

# Garden's Newsletter

*St Mary's Secret Garden*

**AUGUST 2009**

This has been a great month for growing in the garden, warm and wet so I must say St Mary's Secret Garden looks splendid. We are very excited that we now have St Mary's bees busy pollinating the garden and working hard making honey. We'll keep you updated over the next few months as they settle in and the project comes into fruition. It's very safe so come in and have a look and a chat if you're interested in learning more. If you missed last months newsletter, click on July.

## **EVENTS, NEWS AND FEEDBACK**

### **Shoreditch Festival - Saturday 18th July**

St Mary's Secret Garden had a grand day hosting a stall celebrating the theme of 'Earthy Delights' at this years Shoreditch festival. Visitors had free on hand advice with Paula 'on the mike' giving the low down on planting up fantastic floral and edible herb hanging baskets. Paula and her brilliant team of volunteers were then there to offer one to one advice helping children and adults to get their hands dirty and plant up their own basket to take home with them. Delicious! Last count an amazing 500 baskets were filled by children and adults until they ran out isn't that brilliant! The sun shone all day, good music and happy visitors rounded up a great festival this year. Put it in your diaries for next July and don't miss out.



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### **Busy Bees in The Garden**

By the time they arrived, in the back of a London taxi 3 weeks ago, our bees were understandably tired and fed-up. Claudia put her ear to the unopened box and jumped at the sound, they were seriously buzzing. Since then they have taken to their new home like, well, bees to nectar. St. Mary's Secret Garden is awash with colour and now tiny parcels of that colour find their way back into our hives on the legs of a worker bee. When we take out the frames and hold them up in the sunshine we see them dancing across the honeycomb like 80's pop stars wearing gold, yellow, amber, red pollen leggings, and we've become their number one fans. We've been very lucky to have the support and guidance of beekeeper Barnaby Shaw who has taught us all manner of bee secrets over the past few weeks, not to mention the art of bringing our colony back from the brink of collapse with the aid of a couple of pieces of newspaper and a few hundred workers from the BASH creations rooftop. They are starting to seem more settled now and with the imminent arrival of hive number 4, we are preparing ourselves for an exciting year ahead full of learning and sweet times.

**Zoe Palmer**

Youth members of the Golden Co-op will provide high quality locally sourced honey and it's related products at a reasonable price to members of the community and respond to the demand for locally sourced, ethical, environmentally sustainable produce in health food shops, garden centers, local fetes and London's burgeoning organic market scene.

### **Zoe Palmer**

Thanks Zoe, next month Paula will give us an update on the new arrivals and how the bees are adjusting to relocating to Hackney.



## **UP AND COMING COURSES AND EVENTS**

### **Art Course**

September 14th 11am - 3pm, every Monday during school term time.

**Places available**

We will be running a 10 week course starting on 14th with further courses planned for the future.

The program will combine a variety of art workshops around educational visits to museums and gardens. Numbers are limited so please contact us on 020 7739 2965 for enrolment information. Click on to the link to see photographs [www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk](http://www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk)

### **Harvest Festival and fun day for all our volunteers and staff on Wednesday 23rd September (11am-2pm).**

More info to follow.

### **Getting started with an introduction to gardening**

With the support of the Soil Association we are offering a free short introduction to organic gardening; which will include the basics for looking after your plants and vegetables. All you need to bring with you is lunch and sturdy boots/shoes.

This course is ideal for the absolute beginner. Friday 2nd October 12pm - 4pm  
Friday 9th October 10.30am - 2.30pm

### **Basic Gardening Course**

Starting weekly from Friday 30th October - 4 December Time: 10.30am -1pm.

We offer a six week gardening course, covering all the basics, from sowing seeds, to cuttings, planting, pruning, soil and composting. We follow organic gardening practices and will include this in our teaching.

The garden setting provides the opportunity for would be gardeners on the course, to experience first hand the nature of "how to garden" with the help and guidance of professional experts. Having a "hands on" approach makes this course exciting and rewarding (for both student and teacher) as each week offers a different aspect of gardening that is both practical and knowledgeable.

It is hoped that by the end of the six week course, you will have the confidence to approach your garden, balcony, window box, allotment or any community green space.

