

Winter 2008/09
Issue 9



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**Phew, what a great way to start the New Year
- two Trellis Network Meetings!**



A guided tour of the glass houses courtesy of Laura Gallagher, co-ordinator of The Nursery Horticulture Therapy Volunteers at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh. Trellis Network Meeting on 20th January 2009.

Events for your calendar

Trellis Conference 2009
*Growing Healthier, Wealthier,
Fairer, Smarter & Greener
Through Gardening-Scottish
Government Policy: the Gardening
Contribution*

The 2009 Trellis Conference will be held on Wednesday 18th March at The Business Centre, Cardonald College, Glasgow G52 3AY. Further Information and Booking Forms will be on their way to you very soon. Visit us at:
www.trellisscotland.org.uk

Meet the new team members



Jenny - Trellis Information Officer

Jenny started her own business selling herbs and salad plants at Farmers' Markets in May 2008. Previously, as a University of Stirling researcher, Jenny was involved in a wide range of research projects. Jenny's main role is to develop the Trellis Query Service, so if you have any questions regarding therapeutic gardening - from horticulture to care - please email Jenny at : jenny@trellisscotland.org.uk



Vicki – Field Worker Co-ordinator

Vicki has been involved with a wide variety of horticulture and community projects for several years both in a voluntary and paid capacity. She has experience working with many different groups of people including adults with learning disabilities, extra support needs young people and adults with drug and alcohol issues. Contact Vicki at : Vicki@trellisscotland.org.uk if you would like Trellis support or to arrange a visit to your project.

The Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society

The Caley are now offering a "Recognition in Individual Achievement in Horticulture Award" open to people with complex learning difficulties. For further information contact : Margaret Teale at Margaret.Teale@blueyonder.co.uk 0131-449-6596 or David Sinclair at davidcsinclair@btinternet.com 01506 844107



Lloyds TSB
Foundation for Scotland



Project Profile ~ Lilybank Resource Centre



Lilybank Biodiversity team and children from the Wendyhouse Nursery

The service users and volunteers at Lilybank Resource Centre are not only looking back on a year of gardening and personal achievement in 2008 but looking forward to doing even more in 2009!

The biodiversity garden project at Lilybank, set up in 2006, aims to improve the biodiversity of the grounds at Lilybank, provide realistic work experience for service users and facilitate interaction with other members of the community that could effect attitudinal change toward people with learning disabilities.

In the summer of 2008, Pierre Bernard led the team to win a Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society Silver Medal for Lilybank's "Leave a Little" pallet garden in the Scottish Gardeners Forum Challenge at Gardening Scotland. Back home in Forfar plans are in action to expand the project: Work has begun to make the games field, next to Lilybank Resource Centre, wheelchair accessible and to create The Lilybank Turf Labyrinth. Plans are also afoot to organise an annual event for Angus - *The All Angus Pallet Garden Challenge* - in conjunction with the Scottish Gardeners' Forum.

At present the project is developing positive attitudes in pre-school children toward people with learning disabilities. The Wendyhouse Children's Nursery regularly visit Lilybank to see the pond and hedgehog habitat, take part in bird and bat box making, and seed sowing and planting with the service users. And as well as taking part in the gardening projects the service users are also taking a course in horticulture under the supervision of an Angus College lecturer who visits Lilybank weekly.

Not content with all of this activity, Lilybank have been handed what they describe as a "golden opportunity" in the form of developing the gardens of Beech Hill House.

This residential home's gardens were extremely overgrown and unkempt and work on their renovation started a few weeks ago. This has been a very rewarding task for both the Lilybank team and the Beech Hill residents, who literally have had the sunshine let back into their lives with the cutting down of overgrown shrubs. Bluebells and daffodils are to be planted in the woodland area, and a lavender walk is to follow.

Contact Pierre at the Lilybank Resource Centre, Arbroath Road, Forfar, Bernardp@angus.gov.uk

THE VALUE OF VETERAN TREES

Arborists, gardeners, officials, landowners and the public are considerably better informed about the value of ancient trees than a decade ago, and much of the credit for this must go to the Ancient Tree Forum (ATF), which celebrated its 10th anniversary in October.

