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*It's Show Time ~*

From heavy-duty sun block to life jackets, there were several items we wish we had packed for our trip to the Gardening Scotland Show. Saturday dawned hotter and sunnier than anyone forecast and drew record crowds, while Friday and Sunday saw heavy downpours and a brisk trade in wellies. The Trellis stall looked fabulous in any weather, thanks once more to plants grown specially for us by The Walled Garden Project in Perth, set off in planters custom built by the same talented people. In all we spoke to around 500 people about therapeutic gardening projects in Scotland, and found many were keen to know more. Our 'Guess the Plant' game (match 10 therapeutic plants to the correct label) was a great way to get people talking about the therapeutic aspects of gardening. Two of the projects in our network also won medals for their pallet garden designs. Cantraybridge College of Nairn won gold for their design, 'A River Runs Through It' inspired by the colours around the River Nairn in spring (see photo) ~ Lilybank Day Centre of Arbroath won a silver award for their charming wildlife garden called 'Leave a Little' with ramshackle shed and resident wee moose! Well done to both these groups for their success!

**Trellis Events coming soon:**

**Network Meeting & AGM,  
Glasgow  
22<sup>nd</sup> August 2008**

The Hidden Gardens,  
Pollockshields, Glasgow  
To book, Tel: 01738 624348  
or Email:

[info@trellisscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@trellisscotland.org.uk)

This event is for anyone involved /interested in therapeutic gardening who would like to get together to discuss new initiatives or current problems & share best practice. The day will also incorporate the Trellis AGM. Booking forms from Trellis or download at:

<http://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/files/fliers/Network%20&%20AGM%20flier.doc>



**Cantraybridge Gardeners show off their prize-winning design**

**Jobs at Trellis: Information Officer**, P/T 15 hrs, based in Perth – see website for more details.

*Update from our Research & Evidence Meeting, 23<sup>rd</sup> June*

The meeting agreed to form a Research & Evidence working group whose main aim will be to demonstrate the benefits of social and therapeutic horticulture initiatives in Scotland.

Initial work will review available research and evidence results, classifying the methods & tools used (e.g. by suitability; skills and/or training necessary; etc.) Later we plan to begin our own research projects; publishing study results in professional journals; building a reference base of good practice and standards and working closely with similar groups to exchange findings. You'll be able to track the progress of the group on the Trellis website. *If you can help by providing expertise, experience, information sources or volunteers, please get in touch with us here at Trellis or with Anne Jepson: [anne.jepson@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:anne.jepson@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk)*

### *Project Profile ~ Columcille Gardeners*

Columcille, a day centre situated in Morningside, Edinburgh, offers a wide range of activities for people with learning disabilities and mental health support needs. There is year-round daily



gardening work in a mature organic garden where several clients have individual plots, growing seasonal vegetables and soft fruits. The garden has fruit trees, shrubs, perennials and lawns and provides a great venue to celebrate festivals and summer gatherings.

#### Community Based Garden Work Experience

In recent years four service users from Columcille have gained work experience in the nursery gardens of the Royal Botanic Garden of Edinburgh. During 2007 the Columcille team were tending and developing the Botanic nursery's bee garden. When we started, the site was overgrown, especially with borage. It

has been rewarding for the team to see the garden develop due to their input. All the planting is bee-friendly, with scabious, verbascum, nepeta and veronica a few examples.

We constructed a pond (as bees need a source of water) and a woodpile has been started to encourage other wildlife and to add character to the garden. Each week the rain gauge was checked and the temperature that day noted.



When the weather was unsuitable for outdoor work we worked in the potting shed, potting up and pricking out seedlings and collecting seeds from the herb garden for future use in the bee garden. At the end of the working day the clients wrote up their diaries as a record of the day's activities and we looked at photos of the previous week's work. The group is supported by a Columcille staff member, while Laura Gallagher, the nursery's Therapeutic Horticulture Coordinator, provides expert guidance to the group. The group also worked in the garden at Gilmerton Community Centre. We weeded, planted out and maintained the different beds and were supported by donations of plants from the botanics nursery, garden centres and other sources. This enabled us to extend our work experience and use skills learnt at the RBGE nursery to assist a community garden.

