



EARTHWORKS

NEWSLETTER JULY 2010
www.earthworksstalbans.co.uk



ST. ALBANS ABBEY MISSION GIVING



On the lovely hot and sunny afternoon of Open Garden Sunday when all of Earthworks were busy entertaining visitors and working hard to raise funds on site. It was my pleasure to go to St. Albans Abbey where in peaceful, calm and cool surroundings I enjoyed a refreshing cup of tea and a piece of delicious cake. Chatting with many other charity representatives all of whom were presented with cheques for varying amounts of money. Our cheque for £500 was given to me by the Dean of St. Albans. So all in all a good day for us all at Earthworks.

Lynn Moore, Volunteer

THE EARTHWORKS ANNUAL FAIR

is to be held on **Sunday 5th September 2010 11.00am to 4.00pm** at our site in Hixberry Lane, St. Albans AL4 0TZ. There will be activities for everyone including—fete games, folk music, demonstrations, pond dipping a grand raffle. Various stall holders will be offering food and refreshments. We have also invited other community and charitable groups to hold information stalls. It's popular and fun day and we look forward to seeing you there.



FRIENDS OF EARTHWORKS

A very warm welcome and heartfelt thanks to those people who have become "Friends of Earthworks" over the past few months. To our longstanding "Friends", thank you very much for your continuing support.

For those who would like to know a little bit more about the "Friends" scheme, it is aimed at people who have an ongoing interest in Earthworks, St. Albans and wish to make a financial contribution (as little as £10.00 per year) to help us continue our work.

"Friends" receive: this quarterly newsletter, an invitation to the annual Friends and Volunteers summer BBQ, an invitation to our AGM and a small promotional gift (coming soon!).

If you know anyone who might wish to become a "Friend" please ask them to contact the Earthworks office— earthworks@earthworksstalbans.co.uk or 01727 847311.

Earthworks St. Albans People of all abilities learning and working together

NEWS ON NESTING BIRDS FROM PAUL O, A SITE USER.

We had great tits nesting in our wind turbine but have now fledged. In our new bird boxes, a pair of great tits have nested near the shade tunnel. Also, today I saw a male greenfinch and some long tailed tits in our copse. We get to see a lot of birds here at Earthworks notably song thrushes which declined in the 1980s and 1990s but are now making a comeback and doing very well around Earthworks and Highfield Park. We have also seen house martins and a swallow.

Other birds doing well at Earthworks include goldfinches blackcaps and I have seen whitethroats



ELISABETH DAY TWO BY PAUL O. This took place on Friday 14th May 2010. We had a nice garden party and it was warm and sunny. Elisabeth's daughter, Mary Lusby and her brother in law came for the day. I pointed out different birds including the great tits that were nesting in the wind turbine. A buzzard appeared and also two red kites flew over us. We also heard song thrushes and a jay.

After lunch, I took everyone on a nature walk around the site. I showed everyone the different areas that birds prefer. I asked some questions later to check everyone had been listening! I made a nice summer fruit punch for the afternoon to refresh us. I used apples, oranges, strawberries, raspberries and orange juice.

The great tits and blue tits have now fledged.

It was a successful and nice afternoon and brought people together.

PRODUCE FOR SALE

Please don't forget that we sell fruit and vegetables from our site in Hixberry Lane, St. Albans (AL4 0TZ).

