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Gardening Tips
(Patsy Dyer):

- If there is a very dry spring/ early summer keep grass long—at least 3cm (1 1/4"). This will act as mulch, keeping in moisture.
- Use a lawn rake once a month during growing season to reduce a build up of thatch (a layer of dead grass and roots). Thatch can cause disease or deep - rooted weeds to compete with the lawn.
- Grow Russian Comfrey. This is a cheap effective source for plant food. Put cut leaves in container with water. Feed will be ready after 4 – 6 weeks.

Wildlife Day

On Sunday 10th April, after many weeks of careful preparation, Root & Branch hosted a Wildlife Day, and invited the local community to participate in many interesting wildlife and craft related activities.



Simon Nicholls explains how to construct a wildlife pond.

We were fortunate enough to attract a number of specialists who gave talks on different areas of wildlife, including Dave Endacott from Oxford Bat Group, who brought along a selection of different species of bats. Ken Betteridge from Plant Life gave an interesting slide show on Native Wild Plants, and Ian Gourlay from the Oxford Bee Keepers Association gave a fascinating slide-show on the history of bee keeping.

During the afternoon, people had the opportunity to learn about the importance of a wildlife pond in an organic garden, and how to construct and maintain such a pond. People also had the opportunity to participate in constructing a willow arbour and willow hurdles.

Although the weather could have been better, all felt the afternoon was successful with around one hundred people attending and £450 raised, including a very generous £100 donation from Mrs Elizabeth Parker-Gervis.

Would you like to sponsor an edition of Root & Branch's newsletter?

The Garden, Patsy



Installing willow hurdles

The garden at Root & Branch is developing in so many ways now. The vegetable garden is well established; we have begun the four-year rotation, & woven hazel 'pea sticks' into an attractive arched tunnel for the peas in preparation for the climbing beans, volunteers & gardeners have erected beanpoles.

Green manures, including Phacelia tanacetifolia, the fiddle neck flower, have now been dug into the earth. Nutrients, which built up in the green manures over the Winter, are now available to spring-planted crops. The vegetable garden will have a more complete aspect this Spring. Willow hurdles, which have been created by the

gardeners & volunteers over the cold Winter months, will soon be put in position, creating a more permanent & highly attractive view. The gardeners have planted strawberries & a mix of insect-attractant flowers. These will look wonderful against this natural coloured foil.

Volunteering At Root & Branch, Maggie

I think that being a volunteer is probably the best job at Root & Branch. I can lend my mind to really developing projects and looking after the clients. However some of my more imaginative ideas have caused the odd chuckle or two which is not a bad thing whether by design or not! This last year or so has extended my abilities to artwork, woodturning,

carpentry, garden landscaping and construction and now bee keeping. I cannot believe how wonderfully Root & Branch is developing for all of us to enjoy and participate in.



Maggie & the 'Colour My World' art

A POSER FOR YOU.

To make a required item for a Root & Branch project, it is necessary to use a Cow Horn and Straw. Why?

3 Year Development Plan, Liz



Liz

Towards the end of 2004, Root & Branch carried out a Strategic Review of our services to create a three year development plan. R&B consulted a wide range of stakeholders including current and potential members, volunteers, carers, mental health professionals, trustees, commissioners and R&B staff. The process of developing this three year strategy was therefore extremely inclusive, and

represents as far as possible the wishes of our community. The key aims of our three year plan are: to increase the range of activities including more rural craft activities, talks and demonstrations on complementary therapies to develop the therapeutic role of animals in the project to have more communal lunches

to conduct regular six month reviews with members and their key workers to provide an increased focus on assisting people to access training, to look explore the viability of extending the catchment area of R&B to North Wiltshire. If you would like more information about our plans for development, please contact R&B for a 2005 - 2008 Development Leaflet.

Herbalist Workshop, Sue

Lettitia Derrington (M.N.H.I.M.H.) came & did a Herbalist Workshop. An interesting day, we first had a talk & slide show on different herbs & their uses. Tea break had herbal teas to try with the different types Lettitia brought with her. After lunch we were let loose on making our own bath bags. Lettitia made one first & we were given a list of herbs that go together for the different skin treatments. Of all the different types of dried herbs I used two of my favourite - lavender & rose petals. Such a lovely combination later turned my bath water a

lovely purple colour & my skin felt so soft afterwards. They can also be used to wash your body.



Being let loose was great we all got carried away & even funnier was we were using old tights to fill to make the bath bags these

bags are a very versatile way & pleasurable way of using herbs. Different herbs do different things for example Emollients soften, protect & soothe the skin. Vulneraries aid the body to heal wounds. Styptics are good at stopping bleeding. Aromatics have strong odours. Anti-pyretic have a cooling effect. Hypnotics help induce sleep. There are also calming, de-stressing & antiseptic type herbs.

We all had a good day & would like to thank Lettitia for coming to R&B. We are now waiting for the next one later in the year!!

Bluebell Woods, Ian

On Friday May 6th we had an excursion to a Badbury Copse, famed locally for it's profusion of Bluebells. The native variety of Bluebell, *Hyacinthoides Non Scriptus*, is a national treasure that has been celebrated by poets since the eighteenth century. The traditional 'Non Scriptus' tag means literally 'not written', and is to distinguish it from the classical flower in the Greek myth of Hyacinthus, which was said to have

sprung from the dying prince's blood. The grief-stricken Apollo was then said to have inscribed the letters



A I A I, meaning 'Alas', upon the petals. The Bluebells at Badbury were at their peak when we arrived, and were beautifully complemented by the dappled sunlight and the fresh green of the young beech leaves. At the beginning of this century special 'Bluebell trains' ran to the woods at Ipsden in the Oxfordshire Chilterns. Perhaps they should start up a bus to go to Badbury!

Sponsored Walk, Charlotte

On Sunday 21st August we are planning a short (5 mile) sponsored walk on the countryside around R&B, starting at 11 a.m., and followed by a "bring & share" barbecue in the garden.

If you and your family would like to join in the fun, just call us on 01793 780380 and ask Patsy or Charlotte for a sponsorship form.



Where did they go?



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Phone: 01793 780380

Email: info@rootandbranch.freeserve.co.uk

Manager: Liz Clarke.
Horticultural Director: Patsy Dyer

Charity No. 1088493

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Anonymous donation of £500.

Donation of £100 from Elizabeth Parker-Gervis

Rowan Twine for the wonderful donation of a selection of bulbs.

We are supported by:

- *The Big lottery Fund*
- *Oxfordshire County Council*
- *British Trust for Conservation Volunteers*

DO YOU HAVE...

...any gardening equipment, blacksmithing equipment, carpentry tools and art & craft items you no longer need and would like to donate to R&B?

We are also looking for a digital camera, so if there are any floating around that are looking for a home, please contact R&B.

We would also be interested in a sewing machine & accessories.

Financial donations are also greatly appreciated!

Future Plans and Events with R & B

- Extracting honey from bee-hives
- Wood-lathe workshop
- Dry Stone walling
- Aromatherapy workshop
- Harvesting & Eating Garden Produce (especially the potatoes!)
- Sponsored Walk & Barbecue
- Stalls at Summer Fêtes
- Talk on 'Writing and the Garden', title to be confirmed.
- Root & Branch Wimbledon Day (including home grown strawberries & games).



Extracting honey from the bee hives.