During 2008, the group will continue working in the nursery garden at the RBGE, focusing on the bee garden and developing a wildlife garden, including making insect towers, bird boxes and other wildlife habitats. The wildlife garden is registered with the John Muir Award Scheme and we aim to complete the Discovery and Explorer awards this year. We'll also assist with maintenance of the herb garden and participate in general nursery garden tasks. We'll maintain our links with the garden at Gilmerton Community Centre, using skills and plants grown at the Botanics to benefit the garden there.

For further information about Columcille's work experience projects in gardening, library work, music and Columcille Ceilidh Band (experienced in fundraising ceilidhs, weddings, parties and conference events.) please contact Alison on 0131 446 6873 or email [alison@columcillecentre.co.uk](mailto:alison@columcillecentre.co.uk)



*Tell us about your best methods of evaluation* – At our research event, 23 June, we agreed the 1<sup>st</sup> step to gathering evidence on therapeutic gardening was to find out about the information already being collected by projects in the network. So if you are using a particular system to monitor the impact of your gardening activities, whether devised by yourselves, or an externally validated system, we'd like to hear about it. Tell us what it is, and how useful it is, the pitfalls and good points. You can go to the website to do this or email us at the usual address. As we collect this information, we'll share it on the website.

*Shirl's Gardenwatch ~ is an online diary following the seasons through plants, birds and wildlife inspiring others to take a closer look at what goes on in the garden.*

**Hooray, the meconopsis** are now flowering through the golden grasses! Looking back to last year I can see in my online diary that the flowers, birds and wildlife are behind this year by almost two weeks.

**Juvenile birds** are visiting the garden now. Blackbirds, house sparrows, siskins, a woodpigeon and far too many young and old starlings! Yes, I do know that the starling is endangered but other birds cannot get near the feeders. Fat balls on the ground drew the starlings away from the feeders for a while.

**Live mini mealworms** supplied for the blue tit chicks were finally used by our single Mum. Too late though. Her struggle to feed her eight chicks finally ended after 14 days. It was sad to watch through the camera in the Nestbox but this is the harsh reality of nature.

**But nature is wonderful too!** It is great to see the hedgehogs visiting the garden again. Look out for droppings - shown in my 'lovely' photo for this month. I have found they like sultanas, peanuts and dried mealworms and leave them some water as they get thirsty too.

**The plants** are looking lush and green at the moment but soon the blaze of summer colour will be everywhere. *Ah... warm summer days in the garden...*



## *Conservation & Biodiversity News* *~ from the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership*

### Swifts - the Sound of Summer

The swift is surely one of Britain's most extraordinary birds - its life is spent almost entirely on the wing, landing only to nest or in very bad weather. They actually sleep on the wing. The birds arrive from Africa in early May and are the first migrants to leave after just a few short summer weeks in early August.

They are bigger than house martins and swallows and are sooty brown all over; they have a very distinctive scythe-like shape. They are THE birds that you hear and look up to watch as they dash over the rooftops in raucous groups. They are not called "lum screamers" for nothing in Scotland!



Yet their numbers are plummeting: in Scotland by some 62 per cent and still decreasing. Most modern building methods deny access to swifts and many of the older buildings and tenements in Scotland are being renovated and the birds are being excluded.



All birds are protected by law and must not be disturbed in any way when they are nesting, yet the law is being consistently broken - often unintentionally. Swifts return to their nests year after year - if they return in May to their usual nest site and it's not available they tend not to breed that year as they have such a short time to find a new nest. Young birds

also use the time to scout out new nest sites to use when they return the next year: there is much competition for the ever-decreasing number of places to nest.

Swifts are largely adapted to urban living, depending almost entirely on small holes in buildings or under the eaves. Their nest consists of just a few feathers or straw gathered from the air, cemented with saliva. The nest is always inside the fabric of the building, so if you can see bird nests on a building these do not belong to swifts - they are more likely to be swallow or house martin nests.



Thanks to the work being carried out by Concern for Swifts Scotland and numerous local Biodiversity Partnerships, external swift nestboxes are being erected on public buildings, especially schools, sheltered housing and council offices across Scotland.