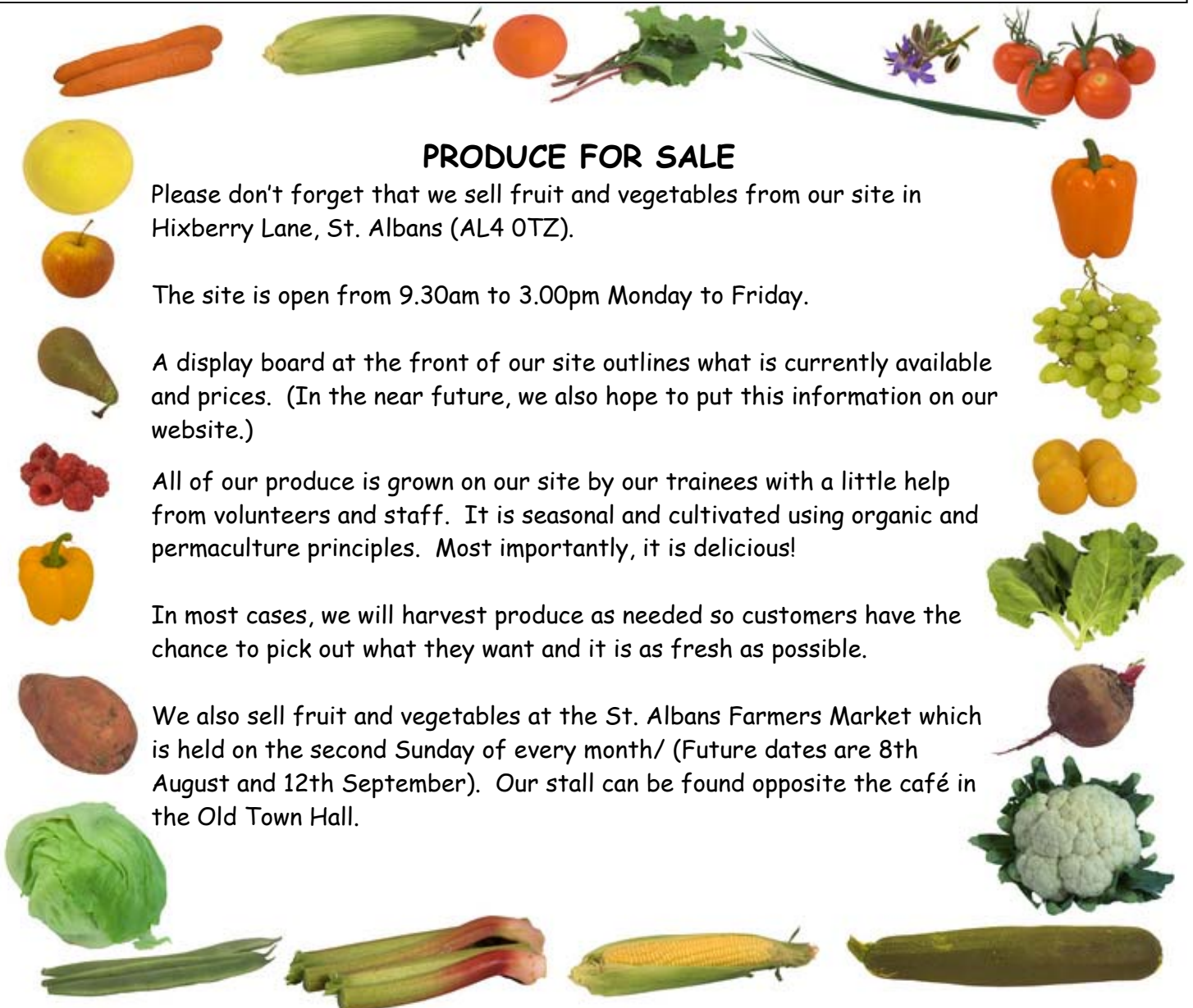
The site is open from 9.30am to 3.00pm Monday to Friday.

A display board at the front of our site outlines what is currently available and prices. (In the near future, we also hope to put this information on our website.)

All of our produce is grown on our site by our trainees with a little help from volunteers and staff. It is seasonal and cultivated using organic and permaculture principles. Most importantly, it is delicious!

In most cases, we will harvest produce as needed so customers have the chance to pick out what they want and it is as fresh as possible.

We also sell fruit and vegetables at the St. Albans Farmers Market which is held on the second Sunday of every month/ (Future dates are 8th August and 12th September). Our stall can be found opposite the café in the Old Town Hall.



