

FACTSHEET

Planning Year Round Garden Activities- Ideas & Resources

We are often asked by projects for ideas, hints and tips as to how to fill the year with garden related activities. This publication goes some way towards addressing this perennial need.

There are 3 main sections:

Working with Groups – top tips for carrying out gardening activities with community groups **Activities** – suggestions for year round gardening activities and year round planning **Resources** – list of useful resources for activities and further garden activity reading

The pack is designed to be regularly updated and added to - so if you have any activities and/or resources that you would like to share, please send them to the Trellis Office, contact <u>jenny@trellisscotland.org.uk</u>.

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Gardening with Groups

Sometimes a lack of gardening knowledge can be perceived as a barrier to gardening with a group. However, when working with community groups it is not always necessary to be an expert gardener. It can be a very positive experience if the group learns together, encouraging all members to share what they know. The group leader should know how to manage people, be creative and have energy. Group gardening activity comes from these attributes as much as from gardening knowledge. It is beneficial to have good resources for basic gardening information. This can be found in books and on the internet - try the Royal Horticultural Society at http://www.gardening/http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/ and Garden Organic at http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/ and the BBC Gardeners World web pages at http://www.gardenersworld.com/, The Gardeners World site includes over 250 video demonstrations of gardening skills at http://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/projects/category/video-projects/, very useful for learning technique and sharing with a group on a wet February day!

Top Tips for Gardening with Groups

Involve the group in planning the garden: crops, equipment needed, activities for the year (see next page)

Sow seeds/ bulbs at a depth of approximately 3x the height of the seed/bulb

Sow seed in straight lines - weeds grow randomly, so it's easier to identify them and pick them out if the seed crop is easy to see

Use a cane to make a seed drill—pressing a cane into the soil to the correct depth makes a useful indentation for sowing seed in.

Sow seed in bulk - be generous, you'll need lots of spare plants to make up for crop failure and learning on the job mishaps and you can have the joy of giving away extra plants!

Label sown seed and crops clearly – as well as names, you can add instructions such as 'You can pick me now', 'Eat Me' etc.(this can be a group activity- why not make it creative?)

When measuring use hands and feet (rather than formal measurements) – make everything as visual as possible.

Growing in small spaces/pots- Pick & pick again plants- these plants flower and fruit more if you pick the fruit/flowers often e.g. herbs (have culinary, wildlife and sensory interest), edible peas, sweet peas, beans, tomatoes (harvesting and eating the crop are good group activities)

Healthy Eating/Organics - Grow what is more expensive to buy in the shops (carrots & onions are relatively cheap); grow what people want to eat, e.g. salad, radish, fruit esp. strawberries, raspberries; try something unusual, creative or fun.

Break tasks down into small parts and create manageable jobs for different skills & abilities. e.g. can't bend? Team with someone who can – one bends and holds while the other uses the secateurs etc.

Celebrate at every opportunity- tea, apple, cake or whatever for birthdays, effort, Fridays, anything – make up something fun.

Activities

Year Round Gardening Planning

Garden planning can be done by groups indoors in winter or at any time of year. It's a good idea to plan visually so you know where the gaps are. Remember that Spring gets very busy so summer is the time to enjoy the garden with BBQ's, picnics etc. *The* BBC Gardeners World web pages http://www.gardenersworld.com/, is useful for suggestions as to what to do in every season.

For this activity prepare or ask the group to prepare:

1 set of cards (recycle cardboard/paper) each with an outdoor activity written on it (leave few blank for suggestions from group)

1 set indoor activities (leave a few blank)

Large sheet of paper/wall marked into 4 sections Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter. (The year can be further sub divided into early winter/late winter, early spring/late spring to help plan successive planting etc, fitting many tasks into a short period of time)

Ask group to sort the cards/activities into the four seasons of the year.

