

Poems from Plant Poets' Corner

At Plant Poets' Corner, we meet to focus on plants and fungi and explore our learning through poetry. We welcome people who are new to poetry, or to plant science, or both, as well as those returning to writing, or looking to make more space for it in their lives. Over time, we have created a generous and caring group that continued to meet and grow online during 2020–21, amid the restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic.

We share these poems in celebration of our work, and to illustrate the learning resources that were created from our sessions, which aim to inspire others to write their own poetry, and to help writers and teachers lead workshops inspired by plants and fungi.

Pepper

by Sadelyn

*Black pepper, chilli pepper
Scotch bonnet pepper
Any pepper*

*Chest grater – Mucus hater
Charging in with fire
Your warmth – Comforting
Releasing and invigorating*

*1 teaspoon – 1 tablespoon
Any spoon*

*Pounding in the mortar
Pounding harder and harder*

*As you're swallowed
Revenge you take
Knocking infection
Mucus and germs
Far asunder*

Wishful Thinking

by Kirstie

*I walk amongst trees and admire
the different textures of their
protective coats.*

*Is bark the building material
of their upright stance?*

*Almost trance-like I'm lost in their
uniqueness and I start to recognise
similarities to the faces and
expressions of those I know.*

*Each gnarly and wrinkled crease,
position of bough and branch
makes a connection to a memory
in my head.*

A plan, a vision, a wish unfolds.

*Could trees become a figurehead for
my revenge?*

*What if I could cast a spell on all of
those who have caused me strife
and unleashed unkindness in my
life?*

*Could I curse their soul deep into
a tree, hold them to account by
consolidating their negativity?*

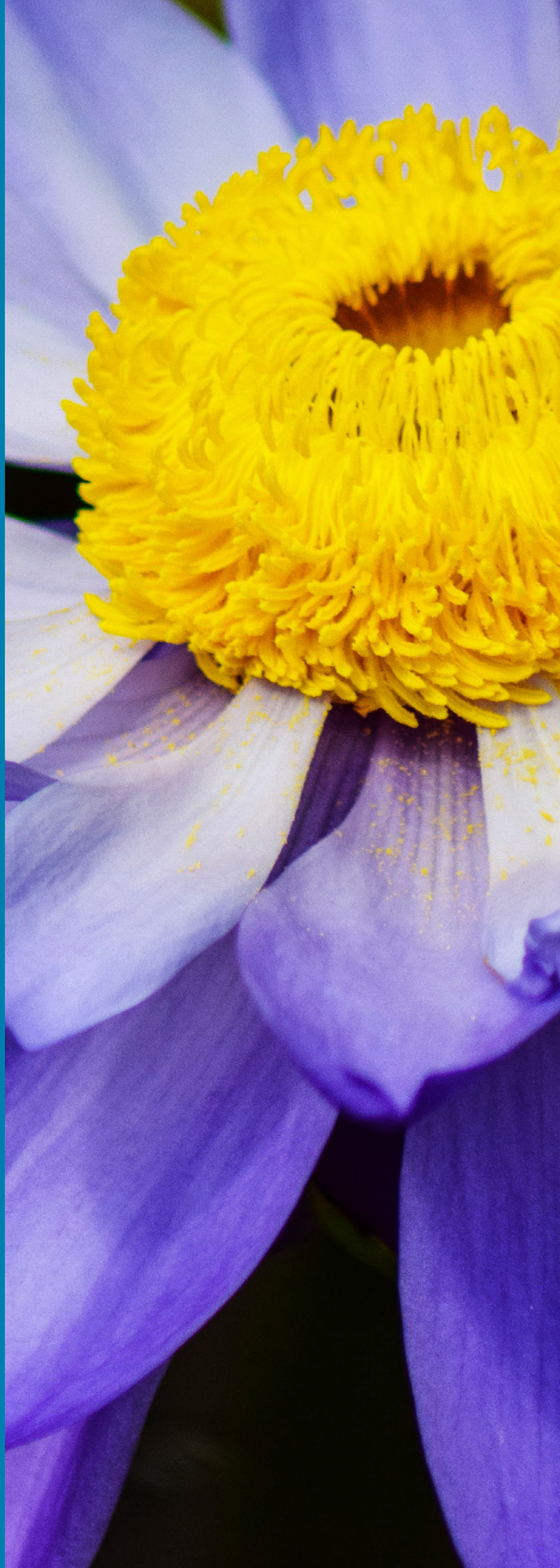
A prisoner bound by solid wood.

Could I? Should I?

