

Project report: BC Community College Sensory Garden



Objectives

The AONB grant of £850 was for the creation of a Sensory Garden at the Bishop's Castle Community College for the use of its Special Needs students. It will also serve as an outdoor classroom for other students. The introduction of herbs, plants, trees and wildflowers, plus insect boxes, was intended to help raise the environmental awareness of the students.

Achievements

1. A design for replacing the Vegetable Garden with a Sensory Garden was drawn-up and agreed with the College (see below). The design took into account the AONB's bio-diversity theme, with a wildflower bank and native 'rowan' and 'birch' trees, as well as 60 plants, herbs and flowers, which, once mature, will attract wildlife throughout the seasons. The sensory benefits will be the birds for sound; lavender, daphne and other plants for smell; mint and thyme for taste. Touch will be provided by all the various plants and wildflowers, and sight is provided by the overall garden.
2. The ground work for clearing two large (1 x 8m) existing raised beds to make way for the students' benches and the wildflower bank was completed.
3. The College's Duke of Edinburgh students were involved in two sessions to help with the groundwork and planting.
4. A wide range of herbs and plants and some trees were planted. (See list below).
5. A Wildflower meadow bank (with seed from 'Forestart', a Shropshire seed company) was prepared and sown. This mix has approximately 25% grass and 75% wildflower seed, which includes: Yellow Rattle, Meadow Buttercup, White Clover, Ribwort, Cat's Ear and Bird's Foot Trefoil.

Bishop's Castle Community College Duke of Edinburgh sessions

Four students in the first session and six in the second, helped removed the raised bed planking (which turned out to be too rotten for re-use), transfer the earth into wheelbarrows and empty into a skip – using some to make a bank for wildflower and grass seed, rake the remaining exposed earth to create a seedbed for sowing grass and wildflower seeds, plant-out the herbs and other plants.

Outstanding work

The original site for the Sensory Garden was moved at the College's request, which led to the need to re-plan. There was then a further delay while agreement was sought between the Caretaker and the College's Management Committee on the new plan. Go-ahead was finally given on 14th March for the final ground clearance work.

As a result of the foreshortened delivery time, the signs describing the plants and their health and medicinal purposes have not yet been made, the insect boxes are outstanding (we will source these from 'Growing Wild in BC'), and the failure of Ransford's to deliver the promised benches will mean the College will have to fund the costs of these from their own budget.

Further plants, herbs, wildflowers, etc, are being grown by members of 'Growing Wild in BC' and 'RSVP'. We continue to hope the Headmaster will agree to the planting of a mixed hedgerow around the garden.

Plants & Trees

A total of 60 of the following types of plants, herbs & trees have been planted, and more are being grown from seed:-

Birch & Rowan trees, Wild Rose, Daphne Odora, Yarrow, Lavender (English), Garlic, Rosemary, Basil (Bush), Thyme, Mint, Dill, Oregano, Chives, Foxgloves

Bishop's Castle Community College Vegetable to Sensory Garden Plan

- Existing raised beds marked with an X to be removed and soil levelled (planks re-used to support other raised beds).
- Information Boards for herbs giving medicinal and food uses
- Name boards for Plants & Shrubs
- 2 Trees plus existing Beech tree
- Benches: if Ransfords unable to supply, alternatives funds to be identified
- 'No Mow' policy to protect wildflower bank

ROWAN
TREE

BIRCH
TREE

With information boards
HERB BED giving medicinal & food uses


Herb & Plants bed


Wildflower & Plants bed

BENCH

SHED

 BENCH


Wildflower Bank

 BEECH
TREE

Entrance Gate