

KING HENRY'S WALK GARDEN newsletter

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Welcome... to the twelfth edition of the King Henry's Walk Garden Newsletter

Results of the 2012 London in Bloom awards, announced on 18 September, showed that King Henry's Walk Garden is still held in very high esteem. Although we came second in the community garden category, pipped to the post this year by the Thrive Herb Garden in Battersea Park, the judges said that KHWG 'continues to amaze' and described the community involvement as 'impressive'.

We are tremendously proud of the way in which all the garden members contribute to this success.

A community garden is different from an allotment plot, and we ask our members to give much more than just the time needed to tend their plants. When you turn up for a weekend rota duty so that we can maintain the public opening hours that are stipulated in our lease, mop down the floors to keep the building clean, or find yourself encouraging visitors to 'Roll up!' for a go on the coconut shy or hoopla, you can give yourself a pat on the back for being a vital part of a project that is so much admired and respected.



WILDLIFE OBSERVATIONS



In July the garden took part in the RSPB's house sparrow survey. This once-common bird is declining in the UK for reasons which researchers don't yet understand. Happily we were able to report regular sightings of 6-8 birds, flitting amongst the plots and sometimes congregating noisily in the hedge.

Our wild flower garden, beneath the shady hedge near the hut, produced a tall and colourful midsummer display of nettle-leaved bellflower and common knapweed. Nearby some foxgloves came into bloom. They had self-seeded in one of the container plots.



Musicians from the Guildhall School of Music entertain visitors at our Summer Fete

Summer saw visitors flock to the garden...

...for several events: Our Summer Fete was very popular again this year, especially the attractions for children. Our annual Mildmay Pensioners tea party brought smiles to the faces of local elderly residents as they got stuck into cream teas. Our open day as part of the National Gardens Scheme attracted visitors from nearby and from long distances, despite the rain. Open Garden Squares Weekend brought back familiar faces and many first-time visitors to the garden. These events allowed us to showcase KHWG looking its summer best after a good dose of both rain and sun, and so many visitors were delighted with what they found. And of course we held our own Jubilee lunch, watching the River Pageant on a specially erected big screen. In June alone we welcomed well over 600 visitors.

happy 5th birthday

King Henry's Walk Garden

Saturday 8th September dawned bright, sunny and hot to celebrate King Henry's Walk Garden's 5th birthday at our annual Flower and Produce Show. The garden welcomed over 400 people who played hoopla, ten green bottles, guessed the weight of the pumpkin, shied at coconuts, drank fresh apple juice which they pressed themselves, ate pizza from the newly created clay oven and generally had a great time whilst being entertained by the live steel band. At this event we also introduced unusual activities such as soap carving and stained glass crafts.

Some very large marrows, cucumbers and courgettes

won prizes while there was success for Alison Fell who won the People's Award. Louise Norton won best plot and Lee Wadey won best container, judged by our patron Joe Swift. A huge birthday cake, generously donated by Dalston bakers Humdingers, was cut and shared at 3.30pm to celebrate this special day for the garden.

Jenny Morgan, who organised the event alongside Rosey Lyall and Angi MacGuire, commented: "As I was leaving I was struck by what a marvellous garden we have and what joy and enrichment it brings to so many people's lives."



Clockwise from above: beautiful birthday cake made by garden member, Andrew Davidson; pressing apples; sun hats and even a parasol kept visitors cool on a baking hot day; the steel band hit the right note and refreshing homemade lemonade was very popular; visitors gather for lunch at the picnic tables; Louise Norton on her prize-winning vegetable plot; Leonie Johnson and her daughters were tireless in running 'Ten Green Bottles'



The Garden Classroom



WWW.THEGARDENCLASSROOM.ORG.UK

The Garden Classroom, KHWG's education partner, has had a very busy year with its expansion into Hackney at Clissold Park and involvement with discussions about learning outside the classroom opportunities using the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park as part of the legacy plans for the park in 2013 and beyond. TGC is excited to be part of these conversations.

In September TGC held its first celebration since its creation in 2008 for the projects we have delivered to date. It was a wonderful evening with the Deputy Mayor and TGC's patrons giving great speeches about TGC's pioneering work.

For autumn and winter 2012 TGC has expanded its choice of education workshops delivered at KHWG to schools in Islington and Hackney to include numeracy and art. If you think your child's school may be interested in receiving TGC's product list, please email islington@thegardenclassroom.org.uk.

For those of you who don't know, TGC has a 4m bell tent for hire for a nominal fee. We are keen to encourage and support families to spend



Mayor of Islington, Councillor Jilani Chowdhury, came to watch children learning at KHWG and enjoyed it so much he came back for a second look. Right: Pupils make candles from wax after a Bees Please Me! lesson.

time outdoors with their children and can recommend some local and further afield campsites suitable for short and long breaks. If you are interested in hiring the bell tent (we also have bunting!) please email info@thegardenclassroom.org.uk to find out more.

TGC has been working with teachers directly and delivered CPD training for local primary school teachers at KHWG last term and is also developing a programme for CPD delivery with the RHS.



Rohan Knox, TGC's Global Growers Project Manager is based at the office at KHWG, please do say hello if you want

to find out more about the project. Rohan is working with 16 primary schools over two years and Global Growers is funded by Local Food Lottery.



