

Field Fare Toolkit



MEANTIME

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Field Fare was a temporary Community Garden on Hardwick Green over the summer of 2021. The project was started and run by We Create (<https://www.we-create.org.uk/>), an arts action group collaborative partnership between Hardwick Gallery (<http://hardwickgallery.org/>) (University of Gloucestershire) and residents in the communities of St Peter's and St Paul's (Cheltenham), supported by Take A Part (<https://takeapart.org.uk/>)

Field Fare saw us growing and foraging for 'useful plants' – such as herbs for cooking and infusing, and flowers and roots that make natural dyes and inks – in raised beds on Hardwick Green. The produce was made available to anyone to harvest when it was ready, and was distributed to residents in the community to cultivate in their own gardens, pots and window boxes (both in the form of seedlings, cuttings and seeds saved from the plants that were grown).

The pallet-planters also created beautiful sensory gardens, filled with carefully selected plants for colour, scent and texture.

The Field Fair Toolkit is a guide on setting up your own community growing project with hints and tips on how to source materials, where to buy seeds and what plants you could grow.

°MEANTIME

 UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Materials

We used pallets and 1 tonne bulk bags for our raised planters. There is an endless list of materials you can use, but we used those for a number of reasons.

- Pallets are readily available, and you can often get them for free. Using pallets promotes recycling and repurposing everyday objects and they come in all manner of different sizes
- They're already built (for the most part)
- 1 tonne bulk bags can also be obtained for free by approaching a local landscaping or building company who are likely to have an excess of them from their deliveries. If not, they are relatively affordable and can be bought from most building supply stores.
- 1 tonne bags also handily fit very well within a pallet planter
- Soil, compost and a water butt for collecting rainwater

We were able to source pallets from a few local businesses on an industrial estate just over a mile down the road from Hardwick Green. Many of the businesses just get rid of the pallets after they've had their deliveries, so you're actually doing them a favour! Depending on how many planters you are planning on building, you'll need 8 pallets for a double planter, or 5 for a single planter.

Our reclaimed topsoil was delivered in 4 one-tonne bulk bags, and we got several more from a local landscaping company for free. However they can be purchased cheaply from local building Merchants such as Wickes, B&Q, or an independent supplier local to your area.

You'll need wood screws and nails, some hammers, a wood saw and if possible, a power drill and some screwdrivers as back up. If you don't have access to power, a good battery operated drill will do the job too.

We were gifted a few bags of compost from a local supermarket which we distributed to residents, but we had decided that wherever possible we wouldn't order 'new' soil or compost, and our building materials were to be reclaimed, reused or recycled. The reclaimed topsoil came from building sites and skips - the link came from the council recycling website so check your local council for any similar schemes.

We sourced 2 additional tonnes of conditioning compost that came from municipal green waste - we found a local supplier on Facebook Marketplace who delivered this for us.

Lastly, we were able to find a water butt on Facebook Marketplace for free. It needed a bit of patching up to fix a small leak, but other than that, it was in great condition.

On the next few pages, we'll go into more detail on all of the above and you'll see how easy it is to build a pallet planter.

°MEANTIME

 UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Construction



We started building our pallet planters around March time, once pandemic restrictions enabled us to work in small groups outdoors (all with appropriate safety measures in place). We chose to build double planters so we went about designing our layout, starting with the bases. Be sure to use sturdy bases as soil is heavy so you're going to have to have them supported well.



°MEANTIME

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



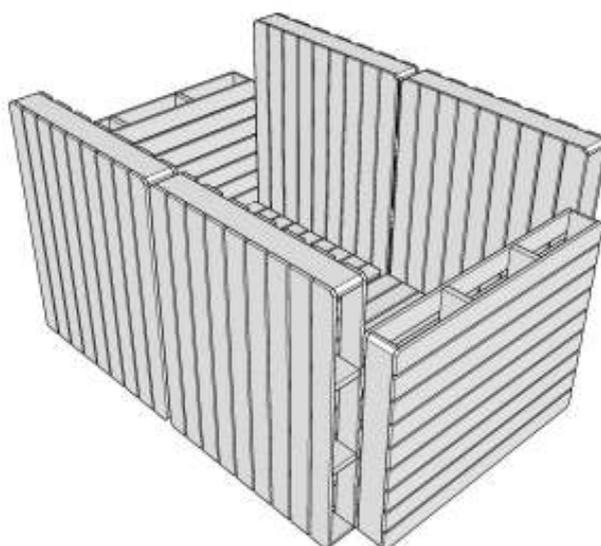
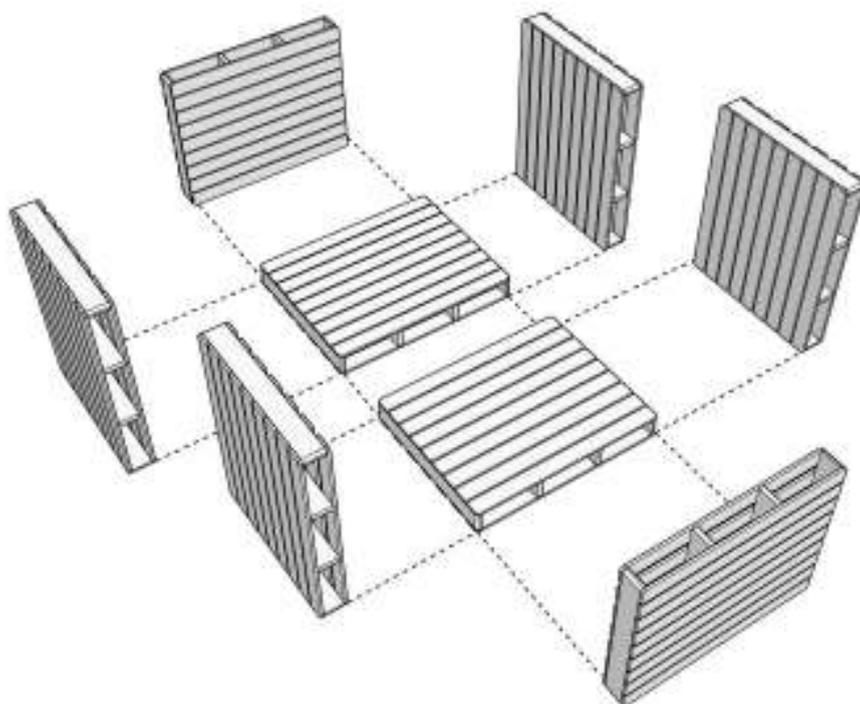
Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