PROJECTS ON SITE

Improving access around the site

We are indebted to the Green Team from Groundwork, Hertfordshire for coming to site and extending the width of one of our existing paths close to the site hut. The Team spent a week on site digging, pouring concrete and levelling the path and completed the project to a very professional standard. It is now much easier for the path to be used by wheelchair users and those with mobility problems and for site users to push wheelbarrows along the path.

New toilets

Our existing toilet block is now in a bad state of repair, the roof is failing, some windows are broken and the inside is rather dark and difficult to keep clean.

We have now received a grant of £13,000 from the Wolfson Foundation to help us pay for the installation of new composting toilets. Over the past two years we have also been fundraising with this purpose in mind and have raised several thousand pounds ourselves.

Consequently, we are now in a position to move ahead with the works. Our preferred supplier is visiting site on the 13th July to work through logistical and construction constraints. It is vital that we re-use the existing location which may mean that the "off-the-peg" system has to be changed.

Once designs, operational detail and timescales have been agreed we will seek the necessary statutory permissions. New toilets should be in place by the end of Spring 2011 if not sooner.

Woodworks@Earthworks

This is a project to clear and level our existing log chopping area and create a waterproof, partially enclosed shed for log sawing and traditional wood turning so that trainees can create natural, hand-crafted products and we can run workshops that will be open to the wider community.

We have removed a number of the ramshackle sheds erected some time ago and we have cleared the site. The area will soon be levelled and we will start erecting our small-scale, replacement wooden sheds over the next few months.

In keeping with our environmentally friendly ethos, we will be using recycled, reclaimed and second hand materials as far as possible.



Gardening tips for August:

- > The first week of August is really the last opportunity to get in colchicums, autumn-flowering crocuses and spring-flowering cyclamen.
- > Plant Madonna lilies (this is the exception as most lilies are planted in November!) - do not bury too deeply; 2.5cm soil above is sufficient.
- > Keep wisteria under control by pinching back unwanted growth.
- > Dead head flower heads and seed pods on herbaceous border plants and annuals—this will encourage the plants to keep flowering into the autumn.
- > Once lavender has finished flowering, clip the bushes back to prevent them getting bare branches of dead wood at the base.
- > To ensure that light reaches the lower trusses of tomatoes and helps them to ripen remove some of the nearby leaves. Don't go too mad or the swelling of the fruits could be checked!
- > Towards the end of the month test the ripeness of apples by lifting them carefully. If the fruit is ready to be picked it will come away as soon as this light pressure is exerted.
- > Gather French and runner beans regularly while they are still young so they do not become tough and stringy.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Office Volunteers

Earthworks has a fantastic team of dedicated, hard working site volunteers but we also need some help in the office. We are looking at ways to boost our local profiles so that people and businesses in the St. Albans area learn more about us. We hope that they will be become more involved by; visiting our events, providing practical help and advice, fundraising and sponsoring projects. Volunteers could be involved in:

- Organising fundraising campaigns.
- Contacting local businesses about sponsorship and donations.
- Asking local voluntary and philanthropic organisations for help with fundraising events.
- Helping the Fundraising and Publicity Officer to devise and write advertisements, press releases and web articles.
- Helping to design and produce posters and fliers for local events.

Garden Support Volunteers

Garden Support Volunteers help our trainees with horticultural, ecological and craft activities on site. Support volunteers must be friendly, encouraging and patient. They must be happy to work outside in all weathers. Although gardening experience is not essential it is very useful.

Conservation Volunteers

We have a 3 acre site which contains wildlife ponds, a wildflower meadow, an orchard containing local heritage fruit and a woodland. We are committed to organic gardening, permaculture and environmental sustainability.

We are looking for keen professional or amateur naturalists/ecologists/conservationists who could help trainees do any of the following—undertaking biodiversity surveys, put together habitat management plans, organise field trips and workshops for the local community and complete tour boards and leaflets for the site. This is a new initiative that we are keen to get off the ground.