EVENTS UPDATE We're looking forward to the return of chef Rosie Sykes, from Fitzbillies Restaurant in Cambridge, on Saturday 17th November 1.30-3.30 having had very enthusiastic feedback from the participants in her July demonstration. Rosie is promising to share ideas for winter vegetables with some festive recipes too and as usual, there will be lots of tastings. KHWG members are offered this course at the concessionary rate of £10. Book on rsvp@khwgarden.org.uk



KHWG WELCOMES NEW PLOTHOLDERS

Nuran and daughter Nazli are very excited to have been allocated a plot after their names reached the top of the waiting list. Nazli lost no time in drawing a plan for the new plot which she says is to include flowers and vegetables, bordered by pebbles collected from a holiday in Turkey and a sunken bird trough.

KHWG champions sustainability

Imaginative use of recycled and sustainable materials has continued to be an important theme at KHWG in 2012 and has enhanced the garden for both members and visitors.



Visitors to the garden (Christine, Vadim and baby Vigo) relax on the bench of ash and willow constructed for our woodland earlier in the year by a group of garden members led by the bench's designer Gary March. The wood was sourced from tree falls in local parks and cemeteries. The group was taught how to make the bench from start to finish - stripping the wood through to the final sanding.



Louise France (plot 22) sits amongst her first crop of vegetables. Louise is a plumber and has made raised beds for her plot from recycled scaffolding boards joined together with flattened copper tubing, stripped from old heating systems.



This year's triumph has been the clay pizza oven installed beside the greenhouse. It produced 75 delicious fresh pizzas at the Autumn show! Site manager Andy Parkinson (above) managed the construction project over several weeks,

assisted by a rota of garden members whose first task (far left) was to "puddle" hard clay in buckets of water to soften it - afterwards we felt as though we had given our feet a spa treatment. Inside the frame of fire bricks (for which there was unfortunately no eco-friendly solution) is a base of green oak and local rubble. The dome-shaped oven is made from clay and straw, whilst the logs used for fuel are supplied by a local tree surgeon.



LEE WADEY: CONTAINER PLOT 75

"I applied to become a plot holder after a garden member had taken me along to the KHWG wine club and I saw what a beautiful place the garden is. I now have a container next to the meeting room. As I'm a keen cook I wanted to grow vegetables to enjoy at home so you can imagine my distress when after spending considerable time digging and planting a variety of crops I returned a couple of days later to find it trashed by the local wildlife. The container now has the nickname 'Colditz' due to its protective cage which has worked wonders. Not only has it kept out the four legged pests but I arrived one morning to find a snail stuck on the wire. Its body was inside munching away on some rocket but its shell was

too big to get through the cage onto the plot. Job done!

I also enjoy volunteering at the garden. I have recently taken over looking after the lawn areas and after cutting them it is lovely to sit on a bench with a cuppa and enjoy the quietness and beauty of the garden. 'Keep off the grass' signs may be appearing shortly!

I also helped Andy and some of the other members construct the clay oven. Not only was it good fun learning new skills but it was great to finally see the oven fired up and to cook some pizzas with toppings fresh from the garden.

Friends and family have remarked on what a wonderful place KHWG is: long may it continue!"

Lee's carrots (pictured) won 2nd prize in the root vegetable class at the recent Autumn Show



RECIPE

Parsnip crisps

As root vegetables mature in our plots, here is an idea for a pre-dinner snack which will show off your harvest and make them go further as well.

INGREDIENTS:

Parsnips; Olive or vegetable oil; Sea salt; Rosemary



Pre-heat the oven (preferably a fan oven) to 180°C, 350°F, Gas Mark 4
Wash the parsnips and with a vegetable peeler; shave the vegetables right down to the core. Place in a nest onto a baking sheet, salt them and place in the oven. After five minutes they will have begun to dry out. At this point add a couple of teaspoons of oil onto the tray and toss so each strand absorbs a tiny amount of oil. Put them back into the oven for another 5 minutes or until slightly coloured and crispy. Season with crushed rosemary and sea salt.

A heartfelt poem, written by a plot holder

The Aubergine Thief

If only they hadn't looked so lovely:
sleek like greyhounds
and black as Jurassic tears

They outshone passion-flower
and marguerite; courgettes
couldn't hold a candle to them

If only they'd been pock-marked
by slugs, succumbed to mildew
or some catastrophic blight

Half a year's love and labour
vanished overnight -
plucked neatly by a fox
with light fingers

or muscular squirrel,
or maybe as a reprimand from heaven,
a rap across the knuckles
to remind me that perfection
is the province, not of men,
but of the quarrelsome gods.
who brook no rival

Five upstart aubergines.

If only they'd hidden their light
under a bushel -
that insolent midnight gleam

Alison Fell

VOLUNTEER WORK SESSIONS

If you haven't come along to one of our weekend volunteer sessions before, why not give it a go? Saturday morning dates are on our website. There are always lots of jobs to do around the garden, and we keep ourselves going with tea and home-made cake.



Top: Alison mows the lawn

Centre: Ben helps to clear blanket weed from the pond

Bottom: Louise keeps the lawn edges neatly trimmed;

BEE UPDATE

Our beekeeper, Ian Bailey, reports that one of our bee colonies had to be merged with another as it had struggled since the cold and wet spring weather. It is now doing much better. The bees have swarmed a few times during the summer but the swarms were successfully rehived and are building their strength again in time to get through the winter successfully.

Many garden members select a few plants for their plots which are especially attractive to bees and despite the unfriendly weather this year it has been a joy to watch our honey bees gathering nectar from a variety of flowering plants around the garden. Blue flowers are a favourite of bees and if you would like information about the other types of flowering plants which will attract bees to your plot throughout the year just email: info@khwgarden.org.uk



Finally – a call to anyone who would like to contribute to the newsletter. Maybe you have a gardening tip or recipe you would like to share with us? Email khwg@khwgarden.org.uk or post suggestions through the letterbox. Thank you.