

1 Orchards and Grow Your Own Census Scotland

Introduction

In March 2011 we put out a request for people to return a census – to get a snapshot of Orchards/ grow you own initiatives in Scotland. This coincided with the time of the National Census, but was voluntary. Response came in from people motivated to do so.

Purpose

The purpose of doing the census was to understand what was happening in terms of “Grow Your Own” and Orchards at a point in time – and to use the information to inform future actions, and to stimulate ideas of how to develop grassroots food growing more effectively. It was also done from interest.

Methodology

A document was prepared by John Hancox of the Commonwealth Orchard, and circulated to various email lists. Returns were made by people motivated to do so, with no reward or advantage, and came from largely from people with a strong motivation to do so.

The geographic spread of returns was very wide – right across Scotland, including urban and rural areas.

Author's Note – John Hancox has been involved in orchards (Commonwealth Orchard and Scottish Orchards) and growing food for many years. John also has experience of developing school gardens, and the Children's Garden, Glasgow Botanic, and has had an allotment for over 20 year.

John is also a journalist who has written about environmental matters for over 20 years. The opinions below are based on this range of experience – and are his personal opinions – based on the returns from the survey. Please address any comments to John Hancox - John@commonweathorchard.com 0778 606 3918

Note

Opinions and comments in parts 4 -15 are quotes from the respondees in their own words, cut and pasted from responses.

2 results and conclusions

The conclusions (and author's opinions) which arise from this are as follows:

There are a lot of interesting "Grow Your Own" and Orchard projects being developed as private passions, as community projects, and some in interesting settings such as business premises.

For many people who responded it's oddly not so much about food – it's a passion – with nice food as a bonus.

Some respondees work at projects funded by a range of grants, such as CCF and Lottery. Others have developed with little funding. Other funding sources – such as Community Food and Health Scotland have supported a lot of food growing projects – but have not been mentioned.

There is a lot of interest in orchards – but also in other forms of food growing including allotments and private gardens. The importance of private gardens for food growing also came through.

It's worth flagging up how many of these initiatives are done without the help of organisations to assist with the set up. Many of the most successful are folk who have just gone and done it. In terms of the advice given – just go and do it, seems a common chorus.

Skills and knowledge is an on-going issue, as is access to specialist tools. How to deliver an appropriate training programme – and to deliver tools – from tractors to pruning stuff – is an interesting challenge.

People have an interesting range of ideas for how they could work better from grants for boreholes, access to tools and also support from 'workparties,' council support, and so on.

The community aspect is discussed as being important. People talk of the pleasure of picking things they have grown themselves. Sharing with their community or work colleagues. Watching wildlife enjoying the fruits of their labour!

One conclusion is that a huge amount of Grow Your Own food and fruit is grown privately in gardens by individuals, families and small communities. There is a suggestion in some returns that there is some wastage due to gluts but that wildlife appreciate the windfall. There are questions of how we could use gluts better – perhaps for community benefit.

Respondents cite organisations – including Commonwealth Orchard, Federation of City Farms, SAGS, Trellis, John Butterworth, and others as helpful. However just as many people get there by “trial and error”, by accessing online information. An outcome of this is that some supportive network may be useful, and people particularly appreciate being shown what to do by an expert .

Tools and training vary in importance – with training appearing to be a bigger issue than tool.

The range of different initiatives and ways of tackling grow your own/ orchards is very varied. There are also a lot of comments about the difficulty – the “prepare for the long haul” of undertaking larger projects. The start small advice and build on it, is also there – and has merit.

The impression is that people do have to struggle very hard to get ambitious projects off the ground. More modest projects – and individual growing has different issues. For many older gardeners – the lack of physical strength etc – can be an inhibiting factor, rather than lack of skills. Trying to match young people with energy and low skills, with older people with skills is an interesting idea.

No contact details for respondees are included – but websites where given have been included as they are public domain.

3 Location of respondees

Cambusbarron Development trust, Stirling
Livingston and District Horticultural Soc
Edinburgh – EH4 Private
Duns, Borders Private
Galston Ayrshire – Private
NTS Priorwood – Melrose
NTS Broughton House, Kircudbright
Penicuik – business
Milton North Glasgow
Garvald – East Lothian
Kinghorn - Fife
Scotlandwell Fife
North Connell, Argyll
Glencruitten Walled Garden by Oban
Bothwell – South Lan

Eyemouth – Borders
Girvan – Ayrshire
Edinburgh – Hunter Hall
Edinburgh – Dreghorn
Pishwanton Wood, Longyester, Gifford, East Lothian
Moffat – Dumfries and Galloway
Kinghorn – Fife
Kirkmichael - Perthshire
Winchburgh West Lothian

Longforgan, Perthshire.
Haddington, East Lothian

4 Reasons for growing

(These are cut and pastes from respondees.)

amisfield.org.uk

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

We are a community project which aims to develop Amisfield walled garden as a working garden where local people can grow food, learn about horticulture and get well through horticultural therapy. We also wish to restore the historic structure of the garden and its buildings and create a new visitor attraction for East Lothian.

when you started? 2006

why you operate? Because there is local interest to see the garden put to good use

Is the future of your growing project secure? Hard to say – we just about break even on running costs from sales of produce, membership subscriptions and donations, but to achieve our long term ambitions we need considerable financial support. We are currently producing a business plan on which to base funding applications

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? Approx. 15 regular volunteers meet 2 or 3 times per week. The Trust has a board of 10 directors responsible for steering the project. Fruit and veg are grown communally and produce shared out at harvest time. Surplus is sold to a couple of local shops and a restaurant, and sold to garden visitors.

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce? See above

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.) All of these!

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

when you started?

Since a boy, at the current site, 4 years.

why you operate?

To feed the family and sell excess.

Is the future of your growing project secure?

Yes, its our garden

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

A family affair - hard graft!

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?

we as a family harvest store eat and sell

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

For good food, pleasure, connection with soil, season and community, to become resilient, make lighter footprints, and enjoy deep, simple and satisfying living.

when you started? Around 1985

why you operate? For fun

Is the future of your growing project secure? I think so.