All you need to bring with you are sturdy boots/shoes, appropriate clothing and a folder.

### **Booking information:**

Spaces are limited to ensure the best learning environment for you. Thanks to the Ashden Trust we are able to offer this course at a subsidised rate. To attend the 6 week course the cost is £120 for those in paid employment. We are able to offer 6 places at a the concessionary rate is £60 if you receive benefits.

All bookings must be made two weeks in advance of the course start date. To make a booking please complete the

### **Autumn Propagation & Maintenance Day Course**

Monday October 12th 2009 Time: 10.00 till 15.00

Learn about & get hands on practice: Hardwood cuttings, division, autumn pruning & maintenance. Also feel free to bring your own gardening queries & questions! Please telephone the garden if you require any further information.

Cost £20 per person

If you can, bring your own secateurs.

Please download a booking form from the education page <http://www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk/Education.htm> or telephone 020 7739 2965 to book your place.

### **CATHERINE'S SEASONAL TIPS**

*In honor of our new little buzzing guests, this month Catherine has been out and about and put together her top tips on encouraging wildlife into your garden.*

#### **Top tips**

- Encouraging wildlife is good for the gardener and for the environment. The more wildlife there is in the garden, the more plant life it can support. There are plenty of things gardeners can do to encourage a wide range of living creatures into the garden, particularly those which are beneficial to us.
- Bees, the best pollinators for fruit, can be brought into the garden by planting mint, lavender, clover, comfrey, Buddleja, white dead nettles, wall flowers, jasmine and many more.
- Hoverflies, lacewings and ladybirds, which are natural predators of a number of pests, can be drawn in by planting simple flowers such as nasturtiums, poached- egg plants and marigolds (Calendula and Tagetes)
- Don't be too tidy! Piles of fallen logs and branches provide hiding places for hedgehogs and rotten wood for stag beetles and ground beetle larvae, whilst the fungi which grow on them feed adult ground beetles and ladybirds.
- Dandelions seed heads provide food for goldfinches, whilst the flowers provide pollen for bees and hoverflies.
- Compost heaps and wormeries, as well as providing organic matter for your garden, also provide a valuable home for a huge number of 'minibeasts', such as woodlice, centipedes, ground beetles, earwigs and worms. These in turn provide a meal for local birds, hedgehogs and frogs. Plastic compost bins are usually provided free or cheaply by local councils.
- Even if you don't have a garden, you can still do something to support local wildlife. A bird feeder on the window can become a valuable food source for birds, particularly through the winter, whilst a few flowering plants and herbs in a window box or on a balcony will encourage birds, butterflies and other insects to visit.



### **VEGETABLE OF THE MONTH**

#### **OREGANO**

Oregano (Marjoram – Oreganum is the Latin name hence often the confusion!) - we have a normal green variety but also a pretty golden one. Bees love this herb.

## WHAT'S FOR SALE

Come and have a go at harvesting our delicious organic vegetables and herbs, price competitive and no air miles. This month we have our tomatoes, beans and herbs

WE'RE ON THE WEB  
[www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk](http://www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk)

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London, E2 8EL E-mail: [info@stmarsgarden.org.uk](mailto:info@stmarsgarden.org.uk)

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

**Name:** Quynh Hoang  
**Volunteer skills:** Website Designer and Developer  
**Profession:** IT  
**Time as a volunteer:** 3 years

### Why do you enjoy volunteering at St Mary's project?

Being able to help out in some way with such an amazing local community project is self-fulfilling in itself. However for me, the most enjoyable aspect of volunteering at St Mary's project is meeting and working with the fantastic people there.

### What have you personally gained from your experience as a volunteer at the secret garden?

Volunteering at St Mary's project has enabled me to utilise my skills in IT and this in turn, has given me good experience in the field following my education. Community projects such as St Marys rely heavily on voluntary support and as such, I am just pleased to be able to play a part.

### Hobbies

I have a keen interest in all types of sports including badminton, football and tennis. My reading interests are mainly fiction, fashion and current affairs. My other interests are singing and listening to music. I take full part in the church choir and sing every week in mass. My enjoyment of music helps me to relax, whether I am singing or just simply listening. I also love cooking and travelling!



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