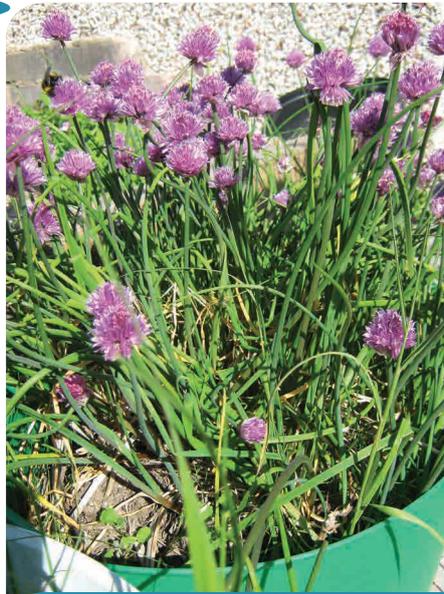




Healthy broad beans!



Growing chives in containers- making the most of the growing area available.

The project...

Garden Organic developed a pilot training programme for two schools in Flintshire to develop volunteer engagement and support for school organic growing projects.

Garden Organic visited schools to:

- Identify the current level of volunteer engagement, skills and knowledge and assess activities suitable for school volunteers.
- Determine each school's long term plan for volunteer involvement and help them design an action plan to achieve this.

Broughton Primary School.

Broughton Primary School felt they would really benefit from more volunteers to help with growing in school.

British Airways Engineering (BAE) staff had helped with some tasks in the past. Following this, the school wanted to develop growing knowledge, skills and support needed to maintain a growing space.

Key areas that were identified as needing support:

- Enthusing volunteers and staff;
- Seasonality and term-time planning;
- Composting and soil health;
- Biodiversity;
- Working and communicating with pupils (risk assessment, health and safety).

A workshop was designed to address the support required in these areas and was delivered to teachers in the school to generate enthusiasm and help the school to create and maintain a growing area.

Broughton held their workshop in February 2015 and this was attended not only by teachers, but also by pupils who are members of the Eco Committee who were obviously keen to get involved.

The Workshop

The Eco Committee designed posters and invitations and promoted the workshop on the school website and in newsletters. They sent invitations to local groups e.g. the local allotment society, BAE etc.

22 people attended, including 4 teachers and Oliver Morris from Organic Centre Wales. 2 children from the Eco Committee attended the morning session on composting. Children joined the group in the afternoon, pairing up with adult volunteers to carry out a variety of practical tasks outside.

The groups rotated around each activity – soil, planting wildflowers/biodiversity, seed sowing, composting, bed preparation. They then joined together for the final session reviewing the day and discussing qualities of a good volunteer. The Headteacher joined the workshop during the day.

The school...

Broughton Primary School was opened in 2011 as an amalgamation of Broughton Infants and Broughton Junior School. There are several community services such as the library that also use the site. There are 451 pupils age 3-11, including 61 who attend nursery.

The school has a very active Eco Committee and Forest school. The school is very lucky to have extensive grounds, consisting of many raised planting areas and some beds that have become overgrown due to capacity within the school and the ability to maintain them. There is also a newly planted orchard with Welsh varieties.



How pupils & teachers described an ideal volunteer...

ENTHUSIAST
PASSIONATE
POSITIVE
ATTITUDE



Vibrant thyme.

Delivered by:



Revealed skills

After the practical session, the children stayed in the groups they had worked with outside. They discussed what qualities might be needed in volunteers wanting to assist with growing in school with children and what support the school would need to offer in return. It gave them the chance to think about the importance of roles and expectations of volunteers, children and staff.

The Headteacher found it interesting to hear the feedback from each group. It really worked well having a mix of children and adults in each group, enabling different perspectives to come through.

Through the workshop, the school discovered local groups who could support them and strengthen the network around the school garden.

The volunteers were thrilled to have been asked to come along and to know that they could make a real difference. The staff were also impressed at the level of knowledge and skills of some volunteers and appreciated the need to harness this.

The group were able to start bonding and were able to reveal new skills and ideas. This is essential to starting a growing space which needs volunteer support to become integrated in to school life.

Successes

Following on from this workshop, the schools' outcomes were;

- More volunteers who are confident to engage with pupils and provide meaningful activities;
- the projects has a more sustainable structure;
- lots more children have access to growing;
- project outcomes will be available for discussion as part of work in wider Wales.

Garden Organic | www.gardenorganic.org.uk | Registered Charity No. 298104

Garden Organic workshops

Garden Organic deliver a range of training, courses and workshop sessions to schools and other community groups. At Broughton Primary School, the workshop which was delivered covered the following topics;

- ✕ Setting the scene; food growing in schools, gardening with children, getting the best out of the curriculum and linking with other programmes e.g. Eco Schools, Healthy Schools, Forest Schools.
- ✕ What is organic gardening?
- ✕ Site selection and assessment.
- ✕ Maintaining soil health; composting and compost monitors, getting to know your compost.
- ✕ Planning what to grow in school; seasonality, crop families, crop rotation, etc.
- ✕ Soil; texture/type, pH, fertility, temperature
- ✕ Biodiversity; friends and foes; wildflower meadow
- ✕ Weeding and preparing a bed, tools, mulches, seed sowing, herbs, planting now for an extended harvest.
- ✕ Maintaining the growing area; watering, netting, weeding.

Garden Organic courses can be found here;

www.gardenorganic.org.uk/courses

This programme was funded by:



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig; Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development; Europe Investing in Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Next steps?

Broughton Primary School plan to;

- ✕ Implement compost monitor training for year 5's and one volunteer is going to help them build new composting bays.
- ✕ Establish a volunteer tasks rota – around working with gardening club and specific tasks.
- ✕ Develop a cropping plan for the growing areas and link with making produce available via a regular stall.
- ✕ Continue to develop and maintain the growing areas with the volunteers.

The growing lead and the volunteers are going to have a planning meeting to develop growing further in school. Thanks to sharing and revealing skills, volunteers are now willingly coming forward to learn from the more experienced growers (mainly grandparents).

Staff also had lots of ideas of how they could then use their growing areas and further develop them to support learning across the curriculum and other programmes.

