



Ratho Primary School Garden Report September 2011

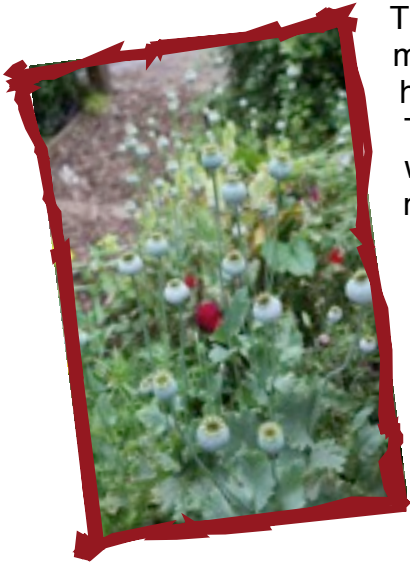


Ratho Primary School Garden Report

September 2011

Summary of School Garden Progress September 2010 - September 2011

The Garden has flourished over the past year with a lot of input from the children, the teachers and the parents.



The Garden Group, consisting of parents, members of the community and children, have continued to meet in the garden on a Tuesday evening from 6.30 - 8.00pm, weather and light permitting. This is very much a drop in group which welcomes new gardeners coming along and joining in when they can.



Over the past year, as well as general maintenance, weed control and planting, we have started to create a wild flower meadow, currently flourishing with poppies. We established a slabbed

composting area with a composting box as well as the large black composting bin. A wormery has been installed with the addition of 1,000 worms! The children love holding the wriggly worms and a few of them have even been named! It is hoped that apple cores and organic waste from snacks and school lunches can be added to the wormery to help feed the worms and produce compost for the garden.



The donation from a parent, towards a bench, has helped fund a curved bench in the willow arbour and the garden fund has been used towards creating a living bench, using different clematis plants climbing up a cane frame, which we hope will flower at different times of the year.

A big thank you must go to Pete Hill & Mike Humphries for sourcing the materials and designing and making the two benches and creating the composting area.



Summary of School Garden Progress September 2010 - September 2011

The Garden Group had a stall at the PTA Spring Fair in April. Once again we sold a wide variety of plants, vegetable, bedding & perennials. Garden Group parents worked with the Ratho Action Group to make grass heads and "Sunshine in a Box" a sunflower planting kit which the children could buy & take home, grow the sunflowers and then the plants could be planted in the school garden with the tallest plant winning a prize. 18 sunflowers were returned to the garden in June and planted by the Golden Time gardeners. Many of the sunflowers are now blooming and some are very tall, the race is on for a winner.

The Plant Stall took £360 giving us a clear profit of £270 which was donated to the PTA as we felt there was sufficient money in the Garden Fund for our needs.



The Ratho Cubs designed and made a wonderful bird table for the Garden as part of a Community Challenge badge. The bird table was installed by the cubs in April and is well used by the birds with the children making sure there is plenty of food in the feeders.



Garden Golden Time & Garden Gym

The children had the opportunity to choose indoor or outdoor gardening as part of Golden Time on a Friday morning from 11.30 - 12.00. The Primary one children also helped in the garden on Wednesday mornings

as part of their garden gym.

The children covered a wide range of topics and learnt many new skills. They learnt about crop rotation, how to chit potatoes, what a plant requires to grow healthily, how to look after the soil, how to sow seeds, they planted potatoes, onion sets, radish, lettuce, pumpkins, broccoli, runner beans, courgettes, and herbs. They learnt how to recognise common weeds & remove them, how to weave the willow on the arbour & the tunnel, how to plant bulbs, shrubs and bedding plants. They produced wonderful garden art from drawings on slate, to casting bird baths to creating hanging glass pebble sculptures to pressing leaves into clay to make fantastic patterned tiles. They produced butterfly feeders, cleared ground to create a wildflower meadow area & loved handling the worms that they found in the soil or visited in the wormery. The garden thrived with all the work that the children were doing and the addition of garden art is starting to give the area a real presence.



Dobbies Plants for to the School Garden



In June, Helen MacGregor wrote to the new Dobbies at Livingston to ask if there were any schemes that we could apply to assisting community gardens. Dobbies got back in touch inviting Helen along to the new garden centre with a garden shopping list.

During the holidays Helen,

Shona Johnson & kids, Josh & Eryn

headed off to Dobbies. We were met by Dobbies Community champion Laura Stevens who became our personal garden shopper giving us good advice on what to purchase with the £350.00 worth of equipment and plants that Dobbies were donating to the School Garden.



We had a wonderful morning, the garden now has 2 new fruit trees, a variety of climbers to clothe the fence, bird boxes, watering cans, gloves for small hands, small gardening tools, watering cans, 2 large weed collecting buckets, small gardening spade and fork, fat

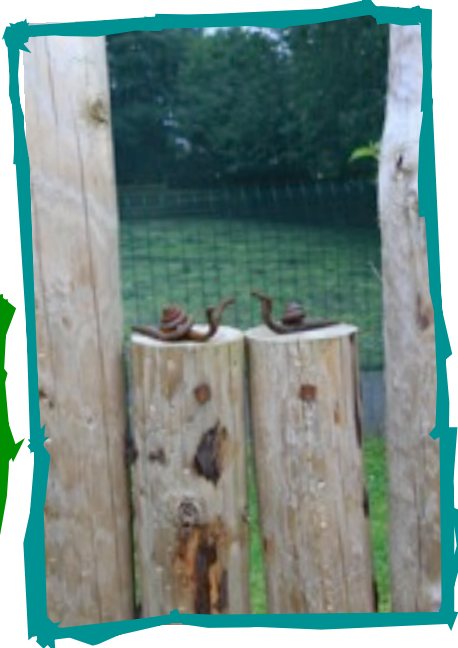
balls for the birds, lots of perennials and some bedding plants for instant colour! We could not fit everything into the car so had to call on Pete Hill with a big white van to come to the rescue!

The following week we set to work getting all the plants into the garden with the help of some of the Tuesday Evening Garden Group parents.

We hope to arrange a date when Laura Stevens can visit the garden and meet the children and we can say thank you.



Some Pictures of the Garden, August 2011



Finance September 2011

So far this year we have spent around £700.00 on the garden. This covers the cost of new compost bins, materials for producing the new benches, compost for new plants, bark for around the new benches, repayment of the cost of the outside tap to the school, worms for the wormery and plants to enhance the garden.

All garden funds are held in the Ratho Primary School Parent Council account & administered by the parent council treasurer, Annette Wilson.

At the time of this report the account is showing a healthy balance for the garden of £890.67

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Garden Gear owned by the Garden Group

A great deal of the garden equipment used in the garden is supplied by the parents, hand tools for gardening, lawn mower to maintain the lawn, hose reel for supplying water. We have started to use some of the funding to purchase certain items of equipment for the garden that are vitally necessary for the upkeep & maintenance of the area. Ideally we would like somewhere within the school to collectively store all the equipment but at the moment parents have offered to look after the equipment we have acquired.

Date Purchased	Item	Where it is stored
9 Oct 2009	Brush Cut Strimmer	Gillian Brown's Garage
11 Oct 2009	Fuel Can	Gillian Brown's Garage

September 2011

Members of Garden Group

Gillian Brown
Helen Day
Ruth Gillian
Nicola Glover
Pete Hill
Mike Humphries
Shona Johnson
Cindy McDougall
Helen MacGregor
Paul Martin
Gillian Mair
Christine Paterson
Joanne Simpson
Jane Smith
Lynn Steer
Debbie Tully
James Tully

Plus several others who drop by to help out when organised work parties are taking place.