



London Road Station Partnership

Station garden guide



The gated plot



The gated plot was a piece of waste land covered in cans and bottles. We cleared it in May 2011 and started growing vegetables in containers. We first grew beans, squashes, tomatoes and salad crops.

Gradually, over summer 2011, we constructed raised beds from used scaffolding planks, and soil donated by neighbours. Southern Rail supported the purchase of water butts and wood chip for the paths.

We now have three raised beds just for veg. The shadiest (north facing, left side) is for leafy crops: this year, we are growing cavolo nero and two types of sorrel. We cleared the back bed of raspberry canes this year as they were too invasive: we've planted a few potatoes, chard and (in the sunniest corner) climbing beans. In our central bed, we have overwintered red onions and chard.

We developed the raised beds for a mini-orchard of cordoned fruit trees in March 2012. The fruit trees are underplanted with salad leaves, strawberries and herbs.

To make use of all available space, we've also planted fruit in plastic containers: a plum tree in a dustbin, our raspberry canes and a black currant.

We also found supports for pots and window boxes to hang over the fence so plants would have more sunlight. We aim to grow annual and perennial herbs here, as well as brightly coloured flowering plants to attract beneficial insects (calendula, tagetes, gazenias). The pots tend to dry out quickly and our tagetes seedlings have this year been munched by slugs and snails!

Finally, we will be using the sunniest corner (by the entrance) to site pots for our tomatoes. Unfortunately, this warm corner can also get windy, so our tomatoes are currently gaining strength in a nearby greenhouse before we gradually harden off and plant out.

So far, we've been harvesting salad leaves, lettuces, chard, cavalo nero and strawberries. Whoever is working in the garden takes away any produce that is ready to harvest. Towards the end of the season, we harvest everything that is edible and get together for a harvest supper.

Examples from LRSP Harvest Supper menu



French onion soup

Summer leaf soup

Tomato tartlets

Three leaf three cheese lasagne

Frisée lettuce salad with walnuts

Raspberry brownies

Pear crumble

Apple and rhubarb compote with ice cream

Rosemary biscuits

Tomato tartlets with frisée lettuce & walnut salad
London Road Station Garden

London Road station has long been important to The Mule as departure point for the Dieppe ferry. Slide the bike onto the train, cycle off at Newhaven past the Keystone Kop at border control and into the hold of the ship. Otherwise, it has been a place of little note, Nick the station master quietly running things these past twenty five years. Then something quite magical happened. The derelict scraps of land that bookend the ticket office were transformed into fertile gardens. A mini orchard of apples, plums and pears, bright yellow courgettes defying the lack of sun, and a public herb patch where commuters can brighten their evening meal with rosemary and thyme. A little eco triumph.

'At the end of September we always have frisée lettuces growing well in the garden. They seem to thrive on our chalky soil. The tomato tartlets are a delicious way of using up our final tomato harvest. We also grow basil and marjoram which work so well with the sweet flavour of the cherry tomatoes. The tartlets and frisée salad make a lovely summer lunch.'

<http://londonrdstationpartnership.wordpress.com>

Ingredients – approximately 12 tartlets

Pastry:

250 gm plain flour
Pinch of salt
100 gm cubed butter or half lard
2–3 tablespoons cold water

Filling:

30 sweet cherry tomatoes
1 sliced onion
Crushed garlic
Chopped basil or marjoram

Salad:

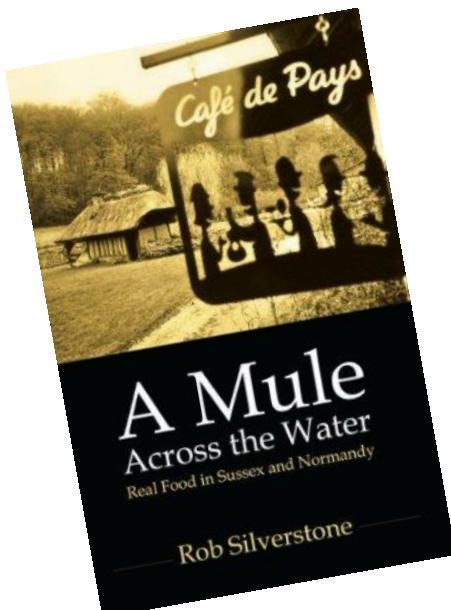
1 large frisée lettuce
200 gm chopped walnuts

Dressing:

1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tsp honey
3 tablespoons walnut oil
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 crushed garlic clove

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London Road Station Partnership
recipe in local author's book about
local food and flavours in Sussex
and Normandy

The mini-orchard



The idea for the mini-orchard in the edible plot came from a chance meeting at the station garden with Joanna Harper from Action for Rural Sussex in Summer 2011.

