

Garden's Newsletter

St Mary's Secret Garden

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2009

This month we are combining October and November so we can all look forward to a bumper end of year newsletter. As always here in St Mary's Secret Garden it has been a busy, fun and enlightening month. We are so lucky to have such a great place on our door step. Please do take the time to read the newsletter and come in and support us. A friendly smile, a purchase or two from our flower and herb cart and a few happy words do help keep us going as the weather nips our toes and fingers. Sometimes I wonder if Catherine, Paula and Claudia's smiles are frozen onto their faces, or are they that happy all the time. Yep they are! That's why you should come in and let some of that good cheer rub off on you.
See you there

EVENTS, NEWS AND FEEDBACK

Harvest Festival at Randal Cremer

Please take the time to click onto the children's blog. Go onto the website and click on "Education" in the header. It really will put a smile on your face believe me. This month written by the very talented Eric and Madihah.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

EVENTS, NEWS & FEEDBACK	2
UP AND COMING COURSES & EVENTS	3
SEASONAL TIPS	3
VEGETABLE OF THE MONTH	3
WHAT'S FOR SALE	3
VOLUNTEER PROFILE	4



Catherine has also started working with the year 5's at Randal Cremer on Monday mornings, developing their food growing garden. Although it's not the best time of year to start gardening, so far we've planted broad beans and raspberries, taken some mint cuttings and started a compost heap. We'll be planting garlic and spring bulbs soon, as well as some winter salad.

Organic gardening course

Thanks to support from the Soil Association, we have been able to offer a free 'Into organic gardening' one day sessions. These went really well, with 18 new people introduced to the garden and trained up. Paula spent half a day sharing top tips on propagation and answering people's queries. If you have ideas for one day training sessions then please let us know. Click on our website and see if there are any up-and-coming courses you would be interested in. Still some courses left this year.



Land search

Do you know about a small plot of land which would be suitable for a community garden? Ideally located next to or as part of a community centre. In partnership with Shoreditch Spa we are applying for funding to create a therapy themed accessible garden in Hackney. Any ideas please send them to claudia@stmarysgarden.org.uk

Team community days

Thanks to Freshfields for helping to revitalise our tool shed, which has been painted a wonderful purple colour and reminds us all of brighter days! All corporate team days are being co-ordinated by ELBA (East London Business Alliance). If anyone manages or runs a business that wants a team community day you can contact them.

Plus we would like to say a big Thanks to Leyland SDM on Shoreditch High St, for advice on how to paint an old portacabin & discount on paints purchased.

We have been making a lot of chutney including; Apple & Green Tomato, Marvellous Marrow and Racy Runner Bean Chutney! If you have any jars and plastic bags we would really appreciate them.

Bee news

The forth hive of the "south london bees" are being moved to a more private & secluded spot elsewhere in Hackney, as they are a bit too protective of their Queen to be used as a beekeepers training hive. Plus, look out for knitted bee hive cosies coming soon - just to keep them snug & warm over winter - although they will become less active as the colder weather comes in you will still be able to spot them working on milder sunny days. We have had a bit of a problem with our local urban fox's taking a bit too close an interest in the hives - hence you may see bits of gaffa tape stuck to the hives. Seems even fox's like honey too & can't wait for it to be ready.

UP AND COMING COURSES AND EVENTS

Volunteer Positions

Admin - help to organise our office, research funding opportunities, raise our profile locally

Therapeutic Volunteer - work alongside our gardeners and staff to support therapeutic gardening sessions (Wednesday).

Download an application form [www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk /Volunteer.htm](http://www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk/Volunteer.htm) and pop in for a chat.

SMSG Christmas Sale on Colombia Road every Wednesday evening in December

Christmas Sale at Yoga Home (www.yogahome.com)

Maria attended one of our gardening courses and has kindly offered to sell products made at St Mary's at their **Christmas Sale on Saturday 5th December. Lightsite, 14 Allen Road, N16 8SB, 1.30-5pm**

SEASONAL TIPS

Hot tips this month...

- Plant your Hyacinth bulbs for forcing so you can have them flowering for Xmas - we are just doing ours at the moment to look forward to scented paper-white daffodils & hyacinths in those darkest months.
- Make leaf mould (leaves into bag, add water, make holes with fork and tie up. Leave for one year). Use it to mulch your garden or as a mix when planting bulbs.
- Bubble wrap your wormery to keep them warm & active
- Plant other spring bulbs
- Leave piles of leaves & twigs for hibernating critters
- Sow garlic & broad beans

VEGETABLE OF THE MONTH

Choy sum & winter lettuce varieties



WHAT'S FOR SALE

Cyclamen Small pots only £1.20 or £2.00 large pots. Discounts for multi buys.

The hardy cyclamen family produces flowers from the first dewy autumn morning through winter into early spring and beyond. Surprisingly shade tolerant and bloom profusely under trees and shrubs.

And don't forget our delicious Apple & Green Tomato, Marvellous Marrow and Racy Runner Bean Chutneys on sale!

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Gardener Barry Allard



How long have you been involved with St Mary's secret Garden?

I've been coming for just over 2 years - I come to the garden every Wednesday.

Do you live locally?

I live near Hackney Wick, it only takes me one bus to get here.

Why do you like coming to the garden and what is your favourite thing to do?

I like the garden, it gives me something to do - keeps me active. I like the company and friends I have made here mainly.

I like digging, feeding tomatoes, planting and I really liked looking after the pumpkin I planted this year. I will have a go at anything though.

What is your favourite flower?

This year I liked a flower called Amaranthus 'Elefant'. We grew it from seed and the flowers felt like a carpet! I entered it into the flower show this year and I won 1st prize.

What is your favourite vegetable?

I like salads, tomatoes and cucumbers.

Hobbies?

I do have hobbies, I have been enjoying going to dance classes for a while now. I have started to go to exercise classes every Monday and I am also learning how to cook better at the moment.

WE'RE ON THE WEB
www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk

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