

TOWN CENTRE COMMUNITY FRUIT GARDEN –Newsletter 1

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY I heard on the radio a commentary about vandalism; it is on the increase. Nothing new there we have experienced it with a tree being snapped in Little Dockray and Roland's tree in Stricklandgate went missing after Saturday night revelries..How our hearts sink at the news.

The chap on the radio went on to say vandals do not understand the value of the thing they are destroying. Perhaps we have to hold onto this thought in our minds; the development of fruit gardens in and around our town hopefully will spark a new way of looking at how we live our lives together in Penrith. Perhaps we will be helping to develop a new sense of what we value as a Community. We have taken a step in that direction, of that I am sure.

THANK YOU everyone who has given time and support to the creation of the first Community Town Centre Fruit Garden in Stricklandgate. It was a tremendous achievement over 50 people have contributed so far and over 100 lavenders have been planted by the community in support of the garden. Yes it has been a rush and yes again perhaps involving more people earlier would have been preferable, but planting time is upon us (and to be honest meetings are not everyone's favourite) and there will be more areas to plant up.

I am reminded of the little local lad, who was quietly walking past with his Mum on his way to Grannies for tea. He took the trowel, dug a hole, looked at the Lavender in his hand as if handling a plant for the first time. The amazement on his face as he poored water from a small can and watched it disappear into the soil around the plant.. a moment that if nothing else will live with me forever...he refused to wash his hands until he had shown Granny the mud on them. He counted the position of his bush from the end of the row so that he would be able to find it on his way to school each day, he was 4 year old. Perhaps he can make Granny a Lavender bag later in the year.

UPDATE....

- 1.St Catherines School came over on Friday and planted the rest of the Lavender bushes, Helen and Irene arrived to help (two local residents wondered past and offered to water). Later in the year, the school would like to be involved with the cutting, drying and making of Lavender bags, to be given to people who live in the area around the garden.
2. Next, aware that the garden will probably look 'thin' this year, I have approached Brunswick Road School to ask if pupils would like to grow short Sunflower seeds and plant amongst the bushes.
3. The Guides are being approached to see if they are interested in designing and building a heather and sandstone rockery on the corner facing the town.
4. Nasturtiums planted after the tulips would bring a flash of colour and are edible. Mavis who lives further up the road has offered to plant in pots and we will need someone to help transplant as Mavis is wheelchair bound.

Sunday (1st April) 10.00 bring a coffee, meet the neighbours and have a chat about the garden. All Welcome!

How about a burger and bun BBQ lunch on May Day for folks in the area?

LOOKING AFTER WHAT WE HAVE CREATED -YOUR THOUGHTS PLEASE

Initially, I did not know whether a fruit garden idea would have any support. It was not until I saw the number of Lavender bushes that had been going in, spoken to loads of people as they walked past and saw volunteers (18) clearing and planting the rest up on Sunday that I thought it was a 'goer'.

So how is it to be cared for? It would be great if people in the Watson Terrace, Stricklandgate, Duke Street area had a special relationship with this garden. Perhaps with others coming in as requested.

It is now a community fruit garden, for all to enjoy.

There will be months when things are quiet followed by weed and plant activity Saturday night 'high spirits' will continue I am sure.

SOME OPTIONS:

1. To ask for volunteers to keep an eye on and look after a section, this they might like to do in their own time. Say...

- Lavender -
- Fruit Bushes -
- Herbs -
- Rhubarb -
- Pear tree -
- Apple tree -
- Cherry tree -
- Flower border -
- Spaces in between- weeds -

2. Someone else suggested a regular monthly gathering. Time/ day of week? A Sunday, following the Saturday 'high spirits' might be good say 10.00 bring coffee.

3. Finding a volunteer to look after the site and call a work team together as required. Easy to say...do we know/ have a volunteer? We could have an email system and or telephone call up when a bigger work party required.

4. Other suggestions:

Please could you give this some thought on how you would like to be involved, ask others and get back to me. **Many thanks.**

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See you on Sunday`at 10.00