

Green Network supports community gardening in Edinburgh & Lothians



Locals in Edinburgh and the Lothians are being encouraged to grow their own plants, fruit and vegetables in allotments, orchards or gardens this year to celebrate The Big Dig Day on Saturday 16 March 2013.

Europe's largest greenspace initiative, the [Central Scotland Green Network](#) (CSGN), is supporting the drive to increase community gardening across Central Scotland.

[The Big Dig Day](#) provides the perfect opportunity for people across the country to volunteer in community gardens on their doorstep and to take advantage of the numerous benefits it can have on individual and community health and well-being.

Community gardening involves shared growing spaces and has a positive role to play in good physical and mental health by encouraging people to use and enjoy outdoor space. It can also lead to increased access to better nutrition in the face of rising supermarket prices and can improve community engagement by encouraging people to get together.

Committed to improving the health and quality of life of the people in Central Scotland, the CSGN has pledged to significantly increase the area of land used by communities for growing plants, fruit and vegetables.

A recent Scottish Government funding boost of £450,000 to the CSGN Development Fund is helping to support eight community growing projects between 2012 and 2015, creating significant societal benefits for surrounding communities.

Edinburgh Cyrenians was awarded £61,000 to develop new community gardens on NHS sites in the Lothians to build upon work already undertaken by the Cyrenians with the NHS at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and the Midlothian Community Hospital in Bonnyrigg which was supported in previous rounds of the CSGN Development Fund.

[The Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust](#) was also awarded £26,040 to expand its community growing development programme into East and Midlothian from Edinburgh City. The project provides support to local community groups to create, maintain and enhance community gardening sites.

Environment Minister Paul Wheelhouse said: “The Big Dig Day is a great opportunity for people throughout Scotland to get involved with their local community to get growing.

“The Scottish Government is committed to helping support communities that want to grow their own food which is why we’ve contributed £450,000 to the CSGN for food growing projects.”

Keith Geddes, Chair of the Central Scotland Green Network Partnership Board, said:- “The Big Dig Day provides an excellent platform to raise awareness of the range of health, economic and environmental benefits of community gardening for local communities in Edinburgh and the Lothians and wider society, which is central to the CSGN vision.”

The overarching CSGN vision is that by 2050, Central Scotland will be transformed into a place where the environment adds value to the economy and where people’s lives are enriched by its quality.

For further information about the CSGN or community growing opportunities, [please visit their website.](#)

The Edinburgh Reporter visited Duddingston Community Garden recently and made this video:-

Submitted by [CENTRAL SCOTLAND GREEN NETWORK](#)