

Newsletter Spring 2016

Welcome to our Spring Edition of the Martineau Gardens' Newsletter.

The last few months have seen volunteers turning up in all weathers for garden tasks ranging from winter pruning, planting new fruit bushes, pot cleaning and compost turning, to landscape improvements.

Last issue, we reported that the crumbling caravan has gone; we've also relocated the compost container that was behind it. This has opened up a large area opposite the outdoor kitchen. The Garden Team have been working hard, removing debris, digging up roots, levelling the land and laying hard core and slabs creating a marvellous location for a new equipment and tools shed.

You can see photographs of Garden Volunteers at work overleaf. Meanwhile, have you seen our new bird hide yet? Our thanks to supporters and Friends who made donations towards this. Located within the SLINC designated area of the Gardens, its secluded location means you can enjoy watching a variety of birds. See our bird species list via this web link:

bit.ly/1UoHzlv

Spring is in the air and we're returning to growing. Seeds have been sown, new fruit bushes and trees heeled in—we've even cut the lawn. Please do come and join us at our Spring event (Sun 8 May), when we celebrate gardening and wildlife and enjoy the Gardens in all its glory.

Caroline Hutton, Director



Bluebells in the woodland at Martineau Gardens. Photo credit: Brian Perry

Diary Dates

Events & Courses Highlights

Sun 8 May, **Spring Event**, 11am—3pm, Friends go free

* Sat 7 & 21 May, **Bee Keeping Courses**, 10am

* Tues 10 May, **Forage & Cook Course**, with Loaf, 6pm

Sat 25 June, **Storytelling Festival**, 11am-7pm, with Trad Arts Team

Sat 9 July, **Summer Garden Party**, 4pm—8pm

* Sat 23 July, **The Herb Patch Course**, 10am—3pm

Fri 5 Aug, **As You Like It**, with Folksy Theatre

Sat 10 Aug, **The Smartest Giant in Town**, with Folksy Theatre

* *Pre-booking essential.*

Information and ticket links via:

www.martineau-gardens.org.uk/events

Open: Mon to Sat 10am - 4pm, except bank holidays. Entry is free except for special events.

Events at Martineau Gardens



Every year Martineau Gardens hosts a season of events, an opportunity for you to enjoy a different side to the Gardens. The Big Dig Food Growing Event (*above, left*) included food growing workshops with Miranda Kingston. Dig out your picnic rug for the Spring Event (*above, centre*), with live music, incredible home baked food and wildlife related activities. Summer is welcomed in

with our Summer Garden Party, a very special afternoon and evening, which includes a charity auction in support of Martineau Gardens. We're delighted that Folksy Theatre is returning with two exhilarating outdoor performances: 'As You Like It' (*above, right*) and 'The Smartest Giant in Town'. Why not gather friends and family together at one of our events—see our Diary Dates Box (*right*) for more details and how to book tickets.

What is Martineau Gardens?

Our Therapeutic Community Garden is looked after by volunteers, many of whom have

mental health issues or learning disabilities. Hundreds of school children visit the Garden to learn about science and the environment. Every year Birmingham people (now in their

thousands), visit the Gardens to enjoy its peace and tranquillity. We host events and courses and sell plants and produce.

Garden Improvements



Winter is the best time to plant new fruit bushes— (pictured left) Miranda and volunteers heeling in gooseberry and currant bushes.



Welcome warmth on a chilly February day, (pictured left) Stewart working with volunteers on clearing away debris to make space for the new shed.

The arrival of a Doddin tree



"It was my mother's [wish](#) that I plant a 'Doddin Tree' for her after she had died. 'Doddin' is a rare, small tree, from Redditch, the apples are the size of a elongated golf ball and very sweet. Apparently you can eat everything yes, including the core.

The new tree is planted

We thought Martineau Gardens would be a good central point to visit and plant the tree. Our mother Nellie, who worked with people with learning difficulties, was into the ethos of therapeutic horticulture.

The three of us sisters (with the help of Martineau Gardens' staff) planted the tree in the orchard in early December 2015. Shafts of winter sun cut through the bare branches as we ate cake, toasted the tree and Nellie with homemade mead. We read a poem. So come, visit the tree and hopefully soon, eat some sweet apples!"

Michelle Bint, Susan and Karen

A Starr returns to the Gardens



Caroline explaining pollination in daffodils in 'Signs of Spring Tour', (left), and revealing the seeds forming at the top of the stalk (right).

Caroline Starr has joined Juliette Green on our Education team. Every year, hundreds of Birmingham School children visit Martineau Gardens. Caroline tours school groups around the Garden, showing the children how the natural world is working around them, whilst Juliette continues to lead the teaching sessions. Caroline's tours include visiting the extensive natural habitats within the gardens to see where wildlife lives, like our woodland, pond and grassland. The children learn how food comes from the vegetable plots, orchard and herb garden, tasting home grown produce on the way; by observing the beehives they appreciate the importance of bees in pollinating our crops. All visits include the chance to play (and eat packed lunches) around the shipwreck play area. We're delighted that Caroline has joined us, not only is she an experienced teaching assistant, but she is very familiar with the Gardens since she was one of the staff members who worked here, during the 1990s when the premises were an environmental education centre. She says: "Our tours at Martineau Gardens are interactive, the children are encouraged to use all five senses whilst they visit the Gardens, their enthusiasm for learning outdoors, even on a wet day, is a wonderful thing to witness". To book a school visit to Martineau Gardens, please call 0121 440 7430. Details also on our [website](#).

New Friends welcomed Reading this and not a Friend? Isn't it time you joined?! Join online www.martineau-gardens.org.uk/about-us/become-a-friend/ or come to reception and sign-up when you next visit.

Connect with us ...



How to contact us

Martineau Gardens, 27 Priory Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B5 7UG

T: 0121 440 7430 E: info@martineau-gardens.org.uk

www.martineau-gardens.org.uk

Opening Hours

For visiting: Mon - Sat, 10am - 4pm

Volunteering: Mon - Thurs, 10am - 4pm

Volunteering for women: Fri, 10am - 4pm