

Healing Green -Therapies in the Community Garden!

**Indian Head Massage, Reflexology and Reiki in
a lovely outdoor setting...**

**Lower Common Allotments, Victoria Park - weather permitting - by
donation**

One fine Saturday morning in July - amidst yet another sacred tea-break with fellow bidders - an idea for a new ground-breaking activity in the garden was discussed and met with enormous enthusiasm!

In the ensuing weeks during August and September I was thrilled and delighted to be able offer fellow BOGGERS complimentary therapies in our magical eden, on several Saturday mornings.

Folks received reflexology, massage and Reiki on my massage couch beneath whispering willow and sat in the scents of lavender and rosemary to receive Indian Head massage. I was also thrilled to introduce BOG to Nigel Williams, fellow therapist and a very passionate organico indeed. It feels great to be able to bring my love of complimentary therapies to share at the community garden, and to donate profits to BOG.

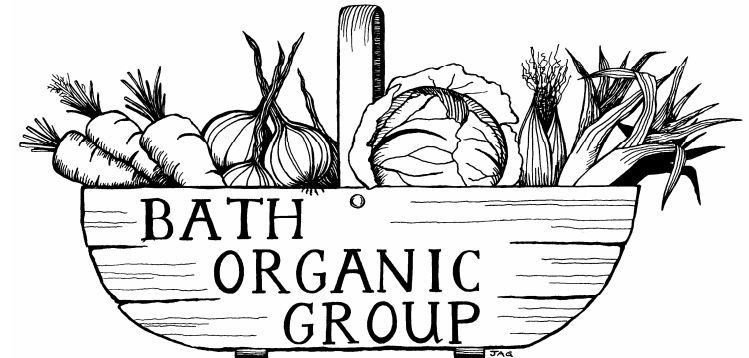
I am looking forward to being able to offer more sessions at the garden next summer. In the meantime, I would be delighted to offer BOG members therapies in the warmer confines of St Michael's Chiropractic Clinic, with a 20% discount and a donation towards Bath Organic Group for each treatment. Please email me on melaphil@hotmail.com if you would like more information or to book.

Massage, Reiki and Reflexology offer a great opportunity to simply relax and 'press the pause button' promoting harmony of mind, body and spirit...

Treatments may also help ease many conditions such as muscular pain, tension, headaches, asthma, chronic back pain, repetitive strain injury and other conditions such as arthritis. Therapies also help overall recovery from injury and illness, boosting immunity and balancing the systems of the body.

Thanks all

Mel Phillips MSc MTI IIST IHHT VTCT



BOG Newsletter March 2007

Affiliated to
Garden Organic (formerly HDRA),
Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry CV8 3LG
and

The Soil Association, Bristol House, 40-56 Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6BY

A word from the chair

Dear BOGgers

Welcome to the new growing year. By the time you get this splendid news letter, the first shoots of 2007 will be pushing through the seed compost. And, speaking of seedlings, one of the best ways we promote the organic message is through our market stall on the first Saturday of every month at Bath Farmers' Market in Green Park Station. At the stall we also sell surplus produce from the BOGarden and plants and produce grown by our members. BOG keeps 33% of your profit and passes the rest back to you. All we ask for this wonderful service is that you do a stint on the stall. Pauline heroically organizes this so contact her if you want more information.

A popular buy is organically-raised vegetable plants. And those plants raised by you personally, yes you, are the most popular of all. So, if you would be so kind as to plant a few more of whatever it is in some pots and nurture them until they are ready to plant out. Bring them down to BOG plot on Friday evening or the market on Saturday morning and we will sell them - as mentioned earlier you could earn yourself some cash or you could donate it to BOG. A fine result for all concerned - BOG would earn a little money, the great unwashed public would have a nice organic plant or two to cherish and you would have a warm glow knowing you had furthered the cause.

