

New scheme to provide free fruit in Nottingham

24-year-old May Bate from Forest Fields has come up with an ingenious way of providing free fruit for local people.

May's project, Fruit & Notts, is being launched on Thursday, 30th April at 2pm with the planting of community fruit trees next to United Carpets on Hartley Road, Radford, with many more fruit trees due to be planted in Radford, Hyson Green, Forest Fields and New Basford in the next few weeks.

Once the trees have grown, local people will be able to pick and eat the fruit and May hopes that providing free fruit will encourage people to eat more of it, especially fruit which is native to the UK and can be grown locally.

The project is being supported by Sprout; an environmental project ran by the Partnership Council charity (based in Hyson Green), the environmental group Transition Nottingham and Nottingham City Council who is keen to support the project because there aren't any allotments available in the area at present.

Sprout helps young people aged 16 to 25 to set up their own environmental projects. Sprout has helped May to source the fruit trees, find suitable locations for planting, work alongside the City Council and publicise the project.

In addition, both Sprout and the City Council have awarded May £500 (£1,000 in total) to develop the project.

The trees will be planted by May and Sprout volunteers and local people are welcome to go along and find out more. Future locations for tree planting include Forest Fields Primary School, Northgate Primary School, Gawthorne Street Park, Forster Street Park, Forest Recreation Ground, Radford Recreation Ground, John Carroll Leisure Centre and the Arboretum.

Paul Hobson, manager of United Carpets in Radford has also granted permission for Sprout to use the area next to his shop to create a community relaxation space, with the tree planting marking the first stage of the project.

Varieties of fruit tree will include cherry, pear, apple, apricot, plum, gage and mulberry.

Rachel from Sprout says:

"With the looming problem of peak oil on the horizon and allotment sites oversubscribed, it's important that we utilise the available space in cities as much as possible to grow food and feed future generations.

It's great that there are young people like May around with the ideas and energy to develop projects like this and lead the way in thinking creatively about local food production. She has put so much work into this project as a volunteer! We hope the project will inspire other people in different areas of the city to develop similar projects."

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The varieties of fruit tree being planted have been chosen because the fruit ripens on the branch, so people will be able to pick the fruit and eat it directly.

The planters being used for some of the trees have been made from recycled kitchen work surfaces and doors by Sprout volunteers.

Sprout volunteers will be working alongside Nottingham City Council gardeners to look after the trees whilst they grow, especially during the coming year, when they'll need regular watering.

May and local volunteers also planted a number of apple trees in the garden of the Red Lion pub in New Basford in January, to provide free fruit for the pub's customers and local people.

**To find out more about Sprout or the Fruit & Notts planting event
please call Rachel Wicks at the Partnership Council on 0115 970 8200
or email rachel@partnershipcouncil.co.uk**

www.partnershipcouncil.co.uk

**To find out more about Fruit & Notts please call May Bate on 0790 590 6453
or email maisiebate@hotmail.com**

May is a member of Transition Forest Fields, part of Transition Nottingham, an environmental group set up in 2007 to provide a community-led response to the problems of peak oil and climate change in Nottingham.

www.transitionnottingham.org.uk