

# E1 Community Gardeners Annual Newsletter, Spring 2022

Welcome! E1CG is an organisation of community gardeners working in and around the E1 postcode in London Borough of Tower Hamlets. This is our first Annual Newsletter, in which we will provide highlights of our experience as an organisation over our first year of existence (2021-22) and run stories from our gardens and gardeners. We aim to communicate what it is we do, how we do it and why and hope through this and our activities together to get in touch with other gardeners, learn, experience and grow!

Over the next few years we hope to bring other gardens and gardeners in the area into the association, if you help maintain a garden in the E1 postcode, please get in [contact](#)

Membership is open to all sections of the community who wish to volunteer their time and or contribute to the improvement of communal gardens and green spaces.

Please see the following [document](#) stating the aims and objectives of E1 Community Gardeners.

The gardens involved so far are:

Deancross Street Allotments

Swedenborg Square Orchard

Tarling West Residents' Garden

Vaughan Way Wildlife Garden

Woollen House Residents' Garden

To get involved please get in touch:

Email: [e1communitygardeners@gmail.com](mailto:e1communitygardeners@gmail.com) /

Website: <https://e1cg.org> / Instagram

@e1communitygardeners



## E1CG Activities and Highlights

*Throughout the year E1CG members are :-*

- **experimenting** with and trying out new growing methods, for example the *hugelkultur* (building on log mounds) method, mushroom growing on wood chips, and various methods to compost food waste

- **sharing** gardening tips, larger equipment and tools, visiting each other's gardens, exchanging seeds and plants, lending a helping hand in each other's gardens and having a joke.

- **neighbours**

tidying up unloved spaces, helping neighbours new to gardening plant plants and create beds, encourage and show neighbours to garden

- **giving advice** to new E1CG members and other groups on creating a new urban garden

### Collaboration

Developing and being part of collaborations with London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Transport for London, Eastend Homes, Tower Hamlets Community Homes, Friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, Swedenborg Partnership, Butterfly Conservation, RSPB, Historic Royal Palaces' Superbloom in The Tower of London, Historic Royal Palaces Community Access Scheme.

### Wider audiences

Posting our photos and stories on E1CG **Instagram**

Developing and adding descriptions and photos to E1CG's **web site**

**Filming of E1CG** members by RSPB who were recording our E1CG story on why and how we are doing what we do. The video and article in RSP-

B's UK wide monthly magazine 2021 can be viewed here: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/rspb-news/rspb-news-stories/london-community-gardeners/?from=hphero>

### March

E1CG volunteers relocated a defunct large raised bed from Cable Street to Tarling West Residents Garden and relocated a large shrub from the bed onto the walkway gardens of Tarling West Estate.



### August

29th and 30th - our 1st Annual Garden Tours took place over the bank holiday in August – visiting seven community gardens in the E1 area. The tours were a wonderful success achieving a much better than expected number of visitors, and provided an opportunity to communicate the existence of the association and circulate Membership Registration Forms and enlist new members from this wider local network. The tours were funded by a small grant from the London Dock Community Fund.



### September

Members of E1CG held a stall offering plants, vegetables and information about the association at the Women's Environmental Network (WEN)

Autumn Gathering at Southern Grove Community Centre, E3.

Additional activities were:

- recruiting and guiding new volunteers,
- making a home for bugs collecting “bedding” material for bugs and insects with local parents and children.



**THE SPIRIT OF CABLE STREET!**



**MARCH AND RALLY  
SUNDAY OCTOBER 3 2021**

**ASSEMBLE 1PM JUNCTION OF  
CABLE ST/ LEMAN ST/ DOCK ST**

**NO TO RACISM! NO TO FASCISM!**

Clean-up in St. Georges Gardens. 6 people helped out weeding, sweeping and pruning near the Mural in preparation for the March and Rally being held on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October commemorate the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street.



## October

Showing new volunteers the basics of gardening – a new volunteer, for example who had always wanted to mow grass, is given instruction on how to use a mower.



## Vaughan Way Garden Halloween

In late October Vaughan Way garden is transformed into a spooky **Halloween experience**. Ghosts, witches, skeletons and a giant spider web hanging among the trees and shrubs scare to the delight of hundreds of local children and adults alike.



## November 2021

Meeting followed by a Members and friends bonfire and BBQ at Tarling West Estate Residents Garden. Charcoal saved for soil improvement for the garden for 2022.

## 2022

### January 2022

Moved very heavy seasoned railway sleepers into Deancross Street allotments and built raised beds for vegetable growing; heavy work! These old sleepers, were kindly donated by Network Rail/Murphy Construction when renewing the bridge at Watney Street.

### February 2022

**Storm Eunice** caused some damage in our gardens, broken greenhouse windows, blasted delicate buds and plants, some where lots, broke the symbolic “S” off an old stump in the community orchard, Swedenborg Square Orchard;

- Sprucing up a members’ woodland garden in Vaughan Way;
- Provided new growing patches to spare shrubs given to EICG for free by St George the developer currently building the London Dock site, (formerly News International);
- Sharing an electric shredder, for lots of shredding of old branches in our gardens later used for mulching;
- Creation of bug hotels from fallen logs on the Tarling West Estate.
- Creation of a log/woodchip mound for fungi cultivation at Tarling West Residents Garden.