The below image shows an exploded view of the pallets and how they come together. Remember that because pallets do come in different shapes and sizes, you may have to jiggle them around to find a good fit. The great thing about this is that some of the sides of your planters can be lower which makes reaching over easier for younger children and people in wheelchairs.



We used recycled lengths of wood (even old furniture) to fix the pallets together. You may need to get creative with this, but once you've built one, they get easier once you figure out what works best. We found that fixing longer lengths across two pallets and screwing them together worked really well.



On the next page, you'll see an example of a finished pallet planter. They can look a bit rough around the edges, but you can organise a community "pallet" decorating workshop. A bit of stain or paint will really make them stand out. We painted a piece of wood with blackboard paint and stuck it to the front of one of the planters so we could update it with the dates of our next workshop, event or drop-in session.

MEANTIME

 UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**



We built 3 double pallet planters in total and each of them could hold 2 tonne bags each. This gave us 6 separate growing areas that we could easily distinguish between and divide up different types of plants to grow.



MEANTIME

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

hardwick
gallery

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Soil and compost

As we mentioned before, we found a company listed on our local council website who reclaimed and recycled topsoil from building sites and skips. Although this wasn't recommended to plant seeds in, it served as a good "base" in our tonne bags. We had 4 of these delivered and dropped straight into the pallet planters.



Once the bulk bags were in place, we distributed the reclaimed topsoil between our 6 tonne bags. This gave us around 2-3 feet of space to fill the bags with good quality conditioning compost that came from municipal green waste.

All of this took a couple of weekends to do. If you plan to start your own community growing project, aim to begin planning in January, building your planters in February/March with the aim to have them all filled and ready to start planting in April/May.

°MEANTIME

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

hardwick
gallery

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Seeds



This is where the fun really begins. The seeds you choose to grow will largely be dependent on what your community growing project focuses on. It may be that your projects focus on education and teaching people a bit about growing and propagating their own vegetables, or you may be growing food to donate to a local food bank. Whatever it is, researching and finding interesting varieties of seeds is really fun.

At Field Fare, we grew a range of useful plants that could be used to make inks and dyes, plants that were good for bees and insects as well as fresh herbs and vegetables that anyone in the local community could help themselves too.

The bulk of our seeds came from The Real Seed Catalogue. They are a fantastic company based in Wales and you can read about them at <https://www.realseeds.co.uk/about.html>

They focus on producing “real seeds” and sell a huge amount of interesting varieties that you won’t see in your local garden centre. They encourage people to save their own seeds too. This meant we able to distribute seeds to the community so they could grow their own at home. We also purchased some plants as ready-grown plugs that just needed to be planted when they were delivered.

We separated our planters into different categories of plants to make it easier for people to identify what they were, and to ensure that inedible plants weren’t accidentally eaten (we recommend not growing any poisonous plants). Our main categories were “salad and edible” planter, a planter for inks and dyes, and a flower planter. Below are some of the types of plants we grew in each planter.