There has been an outbreak of petitions recently - airports, railways, weird car things, Bath bus stations and so on and so forth. The other day I asked a BOG member to help me take forward a cause I knew they were quite interested in. You could have knocked me over with a organic Peruvian mango when they replied that they didn't need to do anything else about this particular issue because they had already 'signed a petition'. Some people seem to think that by signing a petition the problem will be solved. Far from it. Petitions are just a tiny cog in the machine of action required to bring about some sort of change. Writing letters, going to meetings, attending

recreate a heat sink they put in place. Powered by a computer fan running off a car battery, itself recharged by a solar panel, the heat sink was designed to draw the heat that rises into the eaves of the greenhouse down into a trench below the greenhouse which contained some imploded glass. The glass would be warmed by the hot air throughout the day, and at night would be forced back up by now cold air being pumped through the system. The heat sink would therefore be a welcome addition in both winter and summer, levelling out the temperatures between night and day.

I was very excited to receive a prompt response to my questions from Dick Strawbridge, which was shortly followed by a totally unexpected phone call from the assistant producer of the show. After a brief chat explaining Steve and my plans, I was invited to take part in the series, which came both as a complete shock, but also as a complete delight as I would never have thought that our activities would be of any interest to anyone!

The new series, due to air this summer, will feature Dick and his son James, armed with all the knowledge from their journey to self-sufficiency in the first series, helping others out with their projects. Projects ranged from enormous eco-builds to erecting the largest possible domestic wind turbine, but they were also very keen to feature smaller projects, which for many would seem far more achievable. Hence their interest in our greenhouse build

Now several months on, we have had a fair few days filming, which have been great fun. With the producer and sound person in tow, we carried out a very many number of scavenges around skips, collecting the odd bit from the lovely Bath freecycleers, and even visiting the Wellow Trekking Centre to fill up on a load of fresh manure to use in a hot bedding experiment, only to discover how incredibly overpowering the ammonia smell which emanates from the manure can be! The greenhouse is now up, raised beds are in and planted up with all manner of greens and herbs and the heat sink is "doing its thing" although I have yet to fit the solar panel which will keep the battery charged up.

All in all, the journey I embarked on with my friend Steve months ago has been an absolute delight. What I will cherish the most (other than eating my own produce - it doesn't get better than that!) is the people I have met along the way. From freecycleers to the team from the BBC, and from the many friendly people in the self-sufficiency forums that are out there to the people down at BOG during my first visit, it really does restore your faith in humanity and put a smile back on your face.

Duncan Glendinning.

¹ Freecycle: www.bathfreecycle.org.uk

² Find out more about the Strawbridge Family and what they have achieved by visiting their website: www.itsnoteasybeinggreen.org

The first two workshops were both attended by 12 enthusiastic participants who applied magnifying glasses to the fine details of botanical identification, whipped up creams and ointments.

For details of **future workshops**, starting this spring:

- ◆ Info from Ruth
- ◆ Cost £5 payable in advance to secure your place.
- ◆ 12 people per workshop, members and non-members welcome
- ◆ All money goes to BOG

I'd like to thank everyone who has kindly welcomed me and supported my work in the garden. The physical help with gardening, enthusiastic response to the workshops, refreshment and fellowship of the tea breaks, are all very much appreciated. I look forward to sharing with you all the future fruits of the garden.

Ruth Mannion Daniels

Ruth is a consulting Medical Herbalist and a member of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists and The College of Practitioners of Phytotherapy

Gardening does so many things, to so many people.

I discovered the virtues of gardening only last summer when as a freelance web designer with very little work on I used to knock off early, go home and turn to a derelict garden to vent my frustrations and keep abreast of my anxiety levels. Little did I know that it would be the start of an adventure that would see me develop not only a love, but also a passion for gardening and in particular veg growing.