What is the make up of your group: Myself and my wife

– and how do you grow on your own? ...

and who looks after and harvests the produce. The harvest is pears, and the birds get most of them.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. I had a parcel of land, and wanted to do something with it.

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

when you started? - Garden plot – when I moved in, January 2005; chickens June 2009; allotment November 2010

why you operate? – relaxation, outdoors exercise, nice food at a reasonable cost, reduce carbon footprint, interest in animals (chickens), general wellbeing.

Is the future of your growing project secure? - pretty much

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...
- Mostly work on my own, occasional help from (and to) friends with similar interests.

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce? - Me. I eat it, my son eats it, some gets given to friends and neighbours and work colleagues.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

- relaxation, outdoors exercise, nice food at a reasonable cost, reduce carbon footprint, interest in animals(chickens), general wellbeing.

www.moffatcan.org

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

In May 2010 we started the Moffat CAN Allotments and Community Market Garden. The market garden in its first year provided veg for two local hotels and a small amount for our high street retail space. The allotments were fully subscribed in year one and are fully subscribed for year 2 with a waiting list. With 2010 being a short growing season for us, fruit was planned for the 2011 season.

when you started?

May 2010

why you operate?

Moffat had a need for allotments which Moffat CAN provided. We now want to promote the health, wellbeing and green aspects of growing food locally.

Is the future of your growing project secure?

No funding as yet has been secured for 2011. The allotments are self funding and require little input from Moffat CAN. All equipment and plants/seeds for the community market garden and orchard have been purchased for 2011 but as yet no funding has been secured to staff the project beyond May 2011.

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

Moffat Can has a board of directors. A head gardener and gardener (both part time) report to the development officer who in turn reports to the board of directors. We have a large group or other staff, primarily from the Future Job Fund employment scheme. This scheme will end and current employees will end their contract in June 2011. We also have some volunteers. Volunteering is what we will be focusing on for the future.

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?
Head Gardener and Gardener look after the harvesting – the produce is sold to local hotels and has been sold in very small quantities from our high street office/shop.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

All of the above.

Website www.thehiddengardens.org.uk

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing. Various raised beds, some espaliers, allotment site, 2 glasshouses, herb border, mint border

when you started? 2006

why you operate? To be an inspirational and accessible greenspace which promotes peace, sanctuary and inter-cultural dialogue on a local, national and international level.

Is the future of your growing project secure? Not entirely, we have to apply each year for our core grant funds and a further cocktail of funding to support our maintenance, development and community programmes.

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ... We have various volunteering oppos. And have garden assistants to support the work of the Head Gardener, Programme/Volunteer manager and Director.

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?
Volunteers, staff, give away or use in our cookery workshops.

Website www.huntershall.org.uk (but this site is under construction: should be up and running in a May/June 2011

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

The site has perhaps 150 square meters of 'in-use' soil, growing traditional grown vegetables, includes some raised beds, has 5 fruit trees, a substantial communal shed stocking communal tools. There are also fruit bushes (2 cooking apple, 1 eating apple, one plum, one pear) and herbs on site. There are 12 plot-holding tenants involved but the number of active users double when friends/partners/children are accounted for. No one has had an allotment plot before. Only two or three have ever grown their own before. Weekly community gardener led workshops have been vital to the development of the site and of the participant's horticultural confidence, knowledge and skills base, as is this workers role in organising, encouraging and nurturing participation and in finding money to assist.

when you started? Groundwork development began in April 2009

why you operate? A small community allotment site which developed after Management Committee idea and consultation with tenants in identified site.: the site was formerly unkempt and largely unused shared tenant backgreens. Besides the obvious growing veg/fruit, the site is an educational hub for the community, which gets tenants active, outdoors and healthy, benefits community cohesion (it is multicultural/ethnic, inter-generational) has knock on effects of engaging people with this worker and other educational projects, such as literacy classes aiming at developing a recipe book.

Is the future of your growing project secure? Probably not entirely. A core group of participants have great enthusiasm, but funding is continually required for gardener led workshops and community development work over the next couple of years to really embed the site and the learning. If the site is to remain as inclusive as it is now, the same funding situation will always be an overhanging question, in relation to encouraging/nurturing further community participation. The local community is consistently within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation's most deprived communities, with high unemployment, low income, and further capacity-building work required to equip a self-sustaining allotment community to sustain itself in the long run.

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ... All registered plot-holders must be Co-op tenants. There are three African migrants, one Polish migrant, with the others white-Scottish of predominantly Irish heritage. Plot-holder ages range from mid-thirties to 70. The majority are unemployed though some are in training colleges; three are registered disabled, one is retired. Of the plot-holders - 5 women and 7 men
See above workshops references for growing your own, though it is all organic

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce? Everyone looks after their own, with community gardener assistance for many, though there is a strong sense of community and of communal assistance. Two of the men do the bulk of common area tasks.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)
All of the above.

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing.. **Orchard planted in 1998 in memory of Lady Kay Oldfield as an essential component of our community woodland. We are trying to practice and demonstrate sustainable living.**

when you started?

why you operate?

Is the future of your growing project secure? **No - funding is always difficult**

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...
and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce? **We are an educational charity with many volunteers, students and clients with special needs. Everyone helps to care for orchard and garden and to harvest, process and package produce for sale.**

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.) **All of the above.**

Website

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing.. 30+ growing spaces used by volunteers and members of the local community

when you started? 2009

why you operate? To encourage people to grow own

Is the future of your growing project secure? Not certain!

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

See above

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?

Plot holders

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

We have planted fruit trees in our two most recent developments but are very interested in developing allotments and a community garden in the Bellgrove area of Glasgow

when you started?

2000

why you operate?

To develop allotments and community garden

Is the future of your growing project secure?

n/a

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

We have a working party set up at the moment to progress plans to develop allotments and community garden. We have planted fruit trees in our two most recent developments.

