



# Newsletter

## September 2016: Showtime!



# THE 2016 EDINBURGH ALLOTMENT SHOW

Saturday 3rd September  
Free Admission

Register your entries - 9am to Noon

Open to public - 2 to 4pm

City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, Nicolson Square

For full details including Entry Form go to -

[www.fedaga.org.uk/annual-show](http://www.fedaga.org.uk/annual-show)

At last the wait is over. Show us what you've got. Details [here](#). And don't worry that your produce may not be world class. This is primarily for fun and a chance to meet other allotment holders. We hope you can participate - or at the very least, turn up to see what it's all about. There will be trophies, prizes and rosettes. In addition to the exhibits there will be stalls from Edinburgh Garden Partners and Remin (Rock Dust), amongst others.

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# Allotment stories that share skills and experience



*Rosina Weightman*

*Jenny MacKenzie writes:* If there was ever an allotment site in Edinburgh that has already been there, and done that, it would have to be Saughton Mains (SM), west of the city centre.

With a staggering 186 full plots, and some of those halved in two, this site – the biggest in Edinburgh, and, our research suggests, in the whole of Scotland – is a mine of information for any hungry plot holder.

If you have a gardening or governance challenge, perhaps an infuriating pest problem (animal, vegetable ... or even human) you can be fairly sure that someone at Saughton Mains has already faced it and found a solution of sorts.

There are about 200 people working the precious land that is wedged between Saughton Prison and a local cemetery, and between them they create a pool of skills and experience. We will dip into that pool now and then in the coming months to profile some of these interesting plot holders. There's sure to be at least one tip in every story that can be helpful to you. Here we profile two. First is Rosina Weightman, SM committee Chair.

AS a former community psychiatric nurse, Rosina, now retired, clearly knows a thing or two about the relevance of gardening to mental health. She practises those tips she took from her work, and previous gardening experience, about the value of setting aside green downtime in a busy life.



*Mary Simpson*

She also brings her skills in getting people to work together well to her recent appointment as the SM committee Chair.



“It’s a very big site and that can bring its own challenges,” Rosina says. “But I like working with the other committee members to promote good governance, as far as we can, and to put plot holders in touch with each other. I’ve set up a Facebook page that is helpful with this.

“It’s wonderful to visit this environment whenever possible. I love the small pond that my daughter created for me, the greenhouse I inherited from a previous tenant, and the ripening aubergines and tomatoes that are doing so well there. It’s such a pleasure to see the more than ten varieties of bees buzzing about the astilbes, foxgloves and catnip. Oh, while you’re here, would you like some courgettes for your tea?”

Site secretary and former academic Mary Simpson brings her thorough research skills to planning her plot, creating a chart to make sure that she rotates the crops appropriately. Being so well organised seems to pay off. “I’m able to keep a local community centre near my home well supplied with vegetables for their popular ‘Allotment soup’” says Mary proudly.

She also produces the SM newsletter twice a year and the six sides of A4 are packed with practical information. The last Spring newsletter carried up to date information about the Community Empowerment Bill and Part 9, which relates specifically to allotments.

The newsletter also sets aside a page for Frequently Asked Questions about the Workings of the Site. “We try to provide plot holders on this large site with as much information as we can,” says Mary.

“Communication contributes so well to good governance and plot holders working well together. The Facebook page helps this process too.” If you would like to contact Saughton Mains, email Mary [here](#).

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## Social Participation and Wellbeing Survey



There is a commonly held view that those engaging in meaningful activities beyond the age of 60 tend to remain alert into their 80s and 90s. To what extent does social and mental activity contribute to healthy ageing?

The University of Stirling requests your participation in an online survey exploring the effect of social participation on wellbeing and quality of life. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete and there are two £100 Amazon vouchers available as prizes for respondents. If you contribute to the survey, we will ensure your anonymity and confidentiality is maintained throughout all phases of the research process. All ages and nationalities are welcome to take part in this survey which can be accessed [here](#) until 5 September.

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## Can you spare some time?

Ferrylee Care Home on North Junction Street in Leith are installing a polytunnel to enable residents there to grow their own vegetables. Gardening helps provide a focus for older people and growing fresh produce for use in the home provides a great amount of self-esteem to all involved. Would you like to volunteer to help them get started and then carry on visiting to keep an eye on things? You can spend as long or as little as you feel fit, but two to four hours a week would really make a difference.

If you are at all interested please email Stuart MacKenzie [here](#). He's been involved with a similar project and can give lots of details and even more reasons why it's good to volunteer.

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## Growing for a good cause

The Edinburgh Evening News recently ran a feature on Midmar allotment holder Gilbert Clark highlighting his contribution to Christian Aid by selling excess produce from his allotment. Gilbert, now in his 90s and still an active member of the FEDAGA Management Committee, was instrumental in the revival of FEDAGA in the 1970s and '80s when developers were really eating up old established allotment sites. His own site at Liberton Brae was destroyed but Gilbert put his shoulder to the wheel and ensured that the interests of allotment holders were not bulldozed aside.

Gilbert is an unsung hero and even now heavily involved in many aspects of the community. We all owe him a debt of gratitude for the work he has put in to promote allotments over many, many years. You can read the Evening News article [here](#).

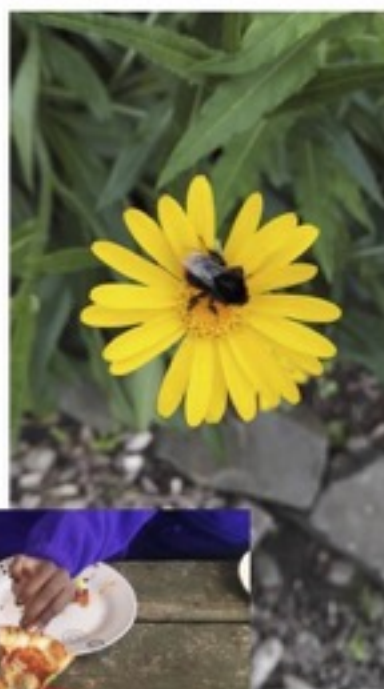


## Taste and Tours

Its fun and games at Bridgend Growing Communities on **Sunday 4 September** between **12:00 and 16:00**.

Live music from Fred's drum group, garden games, children's activities and pizza for lunch.

Please visit us at Bridgend Community Allotments 41 Old Dalkeith Road. EH16 4TE .



# Opening up gardening for wheelchair users



Gardening is a wonderful pastime to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities.

As well as physical and mental fitness, gardening improves social bonding, helping to bring people out of isolation, encouraging the mixing of people of all abilities and all generations and fighting the segregation often faced by people with disabilities.

Five years ago a group of French architects and artists got together with disabled gardeners to create the TERRAform wheelchair accessible allotment and TERRAform is now available in the UK.

The gardens have been created especially for wheelchair users or those for find standing up difficult. The special ergonomic shape allows gardeners to grow produce in full soil while facing straight on to their work. Gardener can comfortably reach the middle and edges of the grow box without having to move. Over 100 TERRAform gardens are being used in family gardens, retirement homes, care homes, schools and hospitals



Boxes can be linked together or kept separate depending on intended use and the layout of the site. The unique cutaway casing which gives ideal wheelchair access is highly durable polyethylene and is 100% recycled and 100% recyclable. The wooden sides are preservative-treated European Douglas Fir. They can be assembled in minutes without specialist tools.

For further details click [here](#).

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**...and finally, did you know that...**



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