Indoor Activities can include: Plan a trip out; seed cleaning /storing; take hardwood cuttings; wildlife hunt; chit potatoes; germinating spices e.g. cumin seed star anise; healthy cooking; bird chart/ identification posters and record what you see (RSPB); plant garlic; sow seeds; grow exotic vegetables under glass; making baskets (willow; cornus); wreath making; sow sweet peas; clean & disinfect glass/tunnel; sharpen & repair tools; plan next year's rotation; making plant labels; tidying/cleaning pots; mosaics/murals; make a bug hotel; keep a garden diary – what did you sow? What is cropping well? Why?

Outdoor Activities can include: Burn garden rubbish (in brazier) & spread potash in garden; make a compost container- wood, netting, posts, canes; murals & mosaics; strawberry teas; summer fete; water conservation- fit a water diverter & barrel; make a bug hotel for lacewings (See http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Ladybird%20and%20lacewing%20hotel.pdf); make a bottle greenhouse; cut grass; collect cones/seed heads for Xmas decorations; mulch beds; Snow tracking (spot birds, animal tracks); weeding; watering; turn compost heaps; check for pests; make nodal cuttings; build/repair footpath; outdoor exercise classes; outdoor open days; parties; invite friends into garden; prune fruit trees; cut herbs for drying; sow salad; guess the weight of the pumpkin; Plant containers, grow plants; prick out seedlings; harvest veg; collect seed; take basal cuttings; watch for the bulbs coming up and the birds nesting; lay turf; leave berries for birds/clip hedges; build compost heaps; What's that birdsong (see RSPB web pages for song identification); sow herbs; plant potatoes; saw logs; plant bare rooted plants; sow biennials; before march-clip hedges; John Muir Award; sow flowers in beds; sledging; divide herbaceous perennials; drink martinis; tea, cakes, celebrate; structural work; fly a kite; soft wood cuttings; make leaf mould; sow green manure; scarify lawn; do a wildlife audit: how many bees - on what? Butterflies - on what? Etc.

Useful garden planners and calendars for year round planning of activities include: A free Growing Schools Year Planner from the Growing Schools web pages, order from www.growingschools.org.uk, Click on their Resources page or go straight to this link http://www.growingschools.org.uk/Resources/default.aspx

A poster calendar with space to write in your garden activities is available to order from The Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/publications/124-annual-reviews

Winter/ Early Spring and First Time Gardeners' Activities

Using Seeds

Sowing seeds is one way of increasing your plant numbers. Seeds can be sown as early as February if indoors or under glass, in a cold frame or glasshouse. See RHS web pages http://apps.rhs.org.uk/advicesearch/Profile.aspx?pid=501

Sowing Sweet Peas

Have plenty of spares available (plants & material to allow for mistakes- beginners have to get a feel for filling with compost/ sowing seed at correct depth(3 times seed height); long paper pot allows for deep root, typical of the pea family to grow.

Make paper pots out of cardboard, newspaper: take a piece of cardboard/ newspaper about 30cm/12 inches (long ruler) long

Roll into a tube (about a thumbs width across) the tube top; Turn up the bottom and staple bottom, staple the side so it doesn't unroll;

Fill with compost and firm gently; Place side by side in a box/container that allows drainage. Fill box with pots so they hold each other upright.

Sow seed one per pot.

Use Seed Packets as a resource

Collect together several packets of seeds of varying types. Design questions to stimulate interest in various topics e.g. food, growing, growing conditions etc. E.g. Ask the group to select a seed packet for a crop which:

Grows in garden

Kids might eat

Groovy name

Sounds interesting

Are hardy vegetables (can grow in local Scottish climate e.g. carrots, cabbage, beetroot)

Need warm soil (e.g. cucumber, squash)

A podded vegetable

A perennial

Using old packets of seed

Ask group to open seed packet and hold the seed in their hand

Ask them to describe their seed to the group.

Discuss: What is a seed? (i.e. a parcel with enough energy (food) to root and send up a shoot (which makes sugar from light))

Compare: Seed type, sizes of seed etc

Sprouting Seeds & Beans

For general information on sprouting seeds and beans see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sprouting, then Google 'sprouting' for any amount of information on seeds, sprouting and eating sprouts. Growing cress and mustard seeds on blotting paper/cotton wool is another way of sprouting seeds to eat and observe the germination process, normally hidden under the soil.