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce? Members of staff and the community pick the ripened fruit and distribute this within the community.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.) Improving the local community, promoting community cohesion.

when you started? **INTO FOURTH YEAR OF A THREE YEAR PLAN (YES! IT HAS TURNED OUT TO TAKE LONGER THAN EXPECTED, ESPECIALLY AFTER TWO HARD AND WET WINTERS) TO RESCUE MY NEGLECTED GARDEN AND MAKE IT PRODUCTIVE.**

why you operate? **BECAUSE I LIKE GROWING FOOD, AND WANT TO MAKE PRODUCTIVE USE OF FAIR-SIZED TERRACED GARDEN, WITH SUBSTANTIAL STONE WALLS. THE STEEPEST PART IS NOW LAID OUT AS A PURELY ORNAMENTAL JAPANESE GARDEN, BUT THE REST IS GIVEN OVER TO VARIOUS FOOD CROPS**

Is the future of your growing project secure? **NOTHING IS SECURE IN THIS LIFE, AND I AM GETTING ON IN YEARS, BUT I HOPE MY GARDEN MIGHT INSPIRE FUTURE OWNERS TO MAINTAIN MY LEGACY. (NOT READY TO LEAVE IT YET, BY THE WAY!)**

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ... **I AM NOT IN A GROUP, JUST A SINGLE HOUSEHOLDER, BUT RECEIVE MAILINGS FROM MR HANCOX**

and who looks after **I HAVE A WELL TRAINED (ROYAL BOTANICS) GARDENER WHO DOES THE MAJOR WORK AND KNOWS WHAT TO DO; . I GET HELP FROM MY HIM, FROM MY EVER OBLIGING HOME HELP**

and harvests the produce **ME**

What do you do with produce? **USE IT AT HOME; OCCASIONALLY DON'T GET ROUND TO USING IT, WHICH IS A SHAME, BUT ALL IS COMPOSTED IF NOT USED**

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.) **I THINK I HAVE ALREADY ANSWERED THIS, BUT I DO GET SATISFACTION FROM SEEING MY PRODUCE GROW THROUGH THE SEASON. IT PROBABLY DOESN'T SAVE MONEY, BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT IT IS ABOUT FOR ME; QUANTITIES ARE SMALL, BUT SO IS THE HOUSEHOLD!**

Website gruinard.org.uk

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing.. Home project providing fruit, veg, eggs, meat

when you started? 1995

why you operate? To be more sustainable and resilient

Is the future of your growing project secure? Yes

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ... Family

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?
Family – fruit, veg, jams, chutney, honey, candles, eggs,

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.) Quality of food, health, lifestyle

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

We are at the planning stage of a project that aims to gain management control of a Defense Estates site that is surplus to requirements in order to create a community growing space of mixed fruit and nut orchard and productive hedgerow

when you started?

The community of Colinton has been actively engaged in trying to access this land since 2000 while it has remained neglected by the owners and the tenants who have ambitions to develop it for housing.

why you operate?

We intend to provide opportunity for the community to engage in healthy exercise, to learn about healthy eating, to produce food locally, to engage socially and to improve well-being. We also intend to provide an arena within which other agencies will be able to undertake various projects whether it be youth training, offender rehabilitation or therapeutic horticulture.

A second reason for operating is to enrich the bio-diversity of the area by improving foraging opportunities so planting will be both for the benefit of people and natural wild life.

A third reason is to improve the cohesiveness of the green wedge that brings countryside into the city and to strengthen the green network

www.eyegrow.org.uk

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

Allotments with orchards planting around

when you started?

2009

why you operate?

Community food growing

Is the future of your growing project secure?

Not bad, have a 20 year lease.

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

Spread of ages, all local, by allotments, mostly organic as best we can.

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?

Aim to use all at home but will sell to raise funds for organisation or

Trellis or donate to Saltgreens (local old-folks home)

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

Reduce food miles, reduce pollution, new skills, empowering people to take charge of their food, learn new recipes, get better nutrition.

when you started? Mid May 2010

why you operate? To fulfil community need for grow your own vegetables and fruit

Is the future of your growing project secure? yes

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ... There is a committee of 11, all volunteers. We have 62 raised beds, 2 polytunnels, a soft fruit area and 2 orchard spaces. There are 73 groups/families who rent a raised bed for a year

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce? The people who rent a bed look after it individually. The orchard and soft fruit area will be managed communally. We eat the vegetables and as yet do not have any surplus. The orchards are newly planted so will be several years away from being productive. Similarly we are just about to plant the soft fruit area.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

All of the above as well as a wish to grow organically and reduce carbon emissions

when you started?

Four years ago began setting up raised beds etc in the still to be completed Lynnside Community Garden Project which lies directly behind the housing association flats where I live in south Oban.

Had been helping at the Seercentre by Pitlochry for several years and so have an interest in combining remineralisation with microbial inoculation (bokashi system) and charcoal/biochar.

Background in forestry and landscaping.

Rural development B.Sc.

Fifteen months ago started helping with fruit trees at the walled garden and now manage 30 beds glasshouse/poly-tunnel and top fruit.

The two other sites are.. for raised beds in one -this year and a reconditioned veg plot under an informal garden share scheme.

why you operate?

To demonstrate remineralisation, soil conservation, microbial inoculation, biochar, raised bed systems, companion planting and, by these methods grow highly nutritional produce for local consumption

Is the future of your growing project secure? No

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

Regular help from one other and sometimes one or two others at the walled garden. Other sites are worked by myself.

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce? ..

Myself and a few others.

We have several likely outlets this year.

May start a box scheme, sell at fortnightly local producers market.

Honesty box at car-parks which serve our woodland walks. etc.

Produce from the community garden is shared although donations are often given.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

All of the above

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

when you started? Jan 2008

why you operate? Desire to be self-sufficient

Is the future of your growing project secure? Pretty much

What is the make up of your group ? Me

and how do you grow on your own? 4 acres of rough grazing on which I raise geese, hens, Muscovy ducks, quails and rare breed pigs. Will be getting a couple of sheep soon and a pair of breeding rabbits for meat and pelts. Also have a small orchard area with gooseberries, raspberries, red, white and blackcurrants, apples, pears, plums, damsons and cherries. Rhubarb has own patch, as do veg. Also have small polytunnel for strawberries, tomatoes, peppers etc and winter growing. Have just harvested first crop of asparagus.

and who looks after and harvests the produce? Me

What do you do with produce? Eat it, share it, sell it at local farmers market.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

desire for a healthy, sustainable lifestyle; not one dictated by money, bureaucrats and chemicals.

when you started? February 2011

why you operate? The project is run by the Portmoak Community Woodland Steering Group who consult the community on what they want from our local community woodlands. They wanted fruit trees and bushes.

