

# insideKENT

celebrating the best of Kent and beyond

## THE GLASSHOUSE: HELPING PEOPLE GROW

BY GUEST COLUMNIST, KALI HAMERTON STOVE, MANAGING DIRECTOR  
AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE GLASSHOUSE IN CRANBROOK.

We are an award-winning social enterprise selling house plants and offering second chances to women in prison through horticultural training and employment. Through our website and shop, The Glasshouse sells beautiful indoor plants in handmade grey clay pots, as well as plant care products and gifts.

Founded in February 2020 by myself and social entrepreneur, Melissa Murdoch, we have since strived to grow The Glasshouse into a leading example of successful social enterprise. Together with the talented horticulture and support team we are determined to reduce reoffending by ensuring women released from prison have improved opportunities and are prepared for release, so we offer intensive training and resettlement support ensuring women have the best chance at a second opportunity for a fulfilled and positive life.

I'm sure you're wondering how this works? The initial opportunity to join The Glasshouse is offered to women at the end of their prison sentence and we work with three women's prisons across Kent and Surrey, including HMP East Sutton Park open prison near Maidstone. At any given time we have up to eight women from HMP East Sutton Park who are part of the programme and work with us part time, which is something we're immensely proud of. Infact, The Glasshouse recently received a commendation from Social Enterprise UK, CBRE's innovation award and has doubled its turnover in the first two years, so we're clearly doing something right.

When they're not working in the shop, wrapping online orders or planning the next installation for our plant-scaping work in London, The Glasshouse women are busy at the company's 'Growing HQ', which is also in Cranbrook. We host regular training sessions here where plants are nurtured and prepared, and the site also hosts the houseplant workshops which are run by our talented, green-fingered women. These informative, fun sessions have been run for groups including local U3A and corporate team building events and we've found they are really important in boosting confidence and offering the women that work with us a chance to be experts and share their knowledge, illustrating what they can achieve.

We are delighted to have become a respected part of the local business community and a place where women on day release can develop and practice



customer service skills, offer plant care advice and pack orders weekly to ship across the UK.

On that note, our wonderful women have offered their top tips on winter houseplant care - winter particularly brings houseplants the twin challenges of indoor central heating and dryer air, so follow these steps for happier, healthier plants this season.

**FEED ME:** Consider giving plants a good seaweed-based plant food to ensure they have extra vitamins and minerals at this time of year. We sell and use Plantsmith plant care products.

**PROTECT ME:** Ensure plants are not in direct light and are away from hot spots in your home especially any direct sources of heating such as radiators and open fires.

**WIPE ME:** When you return home from being away, make sure to wipe and clean the leaves of your plant. Dust may have gathered in your absence and plant leaves should be cleaned regularly to ensure they process light efficiently.

**MIST ME:** Most indoor plants love humid, tropical environments and misting keeps plants happy. Place a bowl of water beside plants to ensure air stays humidified.

Our team is always on hand to give advice and offer plant support. Please pop by the shop in Cranbrook or visit our website to find the right plant for you or ask questions.

[www.theglasshouse.co.uk](http://www.theglasshouse.co.uk)