"Occasional" Volunteers

We are always on the look out for people who are happy to help out at events on an ad hoc basis. Occasional volunteers could be asked to help run stalls at our Open Garden and Annual Fair and/or external events and to rattle collection tins at local venues.

If you or anyone you know may be interested in volunteering with Earthworks, please do get in touch with the Director, Teresa Gore on **01727 847311** or teresa@earthworksstalbans.co.uk



What else have we been up to?

Over the past few months we have been increasing Earthworks' profile throughout St Albans. On Sunday 13th June 2010 we had a display stand at St Albans Half Marathon in Verulam Park. A number of local people enquired about the services that we provide and we managed to sell some bottles of apple juice to thirsty runners!

The following week we attended the Pilgrimage Day celebrations at St Albans Cathedral and Abbey. Braving the wind in the Abbey orchard, we sold vegetable and ornamental plants and distributed literature about Earthworks.

Only a day later we were out again, this time at the Larks in the Parks event held at Fleetville Community Centre on Sunday 20th June. This was a hugely fun and successful event. We sold lots of sweet peas to young people who did not want their Mums to feel left out on Father's Day! We also sold a number of vegetable and flowering plants grown on site (and donated by some generous benefactors). It was great to exchange gardening tips with similarly green - fingered folks and a bit of a challenge to answer questions about the best places to locate certain plants in the garden!

On Sunday 4th July, we were back in town to participate in the St Albans Festival of Life. We ran an interactive stall where people of all ages could sow their own seeds and grow cress, decorate a butterfly mask, compile a collage using objects found in parks and gardens and collect scavenger hunt sheets for use at home or in local woodland and parks.

Many thanks to the following people for inviting us to these events: Carlene Sandiford (Leisure Connection), Julia Low (St Albans Abbey), Cathy Budd (Fleetville Community Centre) and Sarah Gibney (St Albans District Council).

Summer Recipes using Earthworks Produce

TAGLIATELLE WITH WATERCRESS AND BROAD BEAN PESTO

Serves 4 people. Please note that this recipe contains nuts.)

500g Fresh or dried tagliatelle

Pesto

200g Fresh Earthworks broad beans

75g Watercress leaves (retain a few for garnish)

Half tbsp Pine nuts

1 Garlic clove, crushed

1 tbsp Parmesan cheese, grated

50ml Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Blanch the fresh beans in boiling water for 1 minute.
 2. Refresh in cold water, drain, dry and peel off the skins.
 3. Set a quarter of the broad beans aside and throw the remainder in a food processor with the other pesto ingredients **except** the oil and blitz until everything is very finely chopped **OR** rough chop the broad beans into small pieces by hand and whizz everything bar the oil together in a bowl using old fashioned muscle power and elbow grease.
 4. If you use the food processor, slowly add the oil with the motor running until you get a thick, creamy texture. If you use muscle power, add the oil slowly in small amounts, mixing after each pour, until you get a thick, creamy texture.
 5. Season the pesto according to personal taste.
 6. Cook the pasta according to the instructions, remove and drain.
 7. Return to the pan, add the remaining broad beans and season with salt and pepper.
 8. Add the pesto and toss well together.
- Garnish with the remaining watercress and serve sprinkled with grated cheese.

Other ideas for broad beans:

- Cook in boiling (salted) water for 1-2 minutes then drain. Crisp up some chorizo/pancetta/plain old fashioned bacon bits in a pan and then throw in the broad beans for minute or two before serving. Goods as a side dish or light lunch with some crusty bread.
- Cook and skin the beans, mash in a bowl with a little lemon juice, a little freshly chopped mint and drizzle of olive oil. Mix. Spread some cream cheese over toasted bread and spread the broad bean pate over the top.
- Turn it into wine a la the "Good Life" so I'm told-best seek professional advice! We cannot vouch for the taste or the potency!