Is the future of your growing project secure?

Yes

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

We have a group of volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and ages from the local community

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?

Volunteers from the steering group and wider community are looking after the fruit trees.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

We are 'growing our own' for the produce, as well as to involve local people in their community woodlands. We are also very keen to promote biodiversity.

When you started? 2008

Why you operate? I am only growing for myself; I do not 'operate'

Is the future of your growing project secure? As long as I live at this address

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? I am a private individual, although my husband helps occasionally

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce? Me, what little there is so far we eat ourselves.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.) I enjoy really fresh food, and getting out in the fresh air

Started with ambition to create orchard using historic and local varieties; most are scottish/north of England and existed by 1900

The orchard is about five years old; mainly provides domestic use

The challenge was to select varieties that had maximum spread of maturity dates; manage to eat apples off the tree for about four months but then freezer and fridge technology extends this

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

Very small project of fruit and veg growing, also flowers and bushes
when you started?

2009

why you operate?

Love gardening and just love that feeling of going out and picking fresh fruit and veg

Is the future of your growing project secure?

Yes

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

Mainly myself with the help of a few neighbours especially one with plant knowledge

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?

I look after that but also tell neighbours they can help themselves. Unfortunately someone last year, not a neighbour took all the beautiful victoria plums!

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities

stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)
Communal areas were just weed and overgrown patches when I came so set to to change this. Still a work in progress but just love the peace and quiet of gardening... also of course the results. Good but also bad. Helps our cottage community to enjoy the improved look

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

when you started? Historic garden fruit trees long established

why you operate?

Is the future of your growing project secure? Yes

**What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...
Single handed gardener**

**and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?
Mostly juiced**

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

when you started? 1975

why you operate? NTS gardens open to the public

Is the future of your growing project secure? Yes

**What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? NTS
...**

**and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?
NTS staff and volunteers. Wide range of fruit and vegetables. Many of great
historical importance to Scotland**

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

None as yet, we are at a very early stage in the project.

when you started?

N/A

why you operate?

Community benefit.

Is the future of your growing project secure?

Dependant on community involvement and funding (yet to be secured)

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

We are a community Development Trust (see web site)

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?

N/A

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

Outdoor space development for community wellbeing

Website www.makeithappen-girvan.org.uk

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

when you started? 2007

why you operate? To create a space for growing learning and training. Create volunteering opportunities.

Is the future of your growing project secure? We have a 10 year lease. We are in year ¾. Security for project is medium to high at the moment.

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

We have a core band of volunteers. We are slowly building up groups who are in need of this project. We have established 4 plots around the garden and this year will be the first year we will be using them all.

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?

All the volunteers look after the plots they are not dedicated to one group or individual. Most common veg and fruit.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

This year is really our first year of establishing 4 plots but we are growing for every one of the reasons you state in your question.

when you started? 1990

why you operate? Pure pleasure

Is the future of your growing project secure? Only as long as I am here to do it with David Walls and Gerry Mayo.

What is the make up of your group - and how do you grow on your own? We are three interested people who live near the walled garden in the grounds of Nunraw Abbey

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?

I grow lots of vegetables that I eat and give away, and so does David Walls in his own plot. When we have lots of apples, pears, plums and cherries we will have to find an outlet for them.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits - like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

All of the above reasons. Mostly for me, for the satisfaction that it brings. I just love being out there doing it, all year round!

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

when you started? Year 2000

why you operate?

The project is a community orchard for employees and staff at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. A plot of land and bee hives are available to grow fruit and vegetables and produce honey. In particular it provides an opportunity for people to get out of the office during their lunch break, get some fresh air, undertake some physical exercise and take their mind off work commitments.

Is the future of your growing project secure? Yes (land provided by employer)

What is the make up of your group - and how do you grow on your own? ...

Two committed members of staff, occasional assistance from a further four students and employees. Mostly we working during lunch breaks (occasionally weekends during the summer). The focus is on fruit trees (apples and a couple of plum trees). We also grow soft fruit (raspberries, strawberries, blackcurrants, redcurrants, gooseberries) and a variety of vegetables

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?

The produce is mostly divided amongst those who help in the orchard. Some produce is left in the kitchen for all at the institute to help themselves.

.. enjoyed growing produce of various types since I bought the house. Garden benefits from a tall south facing stone wall. After a visit to Kilrie Castle walled garden in 2009, I decided to try two apple trees grown obliquely as cordons. I recently added four more.

when you started? About 1986

why you operate? For benefit of myself, family and friends

Is the future of your growing project secure? For at least as long as I reside here

I grow produce alone. My wife has some interest but does not involve herself. We have no children.

I grow my own because I enjoy watching things grow, enjoy knowing where my produce comes from and how it has been treated chemically, friends and family also benefit from the produce. I enjoy the increase in my skill base and the benefits to the environment.

Can you give a bit of background about your fruit/ food growing..

Keen gardener, mainly vegetables.

when you started?

Started orchard in neglected semi-walled estate vegetable garden (approx 1 acre) with small group of two other neighbours in 2009. Spent first year preparing the ground, weed and rubbish removal, deer and rabbit fencing, etc. First planting of 38 trees March 2010. Second planting of 27 trees March 2011. There were already 6 old trees that require much attention as well. That makes a total of 71 trees so far. The aim is to have 100 trees, all different and preferably heritage varieties.

why you operate?

Fun, interest, to create a local resource and amenity.

Is the future of your growing project secure?

Yes.

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

Group of 3 local neighbours who live on the Nunraw estate, Garvald. All work is done in our own time.

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?
There will be no or only limited produce over the next few years. Thereafter, there will be no shortage of people locally who will make use of the fruit for jam-making, baking, preserves, eating, etc. Any surplus will find a ready market in local outlets, such as farmers' market stalls, producers of pressed fruit juice, etc. We have already had enquiries in this regard.