After a relatively late start (around July) last summer I enjoyed a successful debut, with several courgette plants and a particularly successful tomato plant to my name, and realised that with the good weather on its way out, my days of growing such delectable vegetables were numbered. This coincided with my discovering that a good friend from University, Steve, had also discovered the joys of vegetable growing, so we then set about thinking up a plan to maximize our growing season. At the time, I had also just found a wonderful organisation/concept called Freecycle¹ and so Steve and I set ourselves a challenge to try to build a greenhouse from nothing, using only re-used, recycled or donated materials.

After some encouraging scavenges, and our putting the word out amongst friends and family, we were incredibly lucky to be offered a 6"x8" greenhouse on the proviso that we would go dismantle and pick it up in Cheddar. I had also, at that time and after encouragement from Steve and my girlfriend Julia, contacted the Strawbridge family who were featured in a TV Series last year called "It's Not Easy Being Green"² as I was keen to

demonstrations and, most importantly, personally speaking to everyone you can think of are much more important and in the end much more effective. Jolly dangerous things, petitions.

So as the green shoots of spring push through the mulch of winter I would just like to remind you that the BOGarden is a splendid place and volunteers are welcome Saturday and Tuesday mornings to dig, weed, learn and just stand about drinking tea and eating cake. In fact without volunteers there is no BOGarden and that would be a great loss

pip pip

Peter Andrews

Temporary Acting Chair with the primroses in his hair framing his beautiful (enough of this nonsense - Ed)

Reminders

Don't forget to visit the **BOG website**—bathorganicgroup.org.uk

Broadlands Orchard Share—The quest to find up to 500 sponsors by the end of the year continues. If you are interested in sponsoring a tree—and helping yourself to wonderful apples it produces, or coming along to pruning days, contact Tim Baines, or email tim-jbaines@yahoo.co.uk

Thanks to Sue Kendall for the lovely illustrations you'll see scattered through this newsletter- and for meeting my outrageously short deadline! Ed

Notes from an Eco Daughter

For a child, growing up in an eco household can be like living in a minefield of potential embarrassment. Not only was my father accustomed to sporadically shouting 'get out of your cars and walk' at cowering drivers on the way to school, but there was the odd stray slug on a friend's plate at meal times and the tray of live compost worms discovered, much to my mother's horror, thriving happily beneath her bed, causing the entire house to swarm with fruit flies.

The embarrassments were bearable because their occurrence was tolerably infrequent. Daily despair at my family's rigidly wholesome diet however, was not. Reliably, my school packed lunches would resemble an allotment patch; two pieces of bread that appeared to have been clamped with some effort around a whole lettuce, with a token gesture piece of cheese floating somewhere in the middle.

Yet oddly enough, as much as I cursed the 'only seasonal vegetables rule' and the even more despised 'showers not baths rule' as a child, you'd be surprised how much of my father's eco ethos has stuck. In my first year of university food shopping was a particularly painful experience; I had no money yet I physically could not bring myself to buy the cheaper non-organic options. Every time I went to the supermarket an internal battle was waged and fought in my mind causing me to pick things up and put them back down in a manner that can only be described as schizophrenic.

I will never forget the bemused expression of a friend who committed the extreme folly of agreeing to shop with me one week. I spent fifteen angst-ridden minutes at the fish refrigerator alone, a packet of unnaturally pink but cheap salmon in one hand, a beautifully pale but expensive packet of organic salmon in the other. You will be pleased to learn the organic salmon won, my bank balance lost and my friend politely declined to shop with me again.

By the second year at university I was feeling something akin to demonic rage every time my housemate insisted on having all the electric heaters in the house switched to full even though he was only wearing a t-shirt. 'Turn those off and put a jumper on instead' I snapped on a daily basis. Naturally I never revealed to him that this exact same argument had been the cause of much unrest between my father and I in the winters of



The hedge had to be planted in the first winter - the hardest work in the garden. Fortunately the hedging plants were as tough as the weeds, and thrived. Beech (always hard to establish) had to be replanted. The hedge is to some of us our 'pride and joy' and almost the best part of the garden.