*I laugh at this and it brings me back
to reality.*

*To put that obligation on a tree
would not be fair, besides this is no
fairy tale.*

*I exhale with some wishful regret,
pick up my old wooden spade,
readjust my protective gloves and
continue my search for Deadly
Nightshade.*



Summer Salad

by June and Lucy

*Tear, wash and spin
Your fresh green lettuce leaves
Chop them as finely as you can
Without slicing your fingertips.
Add a large red onion,
Diced.
Mum says it cleans your blood.
Wear a diving mask to protect your eyes
From the fierce stinging.*

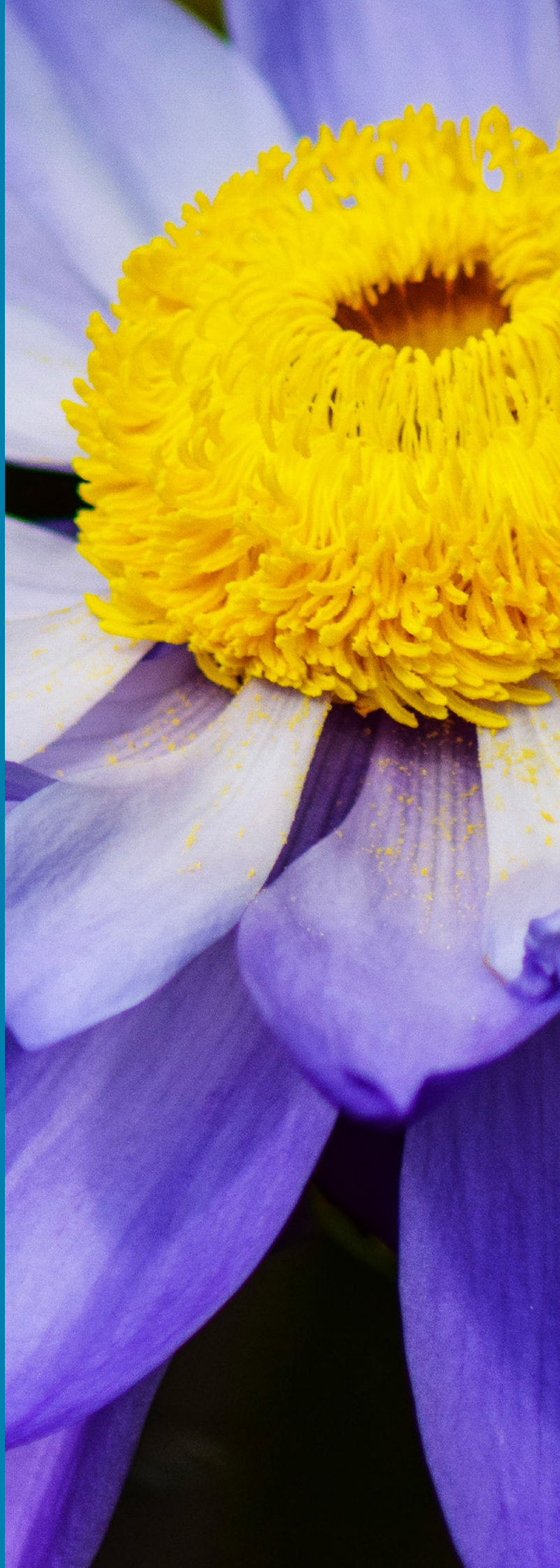
*Now,
Dice or grate or slice or chop
Whatever you can find:
Peppers
Carrots
Tomatoes
Mange tout
Sugar snaps
Cabbage
Spinach
Cauliflower
Add peas, chickpeas
And spuds (boiled and cooled)
Sprinkle liberally with Raquel's oregano
And fresh, clean parsley
And heaps of cracked black pepper.
Splash with balsamic vinegar.*

*Then,
Finally,
Eat it in the sun.
Savour the crunchiness
Roll the freshness round your mouth
Let the tang tantalise your tongue.
Enjoy the moment
With plenty of chatter
And banter
And laughter.*

In this cup of tea

by Sally

*In this cup of tea is
a spent flower, stewed leaves,
the stench of imperialism.
I don't like the taste.*



Violet

by Steven

*A riot of silence in the misty depths
of a velvety nebula.
From far away in Space, Violet bestows its
spiritual blessings upon us, as if Royalty.
In its majesty, I feel its blessed calm.*

Fungi

by Clara

*From Earth unexpected you appear.
With the help of Humans' hands
you grow too.
Joy and surprise you give to us all,
but,
as you wildly spread,
a warning is left in the air.
Choose me wisely,
be aware of Who I Am.
And, if you do have the power of healing,
show me how it is done.
Take away the pain.
Take away the dark clouds from the mind.
Make the juice you give
do the miracle,
to bring back happiness in the heart.*

Daffodil?

A group poem

*Duck herald
Golden trumpet
Spring star
Flapper's dress
Pig snout
Candle snuffer
Ear horn
Butternut plant
Pollen trap
Yellow bee scanner
Exploded baker's hat
Sun-on-me*

Created for Kew by poet Miriam Nash.
For more information on Kew, visit [kew.org](https://www.kew.org)

We hope you enjoyed our poems.
We wrote many more! If you write
anything inspired by this work,
or the resources, we would love
to read it. You can send it to
communitylearning@kew.org
and we will reply when we can.

Special thanks to all the poets
who shared their work, to Valentina
Zunino and Seth Richardson for all
their support and guidance, and to
everyone at RBG Kew who wrote
and helped to create the materials
and resources that inspired us.