What is your reason from doing grow your own. (This may be growing lovely food, saving money. Or other benefits – like peace and quiet, health, making communities stronger, doing intergenerational work, skills and confidence, improving the local environment, that it's fun, biodiversity etc.)

All of the above, really, especially the fun, pleasure and satisfaction aspect. There was a ground resource sitting doing nothing. This seemed wasteful, so we took advantage of that to create a pleasant and productive amenity space that would be of local and wider interest, provide a learning experience for the group and for members of the local horticultural society and others, create a heritage resource for the future, provide a cheap source of nourishing and healthy food, improve the local environment, complement local activities such as bee-keeping, etc. The list is fairly endless.

personally - I love gardening, I love eating own produce, but I started growing my own food because of an interest in eating seasonal produce for environmental reasons.

- Church raised bed garden is secure - volunteers in the church will easily maintain the space and as a local person passionate about it I am happy to maintain the space voluntarily.
- St Monica's orchard secure - have support of the local schools and local neighbours
- Liddesdale Road - less secure - possible vandalism, and also market garden proposal from North Glasgow Community Food Initiative is dependent on outside funders for materials and staff

What is the make up of your group – and how do you grow on your own? ...

Local volunteers with one full and two part time posts for LoveMilton.

and who looks after and harvests the produce. What do you do with produce?

Don't have any yet, but hope to organise harvest days when trees bear fruit. Vegetables will be used in a community cafe and given to people who help grow maintain the space.

5 High Points

pruning the fruit trees and harvesting and pressing for juice.

Though I try to save some fruit for myself, I enjoy watching others (humans and wildlife) take sustenance from my labours. Well, you did ask.

The food tastes better. Getting it for free.

I often say to myself when I am out there, 'I just love being here, I am so happy'.

. Sharing the results of hard work with like minded people.

What are the high points of orchards/ growing your own – good quotes are always interesting.

The pure joy of watching things grow and the thought that 100 years from now someone might wonder who planted all these trees and say a wee thank-you.

Less time consuming than growing vegetables, only a few days a year maintenance rather than daily or weekly

Lots of space in Milton is unproductive grass land. Trees are beautiful and fruit trees have beautiful blossom as well as hopefully some fruit in Autumn.

THINK THEY ARE STILL TO COME. LAST YEAR'S EARLY WINTER GOT IN THE WAY OF PLANTING ESPALIER APPLE AND PLUM TREES ON MY WALL, WHERE WIRES ARE IN PLACE TO TAKE THEM, BUT HOPE TO CATCH UP ON THIS IN 2011. I HOPE I LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SEE THEM BEAR FRUIT. :)

. Food tastes better!!

When I feel stressed and tired, digging the earth is calming. I feel more in touch with 'the real me' that I lose touch with behind the desk, and feel literally much more 'grounded'. There is a huge satisfaction and pride in picking something in the garden to eat minutes later. The allotment is very peaceful, but also quite sociable too at times, and I am hope to grow a much larger percentage of my own food there, and bring down the carbon footprint further. The chickens are a real bunch of comedians - hugely entertaining – the eggs are a delicious bonus.

The first home-raised pork chop, curing bacon, selling the first box of eggs, the first salad of the spring, hearing the children hollering for more, the sight of the vegetable plot in June, the smell of the preserving pan in October, opening a jar of pickle in January, biting into an apple in March...

Seeing seeds grow into plants never fails to amaze. We hope it will be the same watching fruit develop experiencing the cycle/seasonality of nature.

Ask me again when I've got it up and running and members have stopped complaining!

Fresh fruit is the most natural, tasty and healthy food available. Picking and eating your own home grown fruit is a most satisfying experience!

**What are the high points of orchards/ growing your own – good quotes are always interesting.
Feedback from the general public, members of NTS, Patrons and benefactors.**

Having communal BBQ's and using some of the produce

Fresh warm greengages straight from the tree

Enjoying it on the plate!

So far, the best part has been getting a whole pile of folk out onto the hillside to plant and learn about pruning the new fruit trees. We hit a dry patch and had a hilarious time trying to water them by carting the water up the hill in wheelie bins. We think we deserve some fruit, after all that..

It will be worth it in the end!

Constant reappraisal, physical challenge, humbling experience.

6 Networks / Organisations that have been useful

John Hancox of The Commonwealth Orchard and a publication by The Royal Horticultural Society called "Fruit and Vegetable Gardening"

Are there any networks/ organisations which have been helpful to you?

We have attended a couple of things to date, but very early days as yet. We did submit a successful application for a grant to the Central Scotland Green Network Orchard Grant Scheme but had to withdraw as we could not meet the condition of opening to the public three days a year due to the safety hazard presented by a large old derelict greenhouse in the middle of the orchard.

- Commonwealth Orchards - providing trees and volunteers to plant trees from
- News International - Financial and volunteer support
- Scottish Water for giving us 20 tons of compost for raised beds in church garden
- News International for labour and paying for lots of trees

As an employer scheme, this has been set up independently

Are there any networks/ organisations which have been helpful to you?

'Grow your Own' online forum (grapevine). Eat the Seasons e-bulletin (in season recipes).

Awards for All

East Lothian Council Civic Pride award

Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust

Have you received any "in-kind" support. East Lothian Council gives us use of the garden rent free

SAGS

The Forest Garden Network

Permaculture Scotland

FCFCG have been really supportive and we have had cross party political support...where we have hit a brick wall is the intransigence of the owners/developers in not taking no for an answer to allow us to move on.

Mainly friends who have allotments

Are there any networks/ organisations which have been helpful to you?

John Butterworth was most helpful in the choosing of the trees and providing them. I have also found the day in Fife run by Scottish Orchards most helpful. I bought a new pair of secateurs on the way home on the strength of my enthusiasm to prune properly!

Are there any networks/ organisations which have been helpful to you? John Hancox gave us good advice on where to get our trees.

Are there any networks/ organisations which have been helpful to you? Yes - Local origins Rural Network (LORN)

[Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens/ BTCV](#)

[John Butterworth Biodynamic Orchard](#)

Lorncommunity.ning.com
Scottish Orchards.
Lorne Gardening Club.

Are there any networks/ organisations which have been helpful to you?