Vegetative Propagation

Vegetative propagation is a way of increasing plant numbers without using seeds. It is a form of cloning. It can be done indoors and out in winter.

Plant Garlic

Garlic cloves can be planted into ground or in pots in winter- roots down, point up (same for all bulbs)

Take Hardwood Cuttings

Take cuttings from woody plants such as e.g. fruit (currants), willow, and dogwoods

Choose vigorous growth; keep cut canes moist if not striking cuttings immediately.

Cut a pencil length with clean secateurs.

Cut bottom of cutting straight across just below a bud point.

Cut top, just above the bud point, on the slant away from the bud.

See web pages at http://apps.rhs.org.uk/advicesearch/Profile.aspx?pid=387

Dividing Herbaceous perennials

Watch a video on dividing herbaceous perennials at http://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/projects/herbaceous-perennials-dividing/

Pruning

Winter & Summer Pruning

The key to good pruning is knowing the requirements of the particular plants in your patch i.e. consult a reliable resource such as RHS; BBC; Garden Organic web pages.

As a general rule, when pruning cut at a slant just above a bud; angle the cut away from the bud so that water is deflected off the cut and reduces the risk of rot. Start by cutting out dead/diseased/damaged material; crossing branches that could rub; and aim for an open balanced shape that lets air and light circulate. You can move on to more complex from there. When working with a group- ask then to tie ribbon on the branches they want to prune if they are not sure and then consult you/resource/expert.

Weeding – can be done all year round and be used to develop plant /weed identification skills.

Feed Wild Birds

Make a Recycled Bird Feeder

Use:

plastic drinks bottles or milk cartons (make sure they're clean)

Wire or string

Bird seed

Scissors

Cut a hole in the bottle side big enough to allow a free flow of seeds but in such a way that it won't fall on the ground in the slightest puff of wind and won't get wet if it rains. Punch a few small drainage holes in bottom. Make a small hook out of garden wire. Hang in trees.

If your feeder starts to wear out or the food goes mouldy, recycle it and make another one. NB keep your feeders well stocked especially in winter as birds can come to rely on them.

Make a Fat Cake for Feeding Birds

Wild bird seed mix

Vegetable suet/lard

Empty yoghurt pots etc., with hole punched in bottom

Mixing bowl

Use 1 measure of suet/lard to 2 of bird seed. Warm the mixture in saucepan until fat melts & mix. Thread twine/wire through holes in containers to hang them up. Add the mixture to containers .Put in fridge to set. Hang upside down from bird table or in trees/bushes.

Dip pine cones in fat cake, or peanut butter mixture and hang up for the birds to enjoy...

Encourage Insects

Encourage insects and biodiversity in your garden

See the biodiversity column in The Propagator, Winter 2009/10 Edition and other editions available on the Trellis newsletter web pages at http://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/newsletters

Make an Insect Hotel

Cut section from plastic bottle or roll up a comfrey leaf and stuff with twigs, cane, cardboard etc. for other ideas see the Buglife 'Create a Bug Hotel' factsheet at http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Create%20a%20bug%20hotel.pdf

Mosaic for Groups

Mosaic suggested by Emma Burnett, Gorgie City Farm

Made for free: ask charity shops for crockery, tiles (specific colours)

Thick bag

Hammer

Gloves

Marine Plywood

Swimming pool adhesive & grout (for outdoor proofing)

Activity lasted for 8 X 2 hr sessions for 5-6 people and comprises:

Design on A4 and then to enlarge the design by projecting onto a large plywood panel

Preparation of crockery & tiles

Sticking

alchemyarts@gmail.com will give help & support to such projects

Willow Craft

Garden Crafts by Geraldine Rudge, Conran Octopus

Handmade baskets from natural colourful materials, Susie Vaughan, Search Press

Willow Star Suggested by Di Blackmore, Forth Environment Link

Soak willow; keep moist so it bends rather than breaks

Block of wood with 2 nails sticking up about hand span apart acts as a form to bend the willow around.

