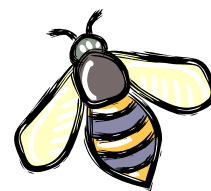


## Cyrenians Farm Newsletter

**Spring/ Summer 2011.**

(The pictures tell the story).



### **Growing Food.**

The spring weather has been a bit up and down this year, helping some crops along and hindering others. The orchard has fared especially well with our young plum trees and apple trees all setting a huge amount of fruit. This will be a very timely crop as orchards across the south of England have been struggling with drought and the resultant small crop will create a gap in the market for us.



This picture shows how heavily laden the plum trees are, nearly every branch of every tree is like this so we will finally begin to be able to reap the reward of our orchard investment. It is a body of work which has seen a huge amount of input from many, many people.



Another crop which has been doing well is the garlic. We decided to start growing this as one of the first field scale crops in our new vegetable plots. It's a very popular crop as typical dried garlic throughout the year but with so much in the ground we have finally been able to start selling it as 'wet' or 'green' garlic which is going down well in the offices, farmers market and shops which we sell to. We will harvest the bulk of the crop by the end of June once it has matured then we'll dry it in the small polytunnel. We'll be looking for a team to come to the farm to help plait the garlic into ropes and perhaps

even smoke some of it for sale as winter gifts. Perhaps you know of a team who would like to do this as a [team challenge](#)?

Strawberries are another crop which we are succeeding very well with at the moment. Demand last year was so good that we have decided to go field scale with strawberries too. We have started selling some now from the polytunnel but we have a large plot of them ready to go in a couple of weeks with the field scale crop coming in just before the raspberries are ready. Look out for our strawberry and rhubarb jam in the shops, from your farm champion or at the farmers market.



With the upscaling in productivity over the past couple of years (thanks mainly to a great team, some of whom I'll introduce later) we'll have a greater volume of crops and a greater diversity of crops than ever before so as well as the usual salads you can look forward to more leeks, kale, cauliflower, shallots, borlotti beans, purple mange tout, blackcurrants.....

Would you like to be a 'Farm Champion'?

A farm champion is someone in a busy office who has 30 minutes a week to help us organise sales. The idea is that we let you know every week through the seasons what we have for sale by sending an email. You circulate the email through your office, you take orders from your friends and colleagues, collect the cash and we deliver the goods to you to pass onto the rest of your team in exchange for the money. We think this is the simplest way to get the best food from the farm to you as fresh as possible. It means that at least one day a week you can leave work with some wonderful ingredients for supper without having to negotiate a busy supermarket. If you are interested in this simple approach give us a call at the farm (0131 333 5202) and we'll let you know when we are passing your office and when we could deliver. We have had great success with this in several offices in town including HBOS and Anderson Strathearn. It'd be wise to contact us soon for this, we are going to have a busy year this year so you want to get your name on the list before the rush.



## Growing Opportunities.



As usual the change of seasons has seen a change of personnel at the farm as a new team of young people come to help us out and learn a little about what makes a successful market garden grow. They are like vigorous young annual crops grown in

companionship with the hardy perennials of the day volunteer team. In this photo we have Alan and Stuart preparing a couple of beds for sowing beetroot. They have been a great asset to the farm and will be sorely missed when their placements are finished in July. After looking into a few possibilities Alan wants to start his own sandwich shop and Stuart has secured work with a building company working in West Lothian. The lads have told me that they weren't acting as scarecrows but were indeed sowing seeds.

Here we have Natalie and Simone, another great example of companion planting. They're in the propagating tunnel getting some salads sown into modules for the next round of the rotation. Natalie, like Alan and Stuart, is on the Future Jobs Fund and has been getting on great with us. We're missing a picture of Nicky from the FJF team but he was moving so fast with the strimmer I couldn't get near him. Simone has been coming to the farm as a day volunteer for over a year. With experience working at the Cowgate Centre and experience as a volunteer at the Forest Café she brings a lot of skills to the team and gets on well with everyone. We are currently in search of opportunities for our young people to continue their great progression and experience. If there are any opportunities within your organization for talented young people it might be worth getting in touch with our [Enterprise to Employment](#) team who are dedicated to marrying up our young trainees to forward thinking companies.



More 'Farm day Volunteers' are needed to help with administration, deliveries and general horticulture. Call the farm staff (0131 333 5202) to find out more about our excellent opportunities for day volunteers.

### **Growing Business.**

The team challenge activity at the farm continues to flourish this year with



a lot of interest from BSKyB, Lloyds banking group, RBS, PWC, JP Morgan and Wolfson Microelectronics. The superb interest and support from these companies is an integral part of the success of the farm and we always look forward to the 'buzz' of the team challenge days. Calum (a community resident) and Darragh (a community volunteer) recently joined me for a

volunteer awareness day at the BSKyB office in Dunfermline. It was a fun day and a great chance to show off to all of the staff there and let them know exactly what we get up to.

### **Any Other Business.**

When I was out taking the photographs for the rest of the newsletter I couldn't resist this one of Tiger-Lily our resident pest controller, moocher and entertainer. I think it fits the classic 'cat in a basket' category.



The management of the grassland at the farm has given some orchids a chance to thrive in the orchard. These will be guarded carefully over coming weeks and hopefully they'll get a chance to flower.

This will be my last newsletter from the Cyrenians Farm as I am moving on to manage another great Organic Market Garden in Fife. It's been a privilege to work here and we've taken the place on a great journey over the past six years with a lot of hard work and investment from hundreds of people. The Cyrenians Farm Enterprise should have a bright future in the hands of its new caretaker.

**Signing Out – Rob. 😊**