Federation of City farms and Community Gardens

Trellis

Fairlie Organic Growers

Ron Gilchrist (Fairlie and worms)

Bute Produce

Are there any networks/ organisations which have been helpful to you?

Yes, FCFCG and CWA

Edinburgh Community Backgreens Association for the first three months from April 2009 (they were paid though! To project manage the beginning)

The City's Community Service Team (part of the Criminal Justice Division: low level offenders serving community sentence orders have been a great help in much of the heavy work. Three or four have come out with a Team Leader periodically over the time)

7 Funding/support for project

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...Tyne Esk Leader +

Have you received any “in-kind” support. Gifts of some trees

Are there any networks/ organisations which have been helpful to you?
Finding it difficult to obtain funding at present.

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ... no, I am eligible for some crofting grants but hate paperwork.

Have you received any “in-kind” support.
Plenty of moral support and some practical from friends made through LORN

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...
CCF
Woodland Trust (tree donation)

Have you received any “in-kind” support.
Other than volunteers? no

What could help you, make this work better?
Funding

Have you received any “in-kind” support.
From my own personal pocket!!

What could help you, make this work better? Some money would help

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...
No

Have you received any “in-kind” support.
Wwoofers

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...
CCF for the major grant to construct and set up the community garden. Community Wildlife (big lottery) funded the fruit shrubs and one orchard area ; CSGN funded

the other orchard area. We have been successful with other grant funding but it is not directly related to the areas you are interested in.

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

Yes, very welcome input from professionals – architect, civil engineer, quantity surveyor, accountant and many others who provided help and support

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...No

Have you received any “in-kind” support. Biggar Area Smallholders Group

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...

Not yet.

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

Not yet.

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...

The community has provided private donation support for the campaign so far... but we have high hopes!

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

Lots of voluntary effort to date.

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...

Ayrshire LEADER, Awards for All, Local Authority grants, donations

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

Yes , a lot of our support at the beginning was in kind

No. All from our own resources to date.

Funding for St Monica's came from commonwealth orchards/News International
Trees for Liddesdale Road came from CCF, as did sessional work hours for creating raised beds in church space.

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

trees and materials form commonwealth orchards

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...

Centre for Ecology and Hydrology provided land, tools, a tool shed, purchase of fruit trees and wood.

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

Local organisations supplied manure and wood chip.

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

Volunteers

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ... NTS and Friends Group

Have you received any “in-kind” support. NTS support

**Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...
NTS, SNH, BMG, Patrons, Individual benefactors**

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...Yes, from local charities.

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

The Woodland Trust, who own the land, have helped us with tree stakes and vole guards.

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...

Funding has been received from Fairer Oban and a few other sources for the Lynnside Community Garden but is currently in a bank.
None for the other sites.

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

Plants, materials have been exchanged and shared across the various growing areas.

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...

This worker has streamed some Wider Role Grant funding (Scottish Government funding for Registered Social Landlords) into employing a gardener for workshops with ‘Improving employability and getting people into jobs’ as the funding aim: the allotment related work was only one of a number of educational projects this worker streamed Wider Role funding into

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

The Co-op paid for this workers community development work for the first 3 months in 2009 and similarly for Edinburgh Community Backgreens Association 3 month work in 2009, probably totalling around £5,000 but since then it has been this workers self-funded post and the funding I can find.

8 What would make it work better?

What could help you, make this work better?

Continued funding for weekly gardener-led workshops; some extra equipment such as a polytunnel; this workers post being continued with further Wider Role funding; expansion into the adjacent strip of City Of Edinburgh Council's Millennium Forest in order to develop an Orchard (which would need some funding too); all participants being available at the same time on the same day for gardener-led workshops!; a tenant-tree structure for collecting and retrieving kitchen waste for allotment compost (funding has been applied for)

What could help you, make this work better? **NOTHING IN PARTICULAR, JUST NEED TO KEEP AT IT; WOULD HELP IF I HADN'T BEEN FOUND TO BE ALLERGIC TO EVERY PLANT KNOWN TO MAN - DERMATOLOGIST'S ADVICE 'YOU DON'T NEED A GARDENER, YOU NEED A BUILDER TO POUR CONCRETE ALL OVER IT!'**

NEEDLESS TO SAY, I HAVE NO INTENTION OF TAKING HIS ADVICE.

Depending on the council is frustrating and slow. Use the press to your advantage.

What could help you, make this work better?

More revenue, staff, volunteers

Did you receive funding – and if so, where from ...

N/A

Have you received any “in-kind” support.

Swap seedlings/ veg/ eggs/ etc with friends, and we help each other out with the digging at times.

What could help you, make this work better?

A facebook page or similar for allotment holders in my area (maybe there already is one?) – as so many tips for growers are for climes further South. Seedling swaps meets (always grow too many seedlings, but not enough variety).

What could help you, make this work better?

General advice, especially on pruning, disease and pest control in keeping with organic husbandry principles, advice about grafting, etc.

What could help you, make this work better?

All is going well

What could help you, make this work better?

Council support

What could help you, make this work better?

If there was a way of persuading the Ministry of Defence that releasing this land to the community, even for just 25 years, would be so beneficial and since it is less than 0.2% of the military land that is to be disposed of (according to the 2008 inventory), it would be insignificant to them in terms of postponement of capital receipt. We need an independent broker to negotiate an agreement.

I tried to find information about suitable varieties for my area, but couldn't find anything useful anywhere, so I am using 'trial and error' now

What could help you, make this work better? It would help if we knew more about growing fruit trees

More hours in the day and a more reliable climate!

Grants for bore-holes

What could help you, make this work better?

Not sure as we feel we have done a good job

What could help you, make this work better?

Local workparties for exchange of labour and expertise.

What could help you, make this work better? More time

9 Are skills and training an important issue

Yes.

Yes, would love to understand more about maintaining the newly planted trees

Most grow your own is common sense or can be learnt from gardening books.
Pruning fruit trees is an important and best learnt from someone with experience.

Are skills and training an important issue ... Skilled knowledgeable dedicated people needed

Enthusiasm and experience mainly

I guess I was lucky in growing up with allotment gardening and soft fruit; general learning by watching things grow; some reading

yes. Scottish Crofting Foundation are about to offer some...?

