

# Secret Garden Newsletter

[www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk](http://www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk)

Spring 2015



Spring is coming which means daffodils flowering. Hooray!

And for frog fans, frogs spawn usually appears in February & March. After about a month tadpoles will begin to develop.



## We need your help!

Please will you come in and take a few minutes to fill in the Community Consultation Questionnaire.

## 2015 Diary of Events and Courses

### Spring Flower Arranging Workshop

Wednesday 1st April 2015  
5.30 pm till 7.00 pm  
With our trained florist Antoinette

Make & take home a lovely spring display.  
All materials provided.  
Cost £25 or £15 concessions.



### 'Propagating Plants'

With Paula

Sunday 26th April 2015

11 am till 3 pm

Cost £30 or £15 concessions.

### Gardening Workshop

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'Growing vegetables in small spaces'

Saturday 18th April 2015

11 am till 3 pm

With Noushine

Cost £30 or £15 concessions.

Call us on: 02077392965  
Email: [info@stmarysgarden.org.uk](mailto:info@stmarysgarden.org.uk)  
Or just come along to join in.

## Professionals Workshop

**'Using gardening and eco therapies to work with people with learning disabilities and long term health issues'**

Monday 7th September 2015

10 am till 3 pm

Cost £50 or £40 concessions.

## Vintage gardening club

Thursday mornings 10 to 1 pm

**Anyone over the age of 55 is welcome; tea, gardening, chats and lunch. What better way to spend a morning!**

Please pop in and chat to Paula or Antoinette if you want to join us.

## Open Squares and Gardens Weekend 13th and 14th June 2015

### Opening times

Saturday 10 am till 5 pm

Sunday 11 am till 4 pm

We will be serving our yummy cakes and cups of rosy tea in fine bone china and our lovely hand-raised plants will be available for sale.

Come and join us.

(<http://www.opensquares.org/preview/index.html>)

## Plants for sale

Monday to Friday

9 am to 5pm

## 'Growing Out'

**Project evaluation** is available through the support of Hackney Giving

**Bulbs** coming into flower:

Perennials & bedding plants including Iris, Daffodils & Muscari

Our work, in partnership with Mildmay UK, in providing horticultural and eco therapy for people who are living with HIV and H.A.N.D (HIV Associated Neuro-cognitive Disorder) was externally evaluated by Inukshuk consultancy <http://www.inukshukconsultancy.com/>

## St Mary's Secret Bees:

We still have honey for hayfever sufferers.

Come & get whilst stocks last

It does prove that the sessions do make them feel better in many ways – have a read here:

<http://www.stmaryssecretgarden.org.uk/community/well-being-therapeutic-services/>

# Spring news

## Qualification glory!

St Mary's Secret Garden has had an excellent start to 2015 with presentations to newly qualified gardeners that have been on training programmes with us.

At the end of January we nipped off to Hackney Wick where last year we delivered City & Guilds Skills for Working Life qualifications at the Trowbridge Centre thanks to support from the London Legacy Development Agency and Hackney Council. 7 learners gained their qualifications and were proudly joined by their family members for a lovely afternoon. Most of these learners had never achieved a qualification before and 2 of the learners have joined our staff team for a short while to help maintain the gardens at the centre.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015 we were joined at the garden by our recently qualified New Leaf trainees and their families and friends to be presented with their awards and certificates. Many of these learners have gone on to study further gardening qualifications and join other local volunteering opportunities.

We congratulate everyone on their success and wish them well for the future.



## Something happening at Bryant Court

Anyone who follows us on Twitter: @stmarysgarden will know we have been getting dirty and sweaty across at Bryant Court. After a year of engagement activities with the residents by the charity Charushila ([www.charushila.org](http://www.charushila.org)), Paula, Paul, the New Leaf trainees and volunteers from the garden all rolled up their sleeves and installed a number of raised beds for the resident's allotments. A community planting day will be held there on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2015 where there will be a wide variety of fruit, vegetable and herb to plant.



It was hard work but useful skills were learnt and there was a great feeling of team work throughout the three days there. Thanks to everyone and can't wait to see them planted up for the benefit of the residents of Bryant Court.

# Coming soon

## Fit2Grow project



Whilst doing a bit of research last year, we were shocked to find 80% of people with learning disabilities in supported accommodation do not eat a healthy diet and only 10% have the recommended levels of physical exercise.

We applied for funding to try and do something to change this Hackney (at least!). This application was successful!

We will be working with people with learning disabilities who are at risk of ill health through poor diet and reduced levels of physical activity – a sort of gardening boot camp with delicious, healthy food and some nutritional advice! A food growing and simple recipe book will be created by the participants and we hope this will become a best seller as the book could be easily used by others, such as parents with children too.

Please contact the garden if you are interested in this project.

## And lastly ...

We will also be saying 'Bon chance' and 'Thank You' to, Ian Jackson, our Finance Officer of 7 years, who is already in Jamaica but is going on to take his financial expertise to New York. We sent him packing with a set of gardening tools! We are interviewing for a replacement over the next few weeks.

'Hello' goes to Julie, a new administration volunteer who is attempting to bring 'order to chaos' in our office. We certainly wish her well there (she'll need it). We hope she enjoys her new role with us.

After 7 years with us we said 'Au revior' to our lovely Catherine Birkett. She is now inspiring and growing food with children in South London. We know she will be great in her new job and we are sure all who have been inspired by her will wish her all the best and thank her. We will be seeing her again especially during the summer months.

## A big 'Thank you' to Corelogic

(<http://www.corelogic.co.uk/>) who sponsored some of our therapeutic and wellbeing work last year. 8 individuals with disabilities and dementia benefitted from their support over the year. Without them they would have been at home; socially isolated.