Freezing broad beans:

1. Shell the beans.
2. Blanch for 1 - 2 minutes depending on size.
3. Drain.
4. Lay beans over baking tray to freeze
5. When frozen, bag up.
6. Beans take 5-6 minutes to cook from frozen.

BOOK NOW FOR A FREE PLACE IN AUGUST 2010 ON THE SUMMER COUNTRYSDE SKILLS PROJECT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN AUGUST 2010

During the summer holiday Earthworks provides an outdoor work experience scheme for young adults with learning difficulties. This helps to bridge the summer gap between your studies, enable you to learn new skills and to meet new people.

If you are aged **16-25** and are interested in working outdoors and learning new skills in horticulture, gardening and conservation, please contact the Earthworks office on **01727 847311** We currently have places available throughout August. Apply now to avoid disappointment.

Earthworks St. Albans would like to thank the following generous benefactors for recent donations or for contributing items/help for our fundraising events.

Donations

Mid Herts & Caledonian Society
Mr. & Mrs G. Horsnell
Mr. J. Walsh
Ms. H. Hillman & Ms. E. Heller

Square Table
St. Albans Cathedral
St. Albans Circle
St. Albans Footpath Society

Items/help for the Open Garden and Annual Fair

Ayletts Nursery, St. Albans
Burston Garden Centre
Courtyard Café, St. Albans
McMullen & Sons Ltd, Hertford

Mr. & Mrs R. Massey
Notcutts Nursery, Smallford
Weston Park Farms, Hitchin
Willows Farm Village, London Colney

Calendar of other events for Summer to Autumn 2010

Earthworks, St. Albans will have a stall at the following external events this summer

Saturday **24th July**—Highfield Park Fete, Highfield Park, Highfield Park Drive.

Sunday **8th August**—St. Albans Farmers Market

Sunday **12th September**—St. Albans Farmers Market

Please do come and support us at one or more of these events. We really would love to see you.

Earthworks Garden Contract Services.

The Earthworks Garden Contract team is back in business! Since the spring we have been out in the community doing garden maintenance and clearance works in local homes, allotments and schools.

Please take a look at the article (below) written by some of the trainees who go out on garden contracts work.

Our team of trainees and staff are available to undertake a number of small-scale garden projects for a very competitive fee. We are happy to provide a quote for the following types of work:

- > Mowing
- > Strimming
- > General garden/allotment clearance
- > Periodic garden maintenance
- > Construction of raised planters and bird tables

If you would like the Earthworks team to tackle your garden or allotment, please contact us using the details provided below. A Project Co-ordinator will arrange a mutually convenient date and time to assess the job and will provide you with a "no obligation" quote. If this is acceptable, we will agree a date for the works to take place.

Phil Maitland (Project Co-ordinator) 07981 052247

Steve Pike (Project Co-ordinator) 07722 145701

Contract Work: What do the trainees think?



Dave B "I like contracts because I learn lots of new things and I work in a team. We all get on well together."



Contracts are good because it's good to try different things. When we all work together it makes the job easier.



Rob O "I like contracts because it's good to try different things. When we all work together it makes the job easier."



I like to meet nice, interesting people and do a good job on their gardens.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US:

Tel. 01727 847311

Office: West Lodge, Hill End Lane, St. Albans AL4 0RA Site: Hixberry Lane, St. Albans AL4 0TZ

E.mail: earthworks@earthworksstalbans.co.uk Web site: www.earthworksstalbans.co.uk

Staff: Teresa Gore (Director) Sarah Massey (Horticulture Co-ordinator)

Steve Pike (Contracts Co-ordinator) Phil Maitland (Contracts Co-ordinator)

David Crisp (Student Placement) Alexandra McCann (Publicity & Fundraising Co-ordinator)

Fiona Gulliver (Administrator)

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: David Ball Nadine Brown Bill Connor Jo Dickenson (chair)

Ray Gibbins Alistair Holland (Treasurer) David James Lynette Warren Roy Warren