Are skills and training an important issue ...

Strictly speaking, immediately, no.

Workshops and training would clearly benefit interested parties mid and long term and although they could easily happen, immediate priorities are site preparation, sowing and planting.

We are occasionally visited by a local primary school.

Are skills and training an important issue ...

[Yes we want to be able to help people gain skills and train our volunteers too.](#)

Are skills and training an important issue ... **YES; I GET MINE SECOND HAND**

... Yes and the funding associated with this too.

10 What could make better

What could help you, make this work better?

General advice, especially on pruning, disease and pest control in keeping with organic husbandry principles, advice about grafting, etc.

Yes, would love to understand more about maintaining the newly planted trees

Access to larger items of machinery would make a huge difference - tractor/quad with plough/harrow

What could help you, make this work better?

Promotion in the corporate sector and with volunteer schemes

Are skills and training an important issue ...

More networking and communication would be good

11 Is access to tools an issue ?

Is access to tools something that would help... If so, how? **Not an issue**

No. We have adequate access to tools.

Tools from Commonwealth Orchards have been very useful for mass plantings.

No, tools were provided by the employer

Probably, spades, hoes, forks etc. for novice and low-income gardeners.

Is access to tools something that would help... If so, how?

We're going to need more pruning equipment in future

Is access to tools something that would help... If so, how? Set of tools for communal use would be helpful

Is access to tools something that would help... If so, how? We are pretty well set up with tools. If we need larger equipment we hire it or borrow from contacts. Possibly a 'swap shop' of large equipment would be helpful, but difficult to organise.

12 Advice to others based on your experience ?

I have no horticultural background at all (I have a BA honours in Community Education), and I can only respond in relation to developing community allotment sites in areas tagged as within Zones of Multiple Deprivation. However: NEED gardener-led weekly workshops; NEED a funding budget; NEED community development worker consistent involvement to develop interest, participation, nurture participation, develop group. Get local JUNIOR youth clubs involved as this age group really enjoy digging up tatties and the like and their involvement helps a lot with funding applications

Go for it. Prepare to become obsessed.

Start with a small range of easy to grow veg and build up gradually as you gain confidence.

Not qualified as a beginner myself but contacting appropriate organisations could bear fruit.

Go for it - get on and start making mistakes. Talk to other people doing the same thing.

Get the community behind you and go for it.

Just start by planting a few trees and meet with others who are doing something similar.

Timely soil preparation can make a big difference.

Funding is the key to success. Obtaining land or a lease may take a long time and require tenacity. Legal costs and insurance are likely to be needed. Work as a group so you can share the worries and setbacks.

? Get more commitment from persons taking part

Try it but start small

Visit lots of others, buy trees appropriate to the area. involve lots of local people

Be prepared for the long haul

GO FOR IT; I COULD SHOW BEFORE AND AFTER PICTURES TO ILLUSTRATE THE BENEFITS!

THINK AS BIG AS YOU CAN, WITH THE SPACE YOU HAVE GOT; GO FOR THE UNUSUAL, THAT YOU CAN'T BUY IN THE SUPERMARKETS

You need a dedicated group to start off with that will be with the project for the long term. There must be a few people in the group who are the drivers. Balance in the group is very important. Make good links with local councils and groups before starting out and do a consultation with local people at the beginning too as this will bode well in the future for applying for funding. Be prepared for setbacks and they're no quick fixes.

Just try it; my Bramley apple which all the locals said would fail has been a real success.

Take slow steps forwards. Don't bite off more than you can chew in any one year. Have a clear work plan. Enjoy learning as you go along and accept mistakes as inevitable. Learn and move on. Don't hesitate to seek expert advice. Check out YouTube where there are a host of really good tutorials on all aspects of fruit tree husbandry. Build up a decent reference library

Get started!

- Make sure there are local people really passionate about it, who intend to live in the area for a good number of years to keep an eye on the orchard to stop it getting neglected.
- Check the site before planting trees for quality of soil or remains of old buildings. Good light and drainage is important too.

Mix with as many like minded people as possible; listen to their advice and comments, but don't wait until you know it all - just get started in a small way, where you are, as so much knowledge and understanding unfolds along the way. Personal experience, particularly the failures, is invaluable to future success.

Don't give up – use your common sense and use business sense to get the project going – ignore the small stuff, concentrate on the big picture, take the bumps and accept the embarrassment that goes with dealing with local authorities.

Get some advice on suitable fruit tree varieties and pruning. Keep the rabbits and deer out (they can do a lot of damage).

To study what is going on in your nearby vicinity. Increase your knowledge and skills by further specific training if required

Start growing there is always advice out there

Finely weed the area and compost well to begin with especially if any nasty perennial weeds. Also chat to friends about what may grow best in your area and position

Grow local varieties; my only failure was French 18th c variety; clearly it thought the Scottish borders were not 18th c france

13 Any other thoughts ?

We would like to hear from anyone who can help us to source Scottish heritage varieties of any fruit trees that we do not currently have. This year we plan to start learning to graft, so would be keen to find interesting specimens on which to develop our skills. We would be happy to make any of our trees available, once they are mature enough, to others who may wish to take cuttings for this purpose. All of our trees have been organically sourced and we intend to ensure that we apply organic principles as far as possible. We will not be seeking certification, however, as there is a cost implication.

The support of my employer was very useful in covering costs for tools and materials and providing land. I would suggest other people interested may think about setting up an orchard via their employer

Meet with other like minded people

Enjoy

Grateful for this networking. I think it has come at just the right time for us

Some tools would be good to get organised before starting. Don't get people who are complete whingers involved

14 interesting adds

Tweedgreen has secured a loan of a small plot off the High St in Peebles; looking for other plots close to Peebles, and have started a register of land available/people wanting land to work. Innerleithen Community Allotments have established a new allotment site Innerleithen Primary School has a projected orchard, just waiting for planning permission to be finalised

Tweedgreen organised a family apple day at Traquair House, introducing people to the joys of home grown fruit

Community gardens being planned at Traquair House

I have my own apple project starting up but have no funding or land, so would welcome any assistance with that!