Wrap willow wand around form until wand is all wound round

Remove the willow from the form, it now has regular bends along its length

Twist into star shape

Can be stuck into the ground to grow or kept as dried willow

Willow Panel

Bind willow wands together with coloured wool/twine to make panels – use to divide garden plots, as decorative backdrop or as a trellis.

Jewellery Making

Elder Jewellery suggested by Lou Evans

Cut elder stems. Centre of stems care spongy and can be pushed out. Cut into sections to make 'beads', dye with beetroot juice or stewed nettles etc. (Google 'natural dyes') thread to make necklaces, bracelets etc. (can use elastic as thread).

Bark Rubbing

Using paper or linen take a bark rubbing using beetroot or red cabbage.

Christmas Decorations

Collect pine cones, teasels, seed heads to make into Christmas decorations (add ribbon, glitter, sequins or gold paint.)

No Bake Clay

Make pots/shapes/leaves with the group

Hang craft stuff around the garden

Clay bake beads – thread together (fishing line) to make mobiles

Outdoor Cooking

Using a bucket BBQ & griddle, try cooking apple slices - can incorporate preparation as part of the activity using knives, peelers for peeling and chopping activities

Make Oatcakes (can also sow oats to see how they grow) - talk about seasonality, food miles etc.

Eco Bingo!

This game can be used as an icebreaker/fact finder in a group situation.

Questions can be edited to suit group/ topic under discussion.

Ask group to "Find Someone Who...e.g. grows fruit" see photo copy sheet at the end of this publication.

John Muir Award

The John Muir Award, http://www.jmt.org/jmaward-home.asp may be useful to a group or project as a means of fostering the enjoyment of the outdoors. It is free, very experiential, participative; informal; supportive; applicable to all ages/abilities (can be especially useful to those who do not like classroom environment); certificated (just turn up – everything else is a bonus); provides a framework; you can see progress and it is useful for maintaining interest. For further information, a Workbook, details of support and training, go to the John Muir Award web pages and their Resource pages at http://www.jmt.org/jmaward-resources-links.asp#John Muir Award Resources

John Muir Conserving /Sharing Activity

Take a number of egg boxes / small containers

Assign each box a pair of opposites (write this on the bottom of the box, e.g. smooth/prickly)

Ask the group to go around garden, in pairs, collecting items which fit their box descriptions

Each pair comes back to the main group and talks about their items – the others have to guess the opposites.

Take a Trowel activity...

Take a trowel and bring back... (Can be tailored to stimulate discussion of many topics)

In winter you can suggest bringing back an annual weed and a perennial weed.

Discuss weed look at soil, plant, root, growth (annual soft fleshy, perennial woody, any seed etc.) and how it spreads.

Discuss how to prevent/ keep under control.

Mirror Activity

In pairs, take turns to be led around a forest garden /walk, looking only into a small mirror held facing the sky.

Further activity suggestions for use with John Muir Award

Activities for children and which may be of use in the John Muir Award can be found in the Resources section of this publication and also in:

Natures Playground: Activities, Crafts and Games to encourage children to get outdoors by Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield, 2005, published by Frances Lincoln

Sharing Nature with Children by Joseph Bharat Cornell, Exley Publications

Resources

There are many resources out there, so concentrate on what you find useful, we bring you those that have been recommend at our Year Round Garden Activities Planning Day.

General Gardening Knowledge

The RHS (Royal Horticultural Society), http://www.rhs.org.uk/

Garden Organic, http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/ for online information and Garden Organic Guides and Booklets on lots of gardening topics great for laminating and taking out into the garden as easy reference at http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/publications/guides.php.

