

School Garden Newsletter

Welcome!

Hello and welcome to the first Edition of the School Garden Newsletter. A lot has been happening over the summer holidays, and the changes to the garden will continue apace during this term. This will be a monthly newsletter to keep you up to date as to what is happening in and around the school grounds.

Firstly introductions. My name is Tim Walker and I have been appointed as Horticultural Instructor, working Tuesday to Thursday throughout the year helping students with growing plants and developing the gardens to become a quality teaching resource.

Having graduated from Horticultural College I worked for various local authorities writing and managing grounds maintenance contracts, and advising the Planning Section on trees and landscaping around property developments. I then worked for English Heritage managing grounds around various lumps, bumps and ruins. I then moved into education teaching Horticulture at Moulton College and Shuttleworth College. In my spare time, I run a successful Scout Troop; help with Duke of Edinburgh Awards, and volunteer at Stowe Landscape Gardens.

National Citizen Service

Over the summer, five young people helped in the gardens as part of their National Citizen Service Programme. As well as spending a week on an Adventure Camp in Cheshire, and a week at the University, they had to plan and deliver 30 hours of social action. I managed to persuade one of the students (my daughter!!) that the school gardens would be a worthwhile project—and her group agreed!!



During August, they dug out a base for a new shed; cleared away an old path and started to build a new one; moved the poly tunnel, and moved some of the Veg Tables, Helped by a £300 grant from O2, they also provided new flower displays around the school, and have paid for an archway which will be erected at the entrance to the gardens, and have purchased some new propagators and cloches. They will be graduating this month. Photos will appear in next month's issue!



Morrisons Let's Grow Campaign

Once again, the school will be collecting Morrisons Let's Grow vouchers to go towards buying more plants, tools and equipment for the school. Temporary collection boxes (in propagators of course!) have been placed in the main school foyer, staff room and Family Room until the official ones arrive. So get shopping and help the school. Don't forget they now deliver too!!!



The New School Garden

The new garden will see some big changes over the next month. Fencing for the site has been ordered, as well as lots of raised beds made from scaffolding boards. Where possible, I am upcycling various materials salvaged from around the site. Over the next month, I will be constructing a large greenhouse made from timber and double glazed windows salvaged from the old mobile classrooms. This will give a large area for overwintering plants, and being able to get plants started early.

Developments towards the end of the year will be a fruit cage and composting area, completion of a slabbed path through the middle of the garden for easy access, and then side paths made of woodchip donated by local tree surgery companies.

Stowe Landscape Gardens

This term, the school will be developing new links with the National Trust at Stowe. I will be taking members of 5DPW to the New Inn Visitor Centre at Stowe to help work on the vegetable gardens there. Over the course of the year we will be growing heritage vegetable varieties, tending the gardens; harvesting vegetables for the restaurant, as well as opportunities to work in the other gardens. This will give the students a great opportunity to carry out community work and to enjoy helping at one of England's finest gardens.



September's Gardening Tips

You can still plant quick growing crops such as radish, spinach and lettuce. Try some of the mixed salads, and Sutton's Speedy Salads range. In Wilkinson's there are autumn onions and garlic sets. Plant these now for harvesting next June. You can start them off in small pots and plant out later if you don't have any space at the moment.

You can also plant potatoes now for Christmas!! Autumn tuber are available at Billing Garden Centre, but you can use those in veg rack that have started to sprout. Get a 40 litre bag of compost and shake to loosen. Put the bag on its side and cut two 15cm crosses in the polythene. Put your potatoes through the crosses about half way down the compost. These will sprout as usual. Cover or bring indoors if a frost is due. You should then have new spuds for Christmas dinner!!



Tim