M

do keep chickens in the back garden and have done for about 15 years (not the same chickens). Happy to discuss pros and cons (of which there are quite a lot) with anyone!

I am in West Lothian and through Livingston and District Horticultural Society, we are starting a campaign to get the council to release land for allotments (current provision in Livingston, 21 plots for 58,000 people).

The people that really need your help though are in Cambuslang. They have been campaigning for about 2 years to get South Lanarkshire to provide land for allotments. I was over at their monthly meeting last night to see if I could pick up any ideas from them and from what they are saying, every time they identify a bit under-used ground that could possibly be used for allotments, the council flog it to a developer!!

ps should have mentioned ; take care with choice of root stock when planning and if possible plant shelter trees [birch/scots pine if need]

My allotment experience

My first house in Edinburgh did not have any space to grow anything as it was all

brick paved. After two years I moved to hunters hall housing where I live in a third floor flat. My dream of ever grow anything in the soil just died then as I had only a drying space.

I remember a couple of years later reading an article about anyone interested in allotments to meet at the office one evening. To cut my story short we met and Colin drove us to Bridgend allotments where Susan had an allotment. This was the first time in years I had come this close to the freshness of soil and vegetables.

The idea was for coop members to see if we would want to grow our own vegetables. After that day the idea of allotments have been ever talked about tried and after couple of years this year is when I finally managed to grow and eat something from my own plot.

This is what I like about allotments

- The fresh air
- It saves money, as I am a vegetarian this year I have managed to cut my weekly bill by ••• by getting vegetables from my plot and sharing everyone else's
- Socialisation as I meet different people, now I have so many people to say hi to in the road
- Putting my hands in the soil is mind stimulating as I feel free and its physically healthy
- Not only learning about vegetables and plants but about species such as bugs
- Very educational for adults and kids
- Discovering new things every time, like some flower can be eaten as salad
- Kids experimenting, they have managed to build a bug house and worm pond; these are the things I would have never done with my son.
- No one judges you as we are all here with the same goal making our hands dirt
- Everyone has the same goal and excitement of putting seeds in the ground and see them come to life.
- This summer I did not have money to go on holiday with my son but allotment became part of our activities, we did not need any money to have fun there

Allotments makes us all come together as one and share, help each other in sharing one dream having green fingers

By Miriam

15 produce ?

Apples, still small yield as tree small. Plums great yield for first time last year and loads of flower buds showing this year. Strawberries good as are blueberries, raspberries and blackberries. Mainly grow potatoes in bags, salad in raised bed and beans, spinach, leeks , beetroot etc in small main area. Only on small production area but successful on the whole, Great success growing carrots in old clematis pots on top of a table last year.

I am only 2 years into planting my orchard; i have photos of the bare plot and saplings if you want them, together with the fruiting hedge I have planted round the orchard for protection, but i have no yield figures yet, I am just happy for anything and eat it.

We'll let you know when we start to get some results.

. Put 16 pigs away for meat in 2010. Breeding sow is Tamworth/Middle White. Have used a Gloucester Old Spot boar, a Tamworth and an Oxford Sandy Black X. Looking to try a Large Black. Raised 4 geese for the Christmas table. About 2kg each of blackcurrants and raspberries. Fruit trees mostly young, but a few kilos wild damsons and 9 peaches of young tree in ploytunnel!

Buckhaven's next generation took part in improving their town's future by planting 20 fruit trees in the grounds of Bield Housing Braehead Gardens which accommodates some of its older generation residents. Organised by CLEAR Buckhaven and sponsored by the Fife Council's Community Food Project, this practical action completed the winter term of environmental sessions organised by CLEAR in Buckhaven Primary School. Catherine Taylor of Bield Housing said "we were delighted to offer space for this project and to see the children so enthusiastic in planting fruit trees".

2010: CROPS GROWN AT 31B: APPLE (SMALL, OLDISH JAMES GRIEVE APPLE TREE); POTATOES (IN BAGS, VERY SMALL CROP COMPARED WITH 2009); BRAMBLES (TWO NEW PLANTS, TRAINED ON THE WALL); PEAS (RAISED BED) STRAWBERRIES (DITTO); RHUBARB (MOVED OUT OF RAISED BED IN 2010, AS AFTER ONE YEAR IT WAS TAKING OVER THE PLANET; NOW DOING WELL IN THE LEAST FAVOURED PART OF THE GARDEN); BLACKCURRANTS (PLANTED TOO LATE, BUT COMING AWAY NOW); REDCURRANT (KILLED BY THE COLD WINTER - WILL TRY AGAIN); BLUEBERRIES (DID QUITE WELL IN TWO LARGE POTS); GARLIC (POTS IN THE GREENHOUSE); CHILLIS (DITTO); TOMATOES (IN POTS, IN GREENHOUSE AND OUTSIDE, DIDN'T DO AS WELL AS 2009; DIDN'T LIKE THE VARIETY, WILL GO BACK TO TRIED AND TESTED); RUNNER BEANS (IN PLANTER - CAME AWAY LATE ON WHEN I HAD ALMOST GIVEN UP)

2011: PLANS FOR WHITE MELROSE APPLE, AND MARJORIE'S SEEDLING PLUM; POSSIBLY MORE BLUEBERRIES, MORE PEAS, MORE GARLIC, LOTS OF CHILLIS (KEEP ME GOING ALL YEAR); POSSIBLY SALADS, I HAVE BEEN LAZY ON THIS

CROPS ARE MINUSCULE, BUT AS I SAID, QUANTIY NOT AS IMPORTANT TO ME AS QUALITY

Potatoes, carrots, onion, leeks, beetroot, lettuce, cabbage, peas, beans, sweetcorn doesn't work! Spinach, turnip, parsnip, rhubarb, blackcurrant, swede, to name most of them!

The things I love growing and that do well for me so far include:

Potatoes, purple sprouting broccoli, kale, savoy cabbages, courgettes, peas, beans, broad beans, pak-choi, salad leaves, chives, parsley, onions and garlic, raspberries and blackcurrants.

Chickens – 3 cream legbars (blue-green eggs), 1 marans (dark brown eggs).