Also, Back Garden Seed Saving by Sue Stickland, 2001, published by HDRA, available from http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/publications/books.php
Gardeners World, BBC web pages, at http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/publications/books.php

(Over 250 video demonstrations of gardening skills http://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/projects/category/video-projects/)
And the **BBC How to be a Gardener** pages at http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/httpg/

Gardening and Gardening Organisations

Garden for Life - All Year Round Plant Guide Wheel & leaflets on wildlife and other types of gardening, find them at http://www.snh.org.uk/about/initiatives/g4l/

Kew Garden Find photos and information on plants with the plant hunter at http://www.kew.org/plants-fungi/index.htm

RBGE (Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh) http://www.rbge.org.uk/ - a source of information and also a great place to visit- try out the education services at the new entrance building.

RCHS (Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society) http://www.rchs.co.uk/

The Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens have activity suggestions & resources available to their members via web pages, see http://www.farmgarden.org.uk/join . FCFCG have also produced an annual review which can be used as a year planner.

Thrive host the Carry on Gardening web pages at http://www.carryongardening.org.uk/, how to adapt gardening activities in light of physical and sensory disability.

Trellis, supports therapeutic gardening projects across Scotland. This Planning Year Round Garden Activities – Ideas & Resources' publication is available from Trellis, Unit8, Perth Business Centre, 28 Glasgow Road, Perth PH2 0NX Phone 01738 624348, https://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/

Food Growing

Channel 4 'grow your own food' site, http://www.channel4.com/food/how-to/grow-your-own/Channel4Food links to growing tips/crop rotation and windowsill gardening

The **Seed to Plate** web pages provide information on organic food growing & video clips at http://www.seedtoplate.co.uk/

The Veg Book 2010, Chiltern seeds, www.Chiltern seeds.co.uk

Herbal Journal, Herbs, Healing & Folkways 2010 Calendar by Zoe Hawes & Friends Pub; Pomegranate Comm. Inc. www.pomegranate.com

Wildlife Gardening

Insects

Buglife provides advice on encouraging insect life in the garden see http://www.buglife.org.uk/getinvolved/gardening/gardencreepycrawlies.htm
For tips on creating a bug friendly garden see fact sheet

http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Create%20a%20bug%20friendly%20garden%20.pdf

Make a bug hotel see factsheet http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Create%20a%20bug%20hotel.pdf

Make a lady bird and lacewing hotel, see factsheet http://www.buglife.org.uk/Resources/Buglife/Ladybird%20and%20lacewing%20hotel.pdf

Birds

RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)

Web resources:

Online Bird Guide – bird picture and facts as well as birdsong recordings at http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/

Online bird identification at http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdidentifier/form.asp

Loads of ideas on wildlife gardening and monthly features at http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/wildlifegarden/

RSPB Printed Resources:

Free 32 page printed guide to birds and how to attract them into your garden, apply online at

http://www.rspb.org.uk/applications/inforequest/(l1cwcfvc5jrfhh55zkwq0zah)/index.aspx?dt=2NGITH0052

Free booklet on wildlife to be found in your town or city, apply at

http://www.rspb.org.uk/applications/inforequest/(jpxzywu4x2gyfmezqnj02r45)/index.aspx?dt=2NGITH0085

 $RSPB\ Education\ resource\ catalogue,\ for\ lots\ of\ information\ and\ materials\ see\ \underline{http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/teaching/catalogue/index.asp}$

RSPB, learning about birds, activities for the under 5's at http://www.rspb.org.uk/youth/learn/earlyyears/index.asp

Gardening with Young People

Grounds for Learning web pages at http://www.gflscotland.org.uk/index.htm

Free Resources available from http://www.gflscotland.org.uk/school_grounds_professionals/resources/free_resources.htm

The **Growing Schools web pages** provide a resource for teachers/those involved in developing gardening with groups of children, see, http://www.growingschools.org.uk/

Lots of activity suggestions for gardening and garden/farm visits at the Growing Schools web pages

http://www.growingschools.org.uk/Resources/ResourcesLibrary.aspx

The Coombes School is an example of school garden development available at http://www.thegrowingschoolsgarden.org.uk/downloads/The-Coombes-Case-Study.pdf