The garden will thrive as long as there are volunteers attracted, welcoming and keeping all ages of volunteers and visitors, friends and helpers. Some of us may have aged, but we all hope the garden itself will have a long future.

Bill Brown, co-founder of the Community Garden

Notes from the Physic Garden

It is a year now since I accidentally discovered BOG and received Bill's warm welcome and informative tour.

In discussions with Bill and Tim, it seemed that the physic garden could do with a medical herbalist again to look after the once neatly laid out quadrants of medicinal plants, and it occurred to me that this could also include raising awareness of the uses of these plants, and generating some funds for BOG through a series of herbal medicine workshops.

An interesting selection of herbs revealed themselves throughout the spring and summer. Some had proliferated to dominating up to 3 of the quadrants but were allowed to stay until harvested for materials for the workshops. Surplus leaves and petals were made into pot-pourri and sold.

The next task was to redefine the quadrants and path by pruning the box, removing dead wood from lavender, rosemary and rose, and edging the path and quadrants with useful amounts of commonly-needed aromatics, especially those for winter colds. We needed to eliminate less useful species such as tansy and Russian tarragon, to accommodate medical priorities such as angelica, and milk thistle (large specimens which will mature this summer) and enough marigolds to supply the workshops with marigold oil. The bay tree was pruned to a lollipop to create a semi-shaded under-planting area.

Our infant Community Garden (1990-1)

With the 17th birthday of the garden on 6th Jan 07, one tries to remember the very early years. It was a time of toil and trouble, although exciting as our first project.

We were offered a group of abandoned allotments. Our new 'garden' was covered with a mass of couch grass and bindweed. The motor mower had destroyed these perennial weeds' natural enemies: the trees. There was little shelter, and no seats, tables or comforts. The first building, now our 'domestic wooden shed, was only a future hope.

On our first working Saturday, we were standing on a sea of grass, mostly wild and tough, a mass of underground stems, complete with buds (mostly dormant and tiny). Any spade-work will simply cut up these rhizomes into pieces. Each bit will use its buds and form a new plant! The area was too big to spade dig, so we used motor-cultivators, even though this was even worse than digging.

We planned a huge square of land divided into 4 parts, with a cross design of paths. A soft-fruit area was marked out and a hedge planned along the public path.

Among a 'sea' of weeds, we tried to grow our first crops, but became aware of the poor nature of the soil, not fed since the war. Only hard work and the compost bins have produced the fairly fertile soil of today. We had no such bins, and no lush stuff to fill them!

The soft-fruit area was covered with black plastic, but only for the summer of 190. It really should have been left for 2 years, but there had to be what looked like a garden to attract and keep volunteers! So we planted blackcurrants and redcurrants. What made it worse was that the plastic was second-hand with holes and slit. The bindweed forced through it, forming huge bushes. The whole plantation was a nightmare to weed throughout its life, and only put right when dug up. We learnt a hard lesson by planting a raspberry row among perennial weeds. This was horror indeed. The solution was to dig it up and replace with vertical apple cordons. Our new raspberry canes have been planted in weed-free rows. Lesson learned.

my childhood, when you could actually see your own breath at the dinner table. 'Ah!' I hear you cry, a child's innocence confusing the steaming evening meal with the condensation of cold breath. Not so: the lentil soup, I regret to inform you, did not steam; at least not by the time I'd psyched myself up enough to tackle it.

By my final year at university I had become a real food lover, a true advocate of seasonal cooking and good wholesome organic meals. Nonetheless, you can imagine my horror when one cold winter evening I heard myself utter the terrible words: More lentil soup anybody?

Jessica Andrews

BOG Allotment To Be
Featured in 'Bath
Life'

In a forthcoming edition of the local magazine 'Bath Life' BOG should be getting a mention in an article about organic allotmenteeing - watch out for it.

