

Rye Community Food and Wildlife Garden

Newsletter No 9: Q2 - 2016

Dear Community Garden Supporter,

This comes just in time to wish you a Happy Easter and hope that the Bank Holiday weather in Rye is not too wet or cold!

The first three events of our 2016 programme have been really successful.

The apple trees received their first pruning on **16th January** in what turned out to be a mild spell of weather before the recent cold 'snap' which has cut short any growth spurt! The original Italian alder trees, planted a good few years ago, were also subjected to the pruning loppers and now all look much smarter!



HugelDay, on **20th February**, saw a good turn-out of Friends so that we were able to create not one but two raised beds – fondly christened Herr & Frau Hugel. All the build materials came from the Garden so the beds are fully environmentally 'green'. However, on the day, the soil conditions were still pretty wet so the beds await their final top dressing of good soil when conditions allow.

Katharine has been speaking to the Primary School re. getting the children involved in the Garden's development. The Hugel beds will make perfect growing sites for 'scrambler' crops ie. courgettes and colourful squashes/gourds, so the children will be encouraged to get started on sowing seeds in pots in the classroom ready to plant out when the weather has warmed up in May. Their squashes and gourds should then be ready for harvesting in time for Halloween and the creation of imaginative lanterns.

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The following images show the step-by-step progression of the Hugel Day's work:



The beginnings of Hugel Bed 1 with old, rotten logs forming the bottom layer....



Smaller branches being laid down ...



A layer of wood chippings and soil going in to create the 'mound' profile....



A layer of 'twiggy' sticks which now await the final top-dressing of good soil.

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Nigel has continued his clearance work on the wooded glade: all of the rampant brambles were stripped away and the boundary fencing cleared of dead vegetation in preparation for our **Tree Day on March 12th** when a grand bonfire was lit to dispose of the huge heap – ably managed by Ian and James. One group of Friends – Kyriacos, Nigel, Dominic, Katharine - made a start on the new Love Lane boundary, planting out 5 cornelian cherry (aka *cornus mas*). In addition, a whitebeam was planted in amongst the willows.



The bonfire making short work of the bramble heap



New screening trees being planted along the Love Lane fencing

A second group (Kyriacos, John & Susan) planted the 12 trees (6 each of paper bark birch & silver birch) to create the Central Circle (hard to photograph now but just wait until 2017!!) whilst a third group (Stephen, Sammy & Pip) set about planting a line of 10 alder trees to create Alder Avenue along the Garden side of the drainage ditch, at the eastern end.



Birch saplings defining the Central Circle



Stephen & Sammy with a newly planted alder

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WORK SESSIONS & ACTION LIST

Between 10 – 2pm on **listed days**

Despite all the industry of 12th March, we didn't succeed in planting all 70 trees! Of those that didn't get planted, the bare-rooted varieties will need to be planted as soon as possible so Nigel, Dominic and Katharine will be working away on getting these in before their roots dry out:

5 cherry plum

3 guelder rose

1 spindlebush

1 small-leaved lime

However, there are also a group of trees which have their roots protected by some soil:

30 hedging saplings (6 each of hawthorn, holly, dog rose, hazel, dogwood)

The saltcote pippin (finally)

A donation of 5 trees by Mike from his own wild wood (thank you, Mike!)

A fastigated yew and a corkscrew willow; both donated by Nigel

We hope to complete the planting of these on **Saturday, April 23rd** – this also happens to be **World Earth Day** and, of course, St George's Day!

In addition, ESCC contractors have supplied us with another load of wood-chippings which we will use to create a **path**, on the inside of the new hedge, from the Entrance ramp to the sheds. This will entail stripping away the grass, lining the path with black plastic sheeting and laying the wood-chip down.

Pip hopes to make a start on this on **Saturday April 2nd** and complete it on **Saturday April 11th** so that the path is in place for the 23rd April session – making access to the Garden a lot easier underfoot!

[In case you're wondering, the lifted sods will be used to re-grass the area where the wood-chippings have been for the last 12 months green to our core!]

By the 23rd, it should also be possible to **finish off the two Hugel beds** with a layer of top soil. Since this has to be carted from the other end of the field, it's another very good reason to create a more robust path!

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2016 DEVELOPMENTS

We are making steady, if somewhat slow, progress on the planned infrastructure projects (as listed in N8):

We have now accepted the quotation from Richard Hare at Keepers Coppicing for the wooden **Gazebo** which, if all goes to plan, should be erected during the **week of April 11th - some help may be required so, if we need to call on extra hands, could you indicate your availability that week.**

Our stock of garden furniture to sit beneath the canopy is also growing with a donation of a sturdy wooden table and 4 wooden armchairs from Stuart & Linda Harland.

Richard also has a lot of experience in making **compost toilets** from sustainable wood sources. Since the 1st February meeting with stakeholders went well with the plan to install a compost toilet meeting no opposition, we will be speaking to Richard about our requirement for a fully accessible compost toilet. This should prove to be more affordable than any commercially-sourced structure (such as the toilet in the Bohemia Walled Garden) but we are mindful that the installation should be self-sustaining ie. without the need for any additional waste disposal liability.

On the **bee-hive** proposal, we have received some valuable input from an Iden-based apiarist, Morris Metcalf, who has provided us with a lengthy list of criteria that govern where a hive could/should be positioned demanding creatures, bees! Given this, and the fact that our energies are focused on the other two projects (above), we will not be making any firm decisions on how to progress the bee-hive this year. In any case, Nigel's glade needs time to settle down to provide a suitable screening habitat.

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For further information:

Either, e-mail to ryegarden@hotmail.com

Or, write to **Rye Community Garden c/o 14 Love Lane Rye TN31 7NE**

Or, you can go to:

Either, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/rye.communitygarden> to 'like' us

Or, <http://transitionrye.org.uk> and click on Activities

Hard hats/gloves/appropriate tools will be provided but please wear sturdy footwear because the ground is still very uneven; bringing a hot/cold drink to refresh yourself would also be sensible!