

Green network urges Edinburgh locals to grow their own

✘ Edinburgh locals are being encouraged to grow their own plants, fruit and vegetables in allotments, orchards or gardens this year to celebrate World Kitchen Garden Day on Sunday 25 August 2013.

Europe's largest greenspace initiative, the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN), is supporting the drive to increase the appetite of Scottish communities for home-grown produce.

Now in its eleventh year, World Kitchen Garden Day provides the perfect opportunity for people across the globe to celebrate the many advantages of growing their own food. Kitchen gardening has a positive role to play in eating well, good health and fostering community spirit by encouraging people to get together.

Community growing, which takes kitchen gardening a step further and involves shared growing spaces, is central to the CSGN vision of creating an environment which supports healthy lifestyles and good mental and physical well-being.

Growing your own food can also positively impact on the local environment through a reduction in food mileage as participants reduce their fuel consumption and supermarkets face a reduced demand for products sourced from further afield.

Committed to improving the health and quality of life of Central Scotland's population, the CSGN is working to increase the area of land used by communities for growing plants, fruit and vegetables.

Keith Geddes, Chair of the Central Scotland Green Network Partnership Board, said: "World Kitchen Garden Day provides an

excellent platform to raise awareness of the range of health, economic and environmental benefits of community growing for local communities in Edinburgh and wider society.

“Community growing can lead to increased access to better nutrition in the face of rising supermarket prices; increased physical health through gardening; and improved community engagement at local and international levels around the universal experiences of gardening, cooking, and eating.”

Since 2010, the CSGN has supported 23 growing and orchard projects through its Development Fund, awarding just under one and a half million pounds to date and creating significant societal benefits for surrounding communities. This includes a Scottish Government funding boost of £450,000 to support community growing projects.

Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead said: “There are many positives from growing your own food, be it the pleasure of watching what you plant turn into the delicious ingredients that appear on your plate, or getting into the garden for some physical exercise and socialising with others. And as people become more interested in the journey of their food and the issue of food miles, the appeal of growing your own increases.

“The Scottish Government is committed to making it easier for communities to grow their own fruit and vegetables, and I hope World Kitchen Garden Day encourages them to look out the gardening gloves and tools, get back to nature and enjoy the benefits that home-grown produce brings.”

Earlier this summer, the Scottish Allotment and Garden Society (SAGS) launched an Allotment Site Design Guide with part funding provided by the Scottish Government Food and Drink Division, the CSGN and Scottish Natural Heritage, and the remainder of the funding coming from enthusiastic anonymous individuals.

The guide will assist local authorities and gardening groups

in designing and cultivating allotment sites and growing spaces, enabling them to make the best possible use of the land they have available for allotments through good, practical use and design.

Peter Wright M.B.E. from SAGS and co-author of the guide, said: "This is the first comprehensive guide covering all aspects of allotment site design in Scotland, perhaps the UK and even the world! It is an empowering tool to provide multiple solutions for new sites and to help all interested parties reach an amicable solution."

The CSGN is one of the 14 national developments set out in the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework. With a wide ranging remit, far beyond just a 'green initiative', it aims to improve the social, physical, cultural and environmental health and well-being of Central Scotland, as well as assisting the area to meet the challenge of climate change.

Stretching from Ayrshire, Inverclyde and Dunbartonshire in the west, to Fife and Lothians in the east, the CSGN encompasses 19 local authorities across 10,000 sq km and has the potential to benefit 3.5million people, equating to 70 per cent of Scotland's population.

For further information about the CSGN or community growing opportunities, please visit <http://www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org>.

Submitted by [CENTRAL SCOTLAND GREEN NETWORK](#)

The Edinburgh Reporter went to visit the Duddingston Community Garden earlier this year:-

