

Carrapitt Plants branch out thanks to GD LEAF funding

Sue and Richard Hearnden have been building their specialist wholesale alpine plant nursery since the 1980s, when they decided to make use of a few acres of Richard's family pig farm to grow and sell plants. The business started as a side line to the couple's day jobs as trained horticulturalists but it is now a thriving business with one full time and several part time employees working alongside Sue and Richard. The business is run on a sale or return basis, and Carrapitt Plants visits customers once or twice a week to look after their alpine beds, taking back anything that has gone beyond saleable quality, and replacing with new stock. This tailored, personal approach has earned them year on year growth in customers from around the UK, and they are now just embarking on online wholesale sales.

Consistent growth naturally led to a need for more space to plant larger quantities of seeds more efficiently. Sue and Richard approached the DR Company for assistance in applying for funding to build a large, custom built potting shed. They were granted £10,000 from the South West Local Enterprise Action Fund to contribute to the build, and this summer the work was completed. Once the Alpine season starts in mid February, Carrapitt Plants will be working more productively, employing further staff, and boosting the local economy. Even more than that, Sue and Richard took a climate unsuitable to grow many plants and have made for themselves a specialism that actually thrives on Dartmoor's unpredictable and harsh conditions. This business like so many others on Dartmoor, is championing enterprise, best practice and diversification, and most people don't even know they are there.