Dan Smith

THANK YOU

... to all those who have contributed articles to this newsletter. Please keep them coming! Deadline for next newsletter **August 20th.**

Please email your contributions to
gill@hypnotherapy-bath.co.uk

Request

Does anyone have any left-over spray paint for containers? Any colour. Please ring
Sheila on

Centipedes

If a centipede a pint how much would a precipice? The old ones are always the best, but just as centipedes don't have a bladder that large, so there are lots of other facts about them that are confused.

For a start centipedes are not millipedes with fewer legs. The two are totally different species. Although they were all once classed as Myriapoda (many legged) centipedes now belong to the class Chilopoda and the millipedes are charmingly known as Diplopoda.

Secondly centipedes rarely have a hundred legs, and some millipedes have fewer legs than the average centipede. So thirdly a centipede with a wooden leg doesn't go 99 bonk.

But enough of the old jokes. The real question about centipedes and millipedes is: are they any good for the garden? And how do you distinguish them if the legs aren't the answer?

Telling them apart is pretty easy. Centipedes run and millipedes amble. That's a clue to their relative benefits too. The old gardening saying is: if it moves fast leave it, if it moves slowly kill it. Not one hundred per cent advice because that would see off worms along with the other slow movers, but the general idea is that fast beasts are the ones that catch things like slugs and others that graze on our plants.

And centipedes go fast because they are voracious hunters (and cannibals) and have to catch their prey. Millipedes are slow because they feed on damaged and decaying growth which can't get away.

So all millipedes are unwelcome, even if they are a cheap way of keeping the kids amused, and you do have to admire the way they manage to organise all those legs

Centipedes are mostly welcome, but not entirely. They feed on woodlice, harvestmen, leatherjackets, mites, springtails, slugs, and many insects. They also eat worms, spiders and beetles, both beneficial and otherwise. And one species eats roots. So not the best friend many gardeners believe, but on balance beneficial.



Centipede



MILLIPEDE

Their eyesight is very poor and they can run as fast in reverse as forward because the final pair of legs have sensitive hairs which act as feelers. At the front end the main jaws have two other pairs of jaws to hold food that is being eaten. Prey is paralysed by being punc-

tured by claws containing a venom strong enough, in the largest tropical species, to give a dangerous bite to a human. Centipedes have a strong anti-social streak, and are most likely to die in an encounter with one of their own. You will rarely find more than a single centipede under one stone.

But it is the legs that are the fascinating bit, and they can number up to about 200 or be as few as 30 depending on the species. Centipedes have one pair of legs on each body segment, whilst millipedes have two sets of legs on segments. And they don't trip over themselves because each leg is slightly longer than the one in front. The last pair, with the sensory hairs, is always slightly different from the rest and usually trails behind the body.

The British species are from 5 mm to about 70 mm in length and may be anything from pale yellow to deep brown, though a bright coppery colour seems most fashionable in this area. These are "geophilids" (ground lovers) and have at least 37 pairs of rather short legs. The larger brown centipedes you might find under a stone are lithobiids (stone dwellers). They have longer legs and mainly live on the surface, hunting at night.

And how much would a precipice? A sheer drop.

Geoff Andrews

Know your slugs

Brown slugs, the juicy fat looking ones with ridged backs, which also come in chestnut, orange, grey or cream, are garden 'goodies' - not the large black slugs so hated by gardeners. The brown slug prefers dung and rotting vegetation to living plants and is, therefore, beneficial to gardeners. They are especially good in compost heaps where they help to break down material down.

There are only really four destructive slugs (for gardeners). These are:

- ♦ the garden slug (blackish-bluish and small),
- ♦ netted slug (cream to light brown or dark grey, with a mosaic-like pattern on the keel or tail end)
- ♦ Budapest (greyish-brown to dark grey, with darker spots and a yellow or orange keel)
- ♦ Sowerby's slugs (greyish-brown, heavily speckled black, with an orange or yellowish keel).

The last two live under the soil, and are the ones responsible for holes in potatoes and other roots.

(with thanks to 'Grow your Own' magazine)