

A photograph of three people working in a garden. In the foreground, a woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt and pink gloves, is planting a seedling. Behind her, an older woman with grey hair and glasses, wearing a red jacket, is also working. To the right, a man in a purple shirt is partially visible, also engaged in the activity. They are in a garden bed with wooden stakes and various plants. The background shows more greenery and a fence.

Throughout Britain people are getting involved in community projects, working together to create attractive and productive outdoor spaces. Continuing her feature in *The Garden* (October 2010, pp688-691), **Rae Spencer-Jones** describes three more inspirational projects

# Team Gardening ➡



## WALLED GARDEN SETTING FOR HONING SKILLS IN GARDENING AND CONSERVATION

### Royden Park, Wirral, Merseyside

Adults and children with mild learning difficulties are referred to Royden Park by Wirral Council social services. In a Victorian walled garden, they learn horticultural skills in association with the Welsh College of Horticulture and are involved in conservation, landscape design and recycling timber. This project promotes a strong work ethic with the aim of reintegrating clients into society through full or part-time employment. Clients are required to attend regularly and on time to prepare them for the realities of employment.

As well as existing for its clients, this project is having a far-reaching effect within the local community. Striving to break down barriers, the project regularly visits primary schools where clients are involved in teaching willow weaving to the children. Some volunteers have been so inspired by the work at Royden Park that they have committed to making horticultural therapy their vocation by enrolling on the two-year Diploma of Professional Development in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture run by gardening charity Thrive.

● For more information, contact Mark Humphreys on 0151 653 6680; [markhumphreys@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:markhumphreys@wirral.gov.uk)

Overleaf: Eco Art  
Projects –promoting  
sustainable living



Hard and soft landscaping is taught to and practised by clients at Royden Park, Wirral



## SUSTAINABLE LIVING IN URBAN AREAS

### Eco Art Projects, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

Established in 1992, this initiative was set up by Gerry Warren to encourage members of the community to live sustainably – specifically in urban areas where large populations can benefit. On a 2,000sq m (1/2 acre) council allotment, Gerry demonstrates to individuals and groups how to cultivate and harvest a range of crops, recycle green waste and manage irrigation effectively by collecting and filtering rainwater; the project even offers culinary advice after crops have been harvested.

Using a range of local resources, Gerry advocates 'complete sustainability today, tomorrow and always'. Eco Art Projects helps local education centres, offering plants, crops and pondwater both to primary and secondary schools.

A keen interest in sustainability is the only prerequisite for anyone wanting to get involved or indeed become a volunteer.

● **Gerry Warren of Eco Art Projects welcomes visitors at his allotment at weekends by appointment only.** For more information contact Gerry Warren: 07774 561481; [gerry.warren@ntlworld.com](mailto:gerry.warren@ntlworld.com)

Turn the page to  
read about Thrive  
– transforming the  
lives of the disabled



RHS / TIM SANDALL

Sustainable gardens can be attractive and productive asserts Gerry Warren (below)



RHS / TIM SANDALL





IMAGES: THRIVE

Staff (below) provide support and encourage clients to undertake practical gardening



## THRIVE, PRACTICAL GARDENING FOR ALL

Thrive has been changing the lives of the disabled through gardening since 1978. Since then, the charity, which is funded by a variety of trusts, grants and their own fundraising activities, has shown that gardening brings profound physical and psychological changes and transforms the skills, knowledge and the abilities of those who had little to look forward to before joining Thrive.

Two gardens form the backbone of the charity's horticultural therapy programme: Beech Hill near Reading and a public garden in Battersea Park, London, which was the first demonstration garden in the UK for people with disabilities. Both gardens offer programmes for rehabilitation, dementia and head injuries. There are also opportunities for clients to enrol on courses that lead to vocational qualifications.

With more than 30 years experience of horticultural therapy under its belt, Thrive also offers courses for budding horticultural therapists from one- or two-day programmes to the only full-time Diploma of Professional Development in Social and Therapeutic Horticulture, in partnership with Coventry University.

● For more information contact Alyson Chorley on 0118 988 5688 or visit [www.thrive.co.uk](http://www.thrive.co.uk)

Getting involved: RHS initiatives overleaf 

## GETTING INVOLVED

- The RHS co-ordinates two community gardening campaigns, Britain in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood. These support more than 2,000 neighbourhoods, villages, towns and cities and involve approximately 200,000 volunteers nationwide.
- The RHS Britain in Bloom campaign gives advice and support, recognition and reward for those making long-term improvements to their locality. Communities of all sizes take part, from residents improving their surroundings to local authorities tackling metropolitan areas.
- The RHS It's Your Neighbourhood scheme helps small, community-led groups to improve their local areas, with emphasis on community participation, environmental responsibility and gardening achievement.

**i** To apply for an information pack, which provides advice on how to get started and where to get funding for either Britain in Bloom or It's Your Neighbourhood projects contact RHS Britain in Bloom: tel **020 7821 3360** or email **britaininbloom@rhs.org.uk**



IMAGES BERT ALLAN

Britain in Bloom volunteers foster children's interests in plants

Volunteers work as a team on the grounds of Falkland Palace, Fife