



## Down to Earth Stroud Spring 2012

What a start to the New Year!  
We've been developing exciting new projects and partnerships that will secure and determine our future.

### Fruit and Nut Tree Guardianship Scheme (FNTGS)

Last year we piloted this project with households that had surplus or unwanted fruit and nuts. We made dried fruit products including apples, pears, plums, fruit leathers, apple and black grape concentrate as well as some red wine vinegar! All products were taste trialled with householders and members of the public at events. The feedback was great and we've had orders placed for this year's harvest. Some retailers have contacted us about selling the products.

We're delighted to be able to announce that Cotswold Conservation Board



have just awarded us £13,000 towards the project for this year. Down to

Earth's task is secure additional funding for £10,000 to ensure the project has enough equipment and resources to keep going. Once this is achieved we envisage that the project will fund itself in years to come.

If you know anyone who has surplus fruit or nuts, please let us know or ask them to contact us.

### Selsley Community Garden



Our plot is one of six on a small parcel of land called the Allotment Gardens. None of the plots have been used for many years and they've become very overgrown. Our volunteers have spent time clearing the land, digging, drinking tea and putting the world to rights! It's at last taking shape and will be ready to use for growing towards the end of May.



We're currently looking for funding to take this project forwards, but if you know of anyone (or group) that would like to learn how to grow and

share the harvest, please get them to contact us.

We've had discussions with owners of the other plots on the site and it's possible that we'll also be able to bring them back into cultivation in the future.

### Training and Workshops

We'd like to develop the range of workshops and training courses that we have available. With The Guidepost Trust and Gloucestershire County Council Adult Education Department, we're co-ordinating a course for people with learning disabilities in early May. Participants will learn how to create a plot, sow seeds, transplant and care for food that they can then harvest and eat.

Towards the end of May we have a series of workshops that include: Successful seed sowing; raising root crops; herbs to eat and drink; composting and green manures; having salads all year round; companion planting; pests, diseases and organic controls; planning for food from your garden in Spring; edible flowers and so on. Contact us for more information.



## Garden Share and Community Allotments



Stroud District Council contacted us to discuss co-ordinating a 'garden share scheme' for their council tenants, many of whom have large gardens. It will provide additional space for other tenants to grow their own. For tenants with communal gardens we can install a community allotment with some support if needed. These schemes are being trialled for six months initially, but can be extended if there's sufficient interest.

## Community Composting for Local Food Projects

Down to Earth has applied to become a 'training hub' for a new project run by the Community Composting Network (CCN). Funded by Local Food (Big Lottery), the aim of the project is to help local groups and communities make and use their own high quality compost to grow their own food. CCN aims to create a training and support network with 12 – 15 training hubs across England. Their trainers will be trained to deliver an accredited training course to local food growers, so they too can start community composting. They want to improve the composting skills of growers and show that it's not hard to produce great quality compost

at a fraction of the cost, with the crops reaping the benefits.

We will be notified of the outcome of our application in May.



## Spring Gardening Event

In partnership with Transition Stroud and Glos. Coppice Group, we held our first event on April 15<sup>th</sup> in Victory Park.



A lot of raised beds were ordered, plants taken

and members of the public showed great interest in our activities. Many thanks to the other organisations taking part and those that came along on the day.

We've started planning for next year already!

## AGM 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012 6.30pm

An annual event to celebrate our achievements and to say thank you to all our volunteers, members and associates. This year we're combining it with a garden party at our plot in Selsley. If you'd like to join us, please let us know.

And finally . . .

## Sustainable Local Food Action Plan

Through discussions with Transition Stroud about climate change, peak oil, peak phosphates and food security issues in general, a new group has been formed to look at sustainable local food in the Stroud district. This group includes farmers and local food groups as well as strategic partners involved in food production, policy making and procurement.

The overall aim of this group is to increase access to and availability of local food for local people, making our community stronger and more resilient to the effects of climate change and world events. This is a very exciting development for all those interested in local food. If you would like to be kept up-to-date on developments, send us an email.



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