ARS and Brighton Permaculture Trust promote the supply of locally grown fruit and ensure the survival of 25 varieties of Sussex apples.

Bryn Thomas from Brighton Permaculture Trust helped us organise a planting event on March 11th 2012 with around 50 local people attending, including our MP Caroline Lucas and Councillor Pete West. We had an apple-themed lunch for all on the station terraces.

We've planted four Sussex varieties of apples and two pears, cordoned up the south-facing wall. For the mini-orchard, we built two new raised beds, extended another, and shovelled over 3m³ of compost and soil. We repainted the wall, installed battens and several metres of fencing wire to construct the trellis. We also planted a plum tree - in a dustbin.

What we're growing

Four apples

Mannington's Pearmain M116 Rich golden yellow with dull brownish red and large russet dots. In terms of taste, it is said to be 'firm, crisp, juicy, and very sugary, with a brisk and particularly rich flavour'. It is very hardy, bears good fruit early in its life, and is harvested in mid-October. It originated around 1770 in a garden in Uckfield belonging to a Mr. Turley. Grafts were distributed in the neighbourhood, but it was Mr Turley's grandson, Mr. John Mannington, who later brought the apple to the attention of London Horticultural Society.

Saltcote Pippin M116 The Saltcote Pippin is another late dessert apple. It's orange yellow with scarlet streaks. Saltcote Pippin was raised by James Hoad in Rye and was first recorded in 1918. It received the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit in 1928.

Crawley Beauty This apple is primarily a cooker, and produces a sweet purée, but it can be eaten fresh after storing. It is pale green turning to pale yellow. It is a very tolerant apple, growing well on chalk, with good disease resistance. It flowers late in the spring, which means that fruiting is not affected by frost. Apples are ready for harvesting in mid-October. It was discovered in a cottage garden in Tilgate, near Crawley, around 1870. The Crawley nurserymen, Cheal & Co., introduced the variety in 1906 and it received the RHS Award of Garden Merit in 1912.

Tinsley Quince M116 Another Crawley apple, Tinsley Quince has pale yellow skin with russet dots. It has a slight quince-like flavour, with firm, sweet flesh. It is said to be an exceptional frying apple. The fruit ripens in late September. The apple came to public attention in the National Fruit Trials of 1942, entered by R. Fairman of Crawley.

Two pears

Concorde Has a long neck and yellow-green skin. It doesn't brown much when cut, and is sweet and juicy even when firm. It derives from two 19th century varieties: the English Conference pear and the French Comice, combining the reliability of the Conference pear with the excellent flavour of the Comice. It grows well in an English summer.

Beurre Hardy An excellent dessert pear with a distinctive flavour. It crops heavily and is resistant to scab, but it may be sensitive to frost, and likes warmth and shelter. The fruit can be picked in mid-September and left to ripen. It was introduced in 1820.

And a plum tree in a dustbin

Marjorie's Seedling This is a late season plum, very reliable, hardy and disease resistant. It crops heavily, giving dark purple fruit with green-yellow flesh.

The shady triangle



This small triangle is overshadowed by sycamore trees, so we've planted it with shade-tolerant ornamental plants. The ground here was very rough, compacted and stony. We spent several weeks in May 2011 sifting the soil and each year, we improve it with our compost.

Almost all the key plants have come from people's gardens locally, or have been propagated. We have purchased only two major shrubs, in June 2011, to act as focal points: the *Fatsia japonica* to the left and the *Mahonia media* to the right.

A neighbour donated the old log from her garden to provide a frame for the ferns (*Dryopteris* – from a family garden in Wales) and another gave us the 'wigwam', up which we are growing a donated clematis ('Victoria'). The clematis is creeping through the fence and flowered by the passenger shelter.

The two green-brown ceramic planters were donated by local horticulturalists, Bridgette Saunders and Deborah Kalinke, of The Garden House in nearby Warleigh Road.

The garden is constantly evolving, as plants react to each year's conditions. Woodland plants seem to do well here and growth has been very lush this year, following the wet winter. We've had some lovely displays from *pulmonaria*, *geranium phaem*, *aquilegia*, *astrantia* and *saxifraga urbium* (London Pride). *Bergenias*, *alchemilla mollis*, *acanthus mollis*, ferns and species geraniums have grown well too.

A very undistinguished *lamium*, planted in 2011, decided in 2014 to take over the central part of the triangle. We've taken much of it out now and are trying to provide a little more interest with begonias and *hypoestes phyllostachya* but these have also been enjoyed by slugs and snails. In August 2014, we planted this area with hardy fuchsias and heucheras to provide some colour.