Trees of great size are not prolific in northern Europe - the UK has around 80 per cent of them. The defining feature of an ancient tree is that it has survived beyond full maturity and shows clear signs of ageing. For a true veteran there are four or more features - deadwood, hollowing, or even 'phoenix tree' qualities of regeneration.

A key issue for both gardeners and arborists is whether or not to keep deadwood in trees, but deadwood is fundamental to nutrient recycling and to their value as habitat. Such habitat is one of the rarest around - a fact acknowledged in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Run by the Woodland Trust, the **Ancient Tree Hunt** is currently halfway through its five-year programme to record as many of Britain's ancient trees as possible. A website cataloguing these has been live for a year. Results can be viewed at www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk. Already more than 30,000 trees have been included. As well as simply recording the trees, the programme aims to support owners with their management and maintenance, and help prevent their loss.



Thanks to Tayside Biodiversity Partnership & The Woodland Trust for this Article

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.



Spiders' webs frozen in their beauty are part of the magical place our gardens can be on a frosty morning. The structure of the garden is visible again and foliage takes the limelight. This month's photo shows Heuchera 'Georgia Peach' on Dec 15th - how about that for winter colour!

Looking to colours and inspiration for next year it is seed catalogue time. Oops... my bulbs are still in my shed. Mm... a test for how late you can plant them. I intend putting crocus in a lawn edge where they will be safe from me - digging them up! It looks more natural too.

Feeding the birds at this time of year not only helps them survive the cold but adds so much life to our gardens, lifting our spirits too. I reuse my obelisks now. Placed near feeders, a cored apple adds colour and food for birds like Blackbirds. Fat balls and fat cakes are the high energy food of the moment but beware, the starlings have heard they are out there!

As 2009 begins we await the possible return of Blackcaps to the garden. However, 2008 ended with a magical sighting. A small flock of long-tailed tits arrived for a week. Then the Sparrowhawk started making regular visits! Whatever visits your garden - do enjoy it in 2009.

BBC Countryfile Magazine has awarded Shirl's online blog as 'Blog of the Month' for their January issue. Visit Shirl's Gardenwatch at: www.shirlsgardenwatch.co.uk

Conservation & Biodiversity News

~ from the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership

Boundary Biodiversity

Catherine Lloyd writes:

Why just put up a fence when you can enhance a boundary with all manner of attractive and biodiverse alternatives? Fences need management and regular replacing. If you slosh a lot of preservative on them you remove most of their biodiversity value. However, if you don't maintain a fence it will be great for lichens, mosses and invertebrates, but will be, in itself, fairly short-lived (and therefore not very sustainable). So what to use instead?

A hedge needs the same amount of work as a fence at the beginning, i.e. it needs planning, placing, staking and care. However, hedges are usually long-lived and only need annual or bi-annual management. They can also be very rich in biodiversity, providing food for insects, birds, mammals - and us (rose hips for syrup, hawthorn berries for jelly, etc.). Think of nectar in the spring, nest sites in the summer and berries throughout the winter.

A native hedge consisting of hawthorn and blackthorn can be interspersed with holly, hazel and dog-rose which will give a variety of flowers and berries throughout the seasons. It also looks very attractive and helps with security and privacy; it will only need cutting once every two years. In a community garden it can help break up a large area. Add to that the bonus of flowers that can be planted at the base of such a hedge - snowdrops, violets, primroses, native bluebells. These look very nice to us, but are vital nectar sources for early insects, especially bumble bees. If the hedge is in an undisturbed area, you may even encourage a hedgehog to hibernate beneath it, but don't be over-tidy in the autumn with raking up all the leaves.

If there is room, a row of hedgerow trees will add height to a hedge, provide extra food and, when mature, song posts and nest sites for birds. If space is at a premium, consider crab apple, rowan, bird cherry or hazel for their attractive spring blossom or catkins and the fruit in the autumn. Leave ash and oak hedgerow trees to the really large sites.

Beech hedges are not so good for wildlife as native hedges (they are only green during the summer and tend to be too dense for flowers to grow at their base), but they can still provide a welcome windbreak and nesting sites for birds. Nearly a hundred invertebrates are known to use beech hedges, so don't dismiss them instantly; just decide if there is anything better for the site.

