful for the show, we wanted to work to a realistic budget and use seasonal plants that are widely available. Sustainability of the project was paramount, so we are delighted that the plants will be installed at the Poetry Pharmacy after the show, where they will be enjoyed by others."

Deborah Alma, Emergency Poet and owner of the Poetry Pharmacy said: "This beautiful border will be a space to inspire well-being and pleasure for local people and for our visitors for many years to come. We will pick the herbs to make teas, use the garden to run workshops and events and be able to inspire even more people to embrace a love of growing and connection to nature."

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Notes to editors:

For press queries contact Alex Valk: alexandravalk@gmail.com / 07903 501357

About the gardeners:

Esther Cooper-Wood is a freelance illustrator and gardener at The National Trust's Attingham Park.

Instagram: [@esther_c_wood](https://www.instagram.com/esther_c_wood)

Liz Colebrook has a background in the cycle industry and occupational therapy. Liz co-manages a specialist nursery in South Shropshire.

Instagram [@liz_b_colebrook](https://www.instagram.com/liz_b_colebrook) and [@newhopedaylilies](https://www.instagram.com/newhopedaylilies)

Laura Clark (Steavley) has worked as an actress for nearly 20 years in theatre, film, TV and commercials and is a trained musician. She has a passion for growing edibles and gardens for two stately homes in Warwickshire. . Instagram: [@laura.in.the.garden](https://www.instagram.com/laura.in.the.garden)

[@laurstevelyactress](https://www.instagram.com/laurstevelyactress) [@scratchybeard](https://www.instagram.com/scratchybeard)

Alex Valk is a journalist and communications manager, now working towards a career in gardening and design. She has written about gardening and ethical horticulture for Hort Week and Radical, and blogs at verygreengardener.wordpress.com.

Instagram: [@valkinthegarden](https://www.instagram.com/valkinthegarden)

About the Poetry Pharmacy

Deborah Alma has been dispensing poetry for eight years as an Emergency Poet from the back of her vintage ambulance at festivals, conferences, hospitals and care settings, libraries and schools, with a poetry pharmacy of poems-in-pills under the attached awning. The Poetry Pharmacy is her first permanent shop.

Visitors can be prescribed suitable poetry to ease their daily woes and the attached Dispensary Café offers tea, coffee and tisanes to lift the spirits. The space is also host to arts events, workshops and much more.

You can find the finished garden after the show at The Poetry Pharmacy, 36 High Street, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire SY9 5BQ. For more information visit poetrypharmacy.co.uk