

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

Spring is the time to enjoy the Gardens awakening after a harsh winter. Seasonal highlights include woodland wildflowers emerging, cherry, damson and plum blossom in the orchard and Magnolia stellata. Now is also the time to mulch your beds with *Care Compost* (made from Birmingham's green waste).

The start of the gardening year also finds us excited about the revised plans for the Green Oasis project. Both the new eco building and the renovations for the two existing buildings will be inspirational and educational in their use of materials. With these developments, we will secure a long term future for these special Gardens. Thank you for your continued support — it's good to see more and more people visiting the Gardens.

Caroline Hutton, Director



photocredit: J Fletcher

A breath of fresh air in early Spring



Forest School at the Gardens

Pictured here pupils from Meadows Primary school, with Forest School Instructor Hannah Moore and Specialist Teaching Assistant Jo Valdmanis

If you take a stroll through the deep dark wood, who knows what you might see? An owl in a tree top house or a snake in his logpile house? Julia Donaldson's children's book, *'The Gruffalo'* was the theme behind the Meadows Primary School and SLCN Resource Base Forest School visit to Martineau Gardens earlier this month. On a glorious winter's day, pupils aged five, six and seven spent the morning getting close to nature, in our outdoor classroom. The pupils who need a bit of extra help with speech and language, attend the Meadows Resource Base. Meadows Primary teacher, Amy Wallis, said: "Many children simply don't get opportunities like this to come to woodland and

connect with nature. Children with communication difficulties particularly benefit from the stimulus that Forest School learning provides". Forest School activities allow children to explore a natural habitat with an emphasis on developing confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences.



Reading this and not a Friend? Isn't it time you joined?! Become a Friend of Martineau Gardens at : www.martineau-gardens.org.uk / about –us / become –a-friend or sign-up when you next visit.

Diary Dates

Sat 16 March, Big Dig Seed Event, 1pm - 4pm. Free with Local Food Global Food (LFGF)

Sun 12 May, Spring Event. 11am-3pm, with LFGF

Sun 2 June, the Big Lunch, with LFGF

Sat 22 June, Storytelling Day, with Traditional Arts Team

Full details at www.martineau-gardens.org.uk



A honey bee finding the first flowers of the year, February



Photocredit J Hill-Daniel

Martineau Gardens is part of a growing network of community gardens — green spaces where people come together to grow plants. We are also one of the longest running community gardens in Birmingham. As a result, NHS Midlands and East commissioned us to report on how the community garden model improves public health and resilience. They were particularly interested in the impact of the Gardens and gardening on the mental health and well-being of the people of Birmingham. The result is a six minute film that gives you an insight into the good work that goes on here. There are interviews with volunteers, visitors and staff in different settings throughout the Gardens, including activities at our Apple Day event. You can view the film, on-line, on our website: www.martineau-gardens.org.uk/about-us/what-is-a-community-garden/

We would be delighted if you can share the link above as widely as possible.

Connect with us ...

We've just made our debut on TripAdvisor. We would be really grateful if you could write a review of the Gardens based on your visitor experience. We're keen to hear your feedback and it will help spread the word about the Gardens. Visit www.tripadvisor.co.uk/reviewit and select attraction. You can also share your experiences on facebook (Martineau Gardens), twitter (Martineau27), youtube (MartineauGardensBum) and TripAdvisor (Martineau Gardens) or keep up to date with our latest news by following us.



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Grow something new this year! Join us and Local Food Global Food (LFGF) for a free gardening event to inspire you to brush off the cobwebs on your seedbox. Or if you're new to gardening, come and talk to the experts for help and advice. Taking place at Martineau Gardens on Saturday 16 March from 1pm—4pm, there will be a seed swap, seed sowing workshops and family-friendly wild flowers' 'seed bombing' activities. There will be displays and advice on how to grow exotic crops like chillis, chickpeas and coriander and you will be able to sample a dish made with these tasty ingredients. Tea and cake will also be available. This is the first in a series of events in 2013 in collaboration with LFGF (see Diary Dates for more) and is also part of the Big Dig, the biggest ever community gardening day across the whole country. Through our partnership with LFGF, we will be able to reach more of Birmingham's diverse communities. You can find out more about the Big Dig and our event at www.martineau-gardens.org.uk/events/seed-event/

Making a Difference

The ESF Community Grant and support from Charitable Trusts enable us to offer opportunities five days a week at Martineau Gardens. Our Therapeutic Horticulture Programme includes people with mental health issues and learning disabilities.

These gardening volunteers acquire skills, knowledge, experience, physical fitness and confidence which can help them to get into further volunteering, training and employment. We are grateful to the ESF and our other funders for this support.



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