MEANTIME

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Edible planter

- General salad leaves. A good variety from Real Seeds is Morton's Secret Mix which gives you a mixture of interesting types of salad leaves in one packet)
- Spring onions
- Basil, Coriander, Sage, Parsley & Chives
- Borage. Bees love Borage and the flowers are edible too
- Wild Violet Hearts
- Nasturtiums. You can use most of the plant. The leaves and flowers are edible and at the end of their growing season, the seeds can be used to make nasturtium capers
- Courgettes. The plants are very big so if you chose to grow these, you can opt for a smaller, compact variety such as Verde di Milano or Burpees Golden Zucchini
- Walking stick cabbages. These also require space, but they are marvelous plants, giving you both a cabbage and a long stalk. These were used to produce walking sticks in the early 20th Century - you can still buy them today!
- Quinoa



°MEANTIME

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Inks & dyes planter

- Woad - for true blues
- Ladies Bedstraw - used for red and yellow dyes
- Sunflowers - for deep olive greens (and the bees love them too)
- Weld - for strong clear yellow
- Common St. John's Wort plugs - for pinks, yellows and greens, all from the same plant



°MEANTIME

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Flowers planter

- Velvet Queen Red & Orange Sunflower
- China Cat Sunflower Mix
- Monstrum Mixed Tall Strawflower
- Sweet peas



We also bought and distributed Hop rhizomes to people in the community. The communities of St Peter's and St Paul's in Cheltenham were once home to around 60 pubs, although now only one remains. Not only are hops used to brew beer, but they are very beautiful plants and when the hops start ripening, they have a lovely aroma. We were interested in finding out about home-brewing and held a beer brewing workshop at the end of the year.

We also had a fair amount of other seeds that we did not plant, but were given away to residents at workshops and drop-in sessions by the planters, where Cynnyth, our community gardener, gave tips and advice on planting and propagating seeds at home. Whatever you choose to grow, you'll find plenty of interesting varieties out there, so take your time to decide what route your community growing project will take and buy seeds accordingly.

°MEANTIME

 UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Community Involvement & Workshops



MEANTIME

 UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

We ran several workshops throughout the year and often had drop in sessions, where anyone could pop along and ask questions, plant some seeds to take home with them and see what was going on. What you choose to do will depend on your community and the specific aims of your project.



MEANTIME

 UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Elderflower foraging

Elderflower grows everywhere in the UK. We were all quite surprised when we went on a walk around Cheltenham to find some; we were spoiled for choice. Elderflower can be used to make homemade cordial and even a fizzy drink which can also be turned into a light elderflower champagne if done correctly.

Be sure to not over pick the bushes/trees as they are an important source of food for birds and wildlife. You only need a few clusters of flowers to make a recipe. There are some great recipes online to follow and we suggest doing a bit of research on when to pick the flowers and how to go about identifying elderflower too. If you are unsure, ask an expert!

This was a great few hours to get some fresh air and walk around our neighborhood, getting to know others and swapping recipes. It was also really educational and helped us realise that we can find and use a plant all around us to make a pleasant treat for our families, and even for gifts.



°MEANTIME

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

hardwick
gallery

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Foraging Workshop with The Cotswold Forager



Rob Gould, The Cortswold Forager took us on an amazingly informative walk in and around the local area showing us just how much edible plants there were. Some of the things we learnt were:

- The difference between dead white nettle and stinging nettles - stinging nettles are far more nutritious.
- You can eat daisies.
- Where we can find flowers to use for dyeing, and walnuts to use for dyes and inks.
- You can harvest linden blossom for tea, and some of us discovered the sweetness of aphid excreta on linden leaves.
- Plantain seeds can be used as a substitute for morel mushrooms in a risotto.

All this just in Hardwick Green, on the Honeybourne Line and in Pittville Park

°MEANTIME

 UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Anthotype Workshop



An anthotype is an image created using photosensitive material from plants. You can use beetroot, spinach, berries and much more to create beautiful and interesting prints. Lisa Lavery held a workshop for us where we learnt about the process involved in making our own prints at home, using everyday plants that can be grown or foraged.

The workshop was a great way to introduce a creative, art-led experience that tied back into growing useful plants, not only for eating, but for us as inks and dyes in art.

°MEANTIME

 UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

Beer Brewing Workshop

St Paul's in Cheltenham has a rich history of local pubs and was home to many local breweries including Colletts Brewery which traded from 1885-1902. The very last workshop of our project was focused on brewing beer made using our own home-grown hops (very tasty) alongside the shop-bought hops, both brewed with ready-made malt extract. We distributed hop rhizomes to various people in the local community who grew and looked after the hops and harvested them for the workshop at the end of the year.

Hops are incredibly fragrant and can also be used in Christmas Wreath making, or for general decorations around the house.

This was a fun way to end the year and the self taught workshop left us with some tasty beer.



MEANTIME

UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Take
A Part

hardwick
gallery

COMMUNITY
FUND

Overall, Field Fare was a successful project and we have found local community organisations that will be taking the partners over in their own spaces so the community can carry on enjoying them for many years to come.

No matter what your project focuses on, we hope this Tool Kit helps give you ideas for events and workshops you can host in your community.

A special thanks to everyone who helped with Field Fare, gave us space to host workshops, and took time to visit our drop in sessions. If it wasn't for the vibrant community in St Pauls, Cheltenham, it would not have been the same!

MEANTIME

 UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

**Take
A Part**

**hardwick
gallery**

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**