We're very pleased that purple-leaved heucheras propagated from cuttings seem to be growing well at the apex of the triangle. A sickly purple hebe, planted in 2012, is now flowering. Heucheras, fuchsias and acanthus seem to have been our most successful plants.

In the past, we've used antirrhinums, as well as begonias, to try to add summer colour. We've also planted large numbers of dwarf daffodils for spring display and pansies have sometimes done well, bringing vivid colour in the spring.

The herb planters



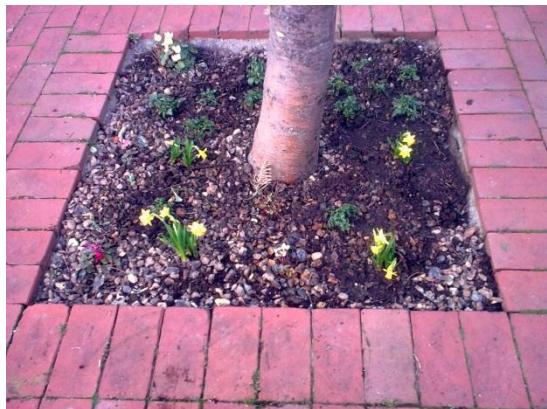
We have planted two wooden planters at the front of the station with herbs for public use. One planter, in a slightly sunnier location on the east side of the station building, has Mediterranean herbs (sage, rosemary, thyme and marjoram) while the other holds chives, parsley, tarragon and sometimes basil.

Inspired by the Incredible Edible movement in Todmorden, Yorkshire, we wanted some of our edible planting to be easily available to the public. Brighton & Hove Food Partnership funded purchase of the planters, which we set up in 2013.

Our herbs are regularly used by neighbours. We've found, though, that the two herbs which are the most popular in this area are also the ones which we find it most difficult to sustain: parsley and basil. We may have to rethink planting in the left hand bed!

The tree pits

We have gradually started planting around the *Sorbus* trees planted by Brighton & Hove Cityparks Arboricultural Services at the front of the station. We started by planting spring bulbs.



In the autumn of 2013, one of the trees was blown down in a storm. The empty tree pit was rather ugly so we decided to try to enliven the tree pits with bedding plants.

We do not want to take a lot of nutrients and water away from the trees, so shallow rooted annuals are useful here. The soil is very stony as originally the tree pits were covered in gravel. One challenge is protecting the plants from squirrels, dogs and bikes.

We've been fairly successful with pansies, petunias, verbena and geraniums. *Verbena bonariensis* is at the centre of the right hand bed for the time being. Cityparks are planning to plant a new tree there in December 2014.

The platform planters



In August 2013, London Road Station was awarded 'Best Community Station' by Southern Railways. We were very proud to have been part of this. Our prize was some funds to spend on planters and plants for the station: we chose three wooden planters with trellises incorporated.

We erected these three planters on the south platform, nearest our water sources, and planted them up in late spring 2014 with summer bedding plants: pelargoniums, trailing geraniums, petunias and lobelia. We've also added sweet peas, foxgloves, fuchsias and heuchera.

The planters are in shade for much of the day, so the plants have grown slowly. We will review planting in the autumn to try to ensure an evergreen display through the winter, with some perennial planting to last throughout the year.

Community composting



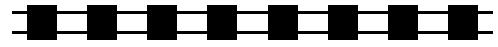
We started our community composting area in October 2011. We first had to obtain permission from Southern Railway and a licence from the Environment Agency. We now have around 25 people registered.

We have three compost bins: two plastic and one wooden. Brighton & Hove City Council has provided convenient kitchen-top caddies for neighbours to collect their fruit and vegetable waste. Brighton & Hove Food Partnership supported LRSP members through free places on their Compost Day workshop.

We reckon on a 6-9 month cycle for our compost bins: we use the compost on both gardens in autumn and spring.



London Road Station Partnership



We are delighted to have been awarded in 2013

- Southern's 'Community Station of the Year'
- Brighton & Hove City in Bloom Edward Furey Community Spirit cup and 2nd prize in Community Garden section.
- RHS 'It's your Neighbourhood' scheme:
Level 4 – THRIVING

We'd like to thank our lovely neighbours and the following businesses and organisations for their support.

- A.A. Taylor Joinery
- Brighton & Hove City Council
- Brighton & Hove Food Partnership
- Brighton Permaculture Trust
- Countrystyle
- The Garden House
- The Open House and The Signalman pubs
- Preston Circus Pharmacy
- St Peter's North Laine Community First
- Southern Railway
- Sussex Community Rail Partnership
- Veolia



London Road Station Partnership



We often meet up to take care of the gardens on **Tuesday afternoons**: check the Work Days page on our website. Do get in touch!

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