

Secret Garden Newsletter

Spring 2013 www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk



Just like the spring, this newsletter is rather late – but good things are worth the wait!! The garden is finally starting to wake up, with daffodils in full bloom and bulbs and anemones flourishing in the woodland. We have been very busy and have loads of exciting training and events coming up!

News



We will be starting the final **Basic Gardening** course with **Estate to Plate** on Thursday April 25th from 5.30 – 7.30, and the **accredited course** on Wednesday June 28 from 4 – 6. To book a place please contact Edouard on 020 7033 8506

We welcome a new member of staff this month, Paul Newham, who will be running our **community gardening training scheme** which is funded by **Growing Localities, City Bridge Trust**. Teams of up to 8 gardeners, known as **New Leaf** trainees, will work towards a qualification over a 3 month period, with some of the training here at the garden and much of the training taking place in gardens within the community, including **St Matthew's churchyard** off Bethnal Green Road, and **Fellows Court Estate** opposite St Mary's. The project will run for 2 years, and the first group of trainees will start on May 13; trainees will come from across the community and will include adults with learning disabilities and people living with mental ill health.

Our **Pop-Up Produce Project**, funded by Comic Relief, has finally overcome a number of setbacks and is due to start on Tuesday May 7th working with **Hackney Young Carers**. They'll get the chance to work on gardening, cooking and craft projects and will be running a pop-up cafe at the garden over the Open Garden Squares weekend in June. We will also be doing some outreach work the Alzheimer's Organisation in City Road. If you are a carer or are involved with a carers organisation and would be interested in taking part in the project, please contact the garden.

We have started working with our first group of **young people** as part of the **Branch Out** project with our partners **Otesha**. The project gives local people between the ages of 16 -25 the opportunity to gain a **practical horticulture qualification**, as well as giving them support and employability skills. The next 10 week course is due to start on July 1, and if you are a young person or if you know or work with young people, find out more on the Otesha website or book a place by calling Tamsin on 020 3609 6763.

As part of the **huge changes to welfare budgets and funding for disabled people** in Hackney and country wide, we have started to lose placements for some of our gardeners who have been coming here for many years. The cut-backs deprive our gardeners of the opportunity to do valuable gardening work within an open access community garden and of a safe place to meet long established friends. It also deprives the garden of an important funding stream. We are supporting our gardeners, their parents and carers as much as we can and are seeking alternative ways to fund the garden and activities for the people we work with.

Dates for your diary

Once again we will be opening up the garden for **Open Garden Squares Weekend** on **Saturday June 8th from 10 - 5** and **Sunday 9th June from 11- 4**. Drinks and cakes will be for sale at our pop-up café run by young carers, and there will be a variety of activities as well as plants and produce for sale. To find out more and to find out about other gardens which will be open as part of the scheme, go to: www.opensquares.org



Antoinette will be running a fab free flower workshop here at the garden on **Saturday May 18th from 10 -1**. As part of **Adult Learners Week**, 'Flower Power' will teach you the art of the florist including how to condition flowers and make a spring handtie. Go to www.learningtrust.co.uk to find out more or phone the garden on 0207 739 2965 if you're interested in coming along.



Now warmer weather is here, start sowing seeds in pots and into the ground....and keep on top of those weeds – they like the sunshine too. Happy gardening!