Garden Organics, free resources available at http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/growyourown/growing_cards.php

Growing Naturally: A teachers Guide to Organic Gardening by Maggie Brown, Southgate Publishers 1996

John Muir Award http://www.jmt.org/jmaward-home.asp

Nature's Playground: Activities, Crafts and Games to Encourage Children to Get Outdoors, Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield, 2005, published by Frances Lincoln

New ideas for conservation work with children at http://www.naturenet.net/education/newideas.html

Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh resources for children at http://www.rbge.org.uk/education/schools http://www.rbge

RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Bird) **Education resource catalogue**, for lots of information and materials see http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/teaching/catalogue/index.asp

 $RSPB, learning about birds, activities for the under 5's at <math display="block"> \underline{ http://www.rspb.org.uk/youth/learn/earlyyears/index.asp} \\$

Sharing Nature with Children by Joseph Bharat Cornell, Exley Publications

SNH (Scottish Natural Heritage) see web pages http://www.snh.org.uk/

Gardening and wildlife resources for pre-school children available at http://www.snh.org.uk/wwo/education/educ-pre-school.asp Gardening and wildlife resources for 11-18 year olds at http://www.snh.org.uk/wwo/education/educ-pre-school.asp

Young Peoples Trust for the Environment, http://www.ypte.org.uk/, Loads of education newsletters containing practical ideas and information on a huge range of wildlife and gardening topics to download from their web pages, see their Downloads page at http://www.ypte.org.uk/downloads.php

Garden Crafts

Garden Crafts by Geraldine Rudge, published by Conran Octopus

Handmade baskets from natural colourful materials by Susie Vaughan, published by Search Press

Making natural Dyes

Information on how to prepare plant material and dye fabric available on many web pages, try http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Natural-Dyes Or http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Natural-Dyes Or http://tilz.tearfund.org/Publications/Footsteps+21-30/Footsteps+21/Home-made+plant+dyes.htm

Outdoor Organisations

BTCV, The Urban Handbook: a practical guide to community environmental work, available from http://shop.btcv.org.uk/shop/level2/59/stock/955

For those in the **Forth Valley Area** contact <u>www.forthenvironmentlink.org</u> or see their resources pages for lots of practical nature related resources available from http://www.forthenvironmentlink.org/library.htm

The **Woodland Trust** – resource packs available for young & old http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/learning-kids/Pages/children.aspx

Other useful resources...

Poundworld Shops, branches across the country - very good value Fleece (excellent for protecting seedlings from frost; extending the growing season, pest control); bird food; cloches; string; weed suppressing membrane.

ILA's Individual Learning Accounts see http://www.ilascotland.org.uk/ILA+Homepage.htm
Up to £250 of training available for adults earning under £22, 000 pa. Training available through various providers e.g. Oatridge College, lots of horticulture training available

HSE (Health & Safety Executive) http://www.hse.gov.uk/ for risk assessment forms.

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This Planning Year Round Garden Activities – Ideas & Resources' publication was compiled from the activities and resources suggested at the Year Round Garden Activity Planning Day led by Lou Evans, Growing Communities in Scotland Fieldworker, and held at Suntrap Garden, Edinburgh on 29th January 2010. This resource was researched and compiled by Jenny Simpson, Information Officer, Trellis, Unit8, Perth Business Centre, 28 Glasgow Road, Perth PH2 0NX. If you would like to contribute material to this resource, please email jenny@trellisscotland.org.uk.

Eco Bingo! Find someone who...

Listens to Gardeners Questions Time	Divides herbaceous plants	Who has heard of/uses John Muir Award	Who uses biological control	Has an interest in wildlife gardening
Who makes compost	Who has a greenhouse or polytunnel	Who makes things to sell on their project	Who you have not met	Who saves seed
Who has a pond	Who takes hardwood cuttings	Who grows herbs	Who grows indoor bulbs	Who is interested in no dig gardening
Who grows vegetable	Who grows fruit	Who watches gardening programmes	Who sprouts	Who buys seed from an organic gardening catalogue