

Secret Garden Newsletter

Spring 2014 www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk



Finally it looks like it might have stopped raining (fingers crossed!) Time to get out in the garden, sow some seeds into pots trays on your window ledge, cut back ornamental grasses and prune soft fruit bushes. So look lively people!

News

Paula Yassine, our garden manager, did a great job at [The Funding Network's Hackney Giving](#) Event in early February, where she pitched for funding to sustain and develop the work we do in partnership with [Mildmay Hospital](#). We currently work once a week delivering social and therapeutic gardening sessions with people living with HIV and Aids. Paula's presentation went down really well, with local businesses donating over £4 000 and counting. We are REALLY grateful to everyone who gave money and to Hackney Giving for allowing us the chance to be involved. To watch Paula's pitch, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5ZhxOBZv5E

Special thanks to [Fellows Court Tenants Association](#) for donating some wonderful daffodil bulbs for our [New Leaf](#) trainees to plant in the communal areas of the estate. The trainees are continuing to improve the flower beds, which are starting to look much more colourful, particularly as the daffodils come into flower.

Anyone with a little gardening experience who would like to help support trainees in the New Leaf project on Monday and/or Tuesday, contact paul@stmarysgarden.org.uk or go to our website www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk/Volunteer.htm



This spring we will be running some fabulous Food Growing Workshops as part of our Estate to Plate project here at St Mary's Secret Garden. Places are available on a first come, first served basis and are free for Hackney residents and anyone that has taken part in a previous Estate to Plate course. The workshops are:

- Tuesday 11th March, 10am to 12:30pm: Food Growing in Small Spaces
- Saturday 15th March, 11am to 1:30pm: Plants for Free,
- Thursday 20th March, 3:30pm to 5:30pm: Designing a Food Growing Area,
- Monday 24th March, 5pm to 7:30pm: Growing Food the Natural Way

To book, go to: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1BQUT_vaC0_s0Y-XQILClcOBRI moR4Oamy3TOVBWoah0/viewform

We will be working with **Otesha UK** again this year, training 16 – 25year olds in gardening. They will gain a Level 1 Award in Practical Horticulture from City and Guilds, as well as learning basic gardening skills with an emphasis on growing food. Last year's students did really well with 20 young people gaining a qualification. A number of ex-students went on to further training, volunteering and employment. We expect this year's courses will be just as successful! If you are interested in signing up, or know someone who might be, the first 10 week course starts on Tuesday April 29th from 12.30 – 3pm. Go to www.otesha.org.uk/programmes/green-jobs/branch-out on the Otesha website or contact shaun@otesha.org.uk for more details or to sign up.



A big thank you to **Corelogic** for their generous donation which has enabled us to provide a number of free well-being placements to people with a learning disability or mental health problem who have lost their funding from their local council. If you know of anyone who would be eligible, please contact us: info@stmarysgarden.org.uk

Dates for your diary

This year's AGM will be held here at the garden on the evening of April 2nd from 6.30. We will look at the year's successes, talk about future plans and, weather permitting, will get to spend some time in the garden. We usually have some tasty food to share, and it gives everyone a chance to socialise with friends, staff and volunteers. If you fancy finding out what's happening or would like to get more involved, please come along and join in. Drop us an email to let us know you're coming: info@stmarysgarden.org.uk or just turn up on the night.

This year, **Open Garden Squares** weekend will be the 14th and 15th June. We will be open both days, from 10 – 5 on the Saturday and 11 – 4 on the Sunday. Look out for more information about what special events will be taking place, but as always, there will be plenty of plants for sale as well as delicious home-made cakes and tea and coffee. To find out which other gardens are involved, go to the Open Garden Squares website: www.opensquares.org

And finally, the **frogs** deserve a mention. Today we counted 13 of them, all in our little pond!! Spring is definitely in the air!



Happy gardening!