Privet hedges that are not overly trimmed and allowed to flower can add scent to the garden and provide nectar to many butterfly and moths species. "Soft" hedges can also be very good for wildlife: cotoneaster, rosemary, box, for instance. Or consider a line of lavender - or, to add height, roses interspersed with lavender. The choices are endless.

Now is the time to plant a hedge. Avoid doing so when the ground is frozen or when soils are wet and then freeze; equally avoid planting pot-grown hedge plants in late spring as they will need regular watering during dry spells. There is a useful two page information sheet to download from:

<http://www.treeforall.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/5671C5EF-790A-462B-A9FB-BD91B9F29595/0/3566HedgeinstrucSCOT.PDF>, or brief details available from <http://www.brotus.co.uk/Brotusfiles/hedge/hedgetypes.html>.

Gardener's Cuttings

"There is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather."

From the book of the same title edited by Charles Elliot

Guinea Pigs & Guerrillas

How often have you seen a bit of bare ground and itched to get your hands on it? Just a few improvements, nothing radical - maybe a clump of daffs over there, a few sweet peas climbing up that fence, some foxgloves brightening up that dark corner. I think we can all identify a neglected space we walk past every day and would love to make more pleasant, well here at Reach Out we joined the growing band of "guerrilla gardeners" and went ahead and did it!

WEA Reach Out is an adult education project based in the centre of Aberdeen. We offer interesting, alternative educational opportunities to our learners, many of whom are facing difficult challenges in life including mental health issues, substance misuse and learning disabilities. Gardening and environmental education have long been part of programme but with increasing difficulties and costs involved in obtaining

transport we have had to look closer to hand to find areas to work in. Where better than the numerous small green spaces on our doorsteps - often a bit sad and neglected and in dire need of some TLC?

Along we go armed with black bags and thick gloves - the starting point always has to be clear up the bewildering amount of rubbish - trolleys, condoms, bottles, mattresses to name just a few. Then work can start on planting - bulbs are good, as well as tough annuals and perennials that will self seed. Costs need to be kept down but it's surprising what you can get for next to nothing. Poundland is a great source of cheap bulbs, and scrounging from other people's gardens is even cheaper. Last years' seeds can be collected and dried, but a few packs from the supermarket can create a beautiful display of colour for very little. Foxgloves, ox-eye daisies, crocosmia, alchemilla mollis and nasturtium have all proved their worth as toughies able to stand up

to the dogs and other less considerate visitors.

Although the work may be hard and sometimes unpleasant it is tinged with the excitement of doing something a wee bit naughty, making it fun, different and appealing to those that perhaps didn't see themselves as gardeners. A bonus has been discovering interesting plants already growing wild, especially when we can harvest the fruits - bramble crumble and elderberry syrup were two delicious end results.

We've our eye on a new space that will make a great wildlife garden right in the city centre. This will be a much bigger project than the wee bits we have done before but has great potential - we'll keep you posted!

You may be confused about the guinea pig link - well as it's not strictly legal we must protect our identities, hence the disguises!

Contact WEA Reach Out on 01224 640 811.

www.guerrillagardening.org

Funding News

Tesco Charity Trust

Community Award - One-off donations of between £1,000 and £4,000. Providing practical benefits, eg equipment & resources for projects directly benefiting children, the elderly and adults & children with disabilities, living in the local communities around their UK stores. **Deadline: 31st Mar 09** www.tescopl.com

Right Here Pilot Sites - Young People & Mental Well being.

Open to projects involving 16-25 year olds from excluded/marginalised backgrounds & involved in activities that promote mental health & well-being. The project must be delivered in partnership with a statutory body. Visit Right Here's website for more info: www.right-here.org.uk/pilot-sites.

Contact Trellis

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The Guerrilla Gardeners in cunning Guinea Pig Disguise

The Climate Challenge Fund ~ offers grants to a range of community organisations. Projects can involve a range of actions, from helping us to use less energy, or walk and cycle more, to local sustainable food delivered in the context of the wider environmental, social and economic dimensions, that give people new skills, improve health, help them to work together or provide better community facilities, but carbon reduction must be at the heart of every proposal. http://www.infoscotland.com/gogreener/CCC_FirstPage.jsp

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 30th March 2009.**

You can now download the newsletter from:

<http://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/newsletters>