There is lots of information available from [www.concernforswifts.com](http://www.concernforswifts.com) and [www.london-swifts.com](http://www.london-swifts.com) (the latter has particularly good advice for developers). Many local Biodiversity Partnerships are now running their own surveys, so please take part in them if you can. Or you can enter details directly on to the online survey at [www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk](http://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk) - and we will forward the information to the relevant area. If you are in Angus, Dundee or Perth & Kinross, a Tayside Swift Survey form is available - telephone 01382 433042 for a copy, or go on line and fill in the information there.

A Swift Newsletter is also available on request or click: [http://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/Project\\_Swift\\_Survey.html](http://www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk/Project_Swift_Survey.html) to download the newsletter and a leaflet on the differences between swifts, swallows and house martins. Martin Ridley's website is also featured on this link - this acclaimed wildlife artist is host to a pair of swifts in his Perthshire house and he is videoing them.

### Column Space for Greenspace

'Equally Well', the report of the Ministerial Task Force on Health Inequalities is now available here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/226589/0061265.pdf>

and green space gets two mentions, while learning disabilities get fourteen and mental health occurs even more.

Recommendation 28, page 30 reads:

*'The Government and local agencies and partnerships should apply the "precautionary principle" across policy development affecting greenspace in environment, education and health. It should increase the priority given to the creation, retention and promotion of high quality green spaces as essential for health improvement, especially in communities at risk of poor health.'*

Perhaps a useful negotiating chip to use with the powers that be when trying to get more resources for your project?

### Spotlight on the web

*The Clydesdale Community Initiatives web page is one not to miss. You'll find a fantastic video charting the recent development of the Lanark Moor Sensory Garden...inspiring stuff!*  
Visit: [www.clydesdale-ci.org/sensorygarden/](http://www.clydesdale-ci.org/sensorygarden/)

### Problems solved?

*We would like to feature some of your queries to the Trellis information service. We'd love to have your feedback on this and any other features in Propagator, so let us know if you find it useful.*

In this issue we've selected a query into sourcing portable gardening equipment:

*Query:* Could you help me source a portable potting bench...as I can have gardening groups at six different locations in the hospital and have to navigate through many swing doors we need something narrow enough...if there are any other pieces of equipment that you think we could use please let me know.

*Response:* If you have access to the wonders of the internet – you might look up <http://www.greenfingers.com/> . This might seem a little 'off-beat' but bear with me... they have a 'Mobile Garden Sink' (£49.00 - select Garden Equipment > Tidy & Clean) that may be close to what you are looking for. If used with the cover on the sink unit it could make a handy tabletop or indeed the sink itself may be practical as a potting basin ~ and it looks very portable.

Or...

How about using this 'mobile sink' in conjunction with the 'Tidy Potting Tray' (£9.00 – select Garden Equipment > Potting)? They also have a useful 'cart' called the Bi-Truck (£29.00 – select Garden Equipment > Wheelbarrows, Carts and Trolleys) which looks as though it may be small enough to be manageable around the hospital.

There are now quite a range of adaptable tools available that may prove useful for your work. The two main manufacturers we know of are Peta ([www.peta-uk.com](http://www.peta-uk.com)) and Wolf ([www.worldofwolf.co.uk](http://www.worldofwolf.co.uk)).

For a Scottish-based supplier you could have a look at Able Gardener ([www.ablegardener.co.uk](http://www.ablegardener.co.uk)).

One other idea that came up was (don't laugh) a hairdresser's trolley – if you've ever been in for highlights, you'll know what we mean. And why not? ~ we gardeners have to think laterally sometimes.

**Any other suggestions from readers for our enquirer are very welcome.**

### Contact Trellis

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Trellis is the national charity that supports, promotes and develops horticulture for health, well-being and life opportunities for all.  
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### Submissions

'The Propagator' is your newsletter. We need your input. Send short project profiles (c200 wds), news, letters, tips, poems, recipes, diary dates and ideas by email or post. **Next deadline is 20th September 2008.** You can now download the newsletter from:  
<http://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/newsletters>

### Gardener's Cuttings

*"Odd as it may appear, a gardener does not grow from seed, shoot, bulb, rhizome or cutting, but from experience, surroundings and natural conditions.*

From the book of the same title edited by Charles Elliot