

Kent Connections



inspiring people, improving places

Winter 2008



DISCOVER GREEN GYM IN ASHFORD FOR FITNESS, FRESH AIR, FRIENDSHIP AND A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

Discover Green Gym is a unique scheme from BTCV to help you become physically and mentally healthier by taking part in nature conservation activities to improve your local environment. **Discover Green Gym** helps you to become more active through weekly sessions of nature conservation over a 10 week period. Each session last for around 3 hours, and includes warm-up and cool-down exercises.

What Green Gym offers

- Free fitness tests at the beginning and end of the programme, so that you can monitor your progress.
- A free pedometer, so that you can record the number of steps you take as part of your weekly physical activity.
- Introduction to other local 'green exercise', to help you stay active after the programme ends.

Based at Singleton Environment Centre, these 10 taster sessions will offer you the chance to take part in a wide range of practical conservation tasks. The tasks will include tree planting, coppicing and glade creation and these will take place at either Singleton Environment Centre or at the nearby Ashford Community Woodland.

**Events run every Monday
from 10 am—1 pm.**

**For further info, contact the BTCV office on
just turn up on the day.**



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Kent Connections is a newsletter for everyone who cares about their local environment. Kent BTCV aims to encourage and enable people to improve their local environment through developing and supporting sustainable practical action.

Wanted: Kent Compost Advisers

Compost Adviser Training Course

Sunday 25 January 2009
Ashford

9.30 am—4.00 pm



Spread the word about converting kitchen and garden waste into organic compost. Age and ability is no limitation as resources and support are provided.

Places are limited so please book your place early to avoid disappointment.

To book a place, please contact Fiona at BTCV on 01233 666519 or email: f.houghton@btcv.org.uk

Leaf Compost

The Autumn gales have now shed most leaves from the trees. Although the landscape may now appear barren, we have the advantage of being able to use the leaves to make wonderful compost. As trees have extensive root systems, they draw up nutrients from deep within the subsoil. Much of this mineral bounty is passed into the leaves, making them a valuable and often underrated garden resource.



It is possible to put leaves into your compost bin, but as they decompose at a slower rate than most materials, it is best to utilize them on their own. They can just be piled into an unused corner of the garden, placed into a plastic bag with a few air holes in it or put into a simply constructed wire netting container. Dampen them with water and leave undisturbed for a year in order to produce a good crumbly leaf mould. The fibre content aids in improving the aeration and crumb structure of most soils, it can be used as a mulch to suppress weeds and improve water retention or turned into an excellent potting mixture.

If you would like to become a Compost Adviser and learn how to promote this wonderful natural process, please telephone the BTCV office for further details on: 01233 666519.

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Friends of Singleton Environment Centre

The Friends are a newly formed community group, based here at the Singleton Environment Centre.

If you are interested in what goes on at the centre and want the chance to get more involved in activities, please contact the Kent BTCV office to find out more details.



Tel: 01233 666519. Email: kent@btcv.org.uk

Forthcoming training events

Emergency First Aid

Saturday 17 January

Ashford

All conservation projects should have a nominated first aider and this is the ideal chance to gain or renew your Appointed Person status. This course will cover all major incidents with a bias towards conservation tasks.

(Free to Tree and Pond Wardens, Compost Advisers and Veteran Tree Surveyors)

Winter Tree Identification

Saturday 31 January

Kemsing

This day aims to improve your tree identification skills by teaching techniques to identify trees without foliage, including looking at shape, twigs, buds and bark. You will also have the chance to visit some wood pasture with excellent specimen trees.

Ponds, Pounds and People

Saturday 7 February

Maidstone

The pond has become an even more valuable asset in the last few years as well as an important educational resources. The course will teach you how to access funding and obtain pond equipment while enthusing others to help in a safe manner.

An Introduction to Day Project Leadership (leading groups safely)

Wednesday 11 March

Ashford

An essential course for anybody who leads practical conservation tasks and covers many aspects of leadership including group dynamics and tools talks as well as how to undertake risk assessments.

To book a place, please contact the Kent BTCV office.

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Trees in Winter

When identifying trees it is the leaves that are most often the feature that gives away the species. The classic is the oak leaf with its lobed outline. Unfortunately, there are no leaves on deciduous trees at the moment, but fear not as there are lots of other things about trees that give clues to their identification.



The shape of a tree can be helpful, as in the lombardy poplar with its tall, slimline appearance. The twisted branches of an oak are also very characteristic and can reveal the identity of this majestic tree. The cherry tree reveals its identity readily with tell tale horizontal lines of lenticels on its trunk. So it really doesn't matter what time of year it is, trees are prepared to give up the secrets of their identity, you just have to look a bit more carefully. It's not just the shape and form of the tree either, the buds of next year's leaves are already formed, from the spiral of buds at the end of an oak twig to the single scale of the willow. Twigs, and the way that the tree branches when it grows are also diagnostic signs. The zigzag of the lime and the opposite pairs of the ash and sycamore are all there to tell us what a tree is.

However, if all that fails, there are usually some fallen leaves underneath a tree for those of us who like to cheat. Be careful though, as you might not match the leaf to the right tree!

Maidstone Health Walks



**Gentle short walks
between half an hour and an hour,
at your own pace,
friendly, safe, free
and open to all age and abilities**

For more information, contact:
Paula Hubens, Health Walk Co-Ordinator
Tel: 01424 830564
Tel: Email: p.hubens@btcv.org.uk

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 **Heritage
LOTTERY FUNDED**

Registered Office: BTCV, Sedum House, Mallard Way, Potteric Way, Doncaster DN4 0DB Registered Charity No 261009.

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