### March 2022

- Tidying and creating a new growing bed for a **vulnerable, elderly neighbour**, Swedenborg Gardens.

Creation of a micro-pond at Tarling West Residents Garden, population of pond with water irises, duck weed for oxygenation and tadpoles (on loan) from Deancross Allotments.

### Wider audiences

**Filming of EICG** members by the **RSPB** who were recording our EICG story on why and how we are doing what we do. Filming of EICG members showing their gardens over two days.

Also expected an article in RSPB's UK wide monthly magazine.

### **Superbloom** in the Tower of London moat

- As E1CG, we were invited to plant in the Superbloom wildflower exhibition for the celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in the Tower of London moat. Several gardens received a donation of wildflower seeds from the Superbloom project.



### **April 2022**

**Lending a hand and a little experience** preparing and planting wildflowers in primary schools

Responding to questions for the RSPB's article about E1CG.

Cleaning bugs from box hedge at James Gair Memorial Garden.

Saturday 23 April E1CG First Annual General Meeting and social at Swedenborg Square Orchard.



### **E1CG August Garden Tours: Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday 29 and 30 August, 2021**

There were two guided garden tours visiting seven of our E1CG member's gardens. For each space E1CG founder members, quite honestly, spoke about and showed off their special gardens.



Many of these gardens would not be normally seen by the public which emphasised our tours as a bit of magical mystery tour of curiosities. I would call that very good value for money as we did not charge anyone.

Each garden had its own special character, reflected by a personal vision, concentrated effort, and preference on style and type. To bear in mind, these gardens have other stakeholders who bear a significant influence such as landowners, consisting of housing associations and London Borough of Tower Hamlets, not to exclude all visitors and users: these spaces can be a balancing challenge to maintain.

On the individual characteristics: we presented a formal structured memorial garden, a formal herbaceous border (in St George's Gardens), thriving allotments with highly colourful flowers and a small pond (Deancross

Street allotments), a beautiful rambling garden centred by a lawn and lots of places to sit and contemplate (Woollen House gardens), a dark, enchanting and amazing woodland glade (Vaughan Way Wildlife Garden), several patches by the railway arches improved by wildflowers, (Cornwall Street) and a community orchard with wildflower strips, 47 fruit trees including cherry, apples, pears, medlar and plums; the entire orchard being surrounded by raised vegetable beds, (Swedenborg Square Community Orchard). Another garden is a community vegetable and flower growing sun trap back yard transformed by scented jasmine and honeysuckle trailing over a high fence, (Tarling West Estate Residents' garden).



Total visitors on day one were better than we ever expected, especially on the Sunday. Our eye catching lamp post poster campaign obviously worked. Our online networks also buzzed and we had visitors from much further away than originally envisioned.

We had a slightly lower number of visitors for our look around Deancross Street allotments and Wollen House on the Bank holiday, day two suited this small space peppered by vegetable beds which did not want to be trampled. All visitors sampled a delightful tea given (by Pat) in Woollen House gardens. Anyone open to baking scones, for next time?

We told our funders London Dock Community Fund that we would have a wide range of ethnicities, and ages reflecting the cosmopolitan and changing nature this borough. The oldest, you are never too old only as old as you feel, was 79 and the youngest 26 years of age. We were very happy to accommodate such wide range of interest and ages on our jolly, safe, walking tour of our gardens.

We were also trying to enlist more members to EICG on both days, we have had a nice boost as 17 expressed an interest in becoming a EICG member.

As interest was sparked by our garden tour, many would like – which we had not initially thought about – to be placed on a list for further events. This was an important chance for us to receive feedback, advice and new inputs into what we do. We hope to repeat the tour annually, this year (2022) and next, and potentially include other gardens and community growing spaces in the tour. Look out for future announcements. We look forward to meeting more gardeners and visiting each others gardens in the future.

– Genia Leontowitsch



## The Origins of Vaughan Way Wildlife Garden

It is nearly 10 years since a group of neighbours decided to clear a piece of derelict council land smothered in brambles, ivy and strewn with discarded rubbish.

It was the start of the Vaughan Way wildlife garden, which has now been landscaped with a winding path, nesting boxes, insect hotels and benches for locals to sit and relax.

The aim of the garden has been to provide a habitat friendly to birds and insects all year round.

It is now planted with thousands of spring flowering bulbs, nectar rich shrubs and many summer and autumn wildflowers and perennials.

– John Schuster



## What is a Community Garden?

Is a question we posed each other several times as we began to form an association of gardens and gardeners in the E1 area. James Gair Memorial Garden, Tarling West Residents Garden, Deancross Street Allotments, Swedenborg Square Orchard, Woollen House, St Georges in the East Park, Vaughan Way Wildlife Garden each of these green spaces are used, maintained and developed by members of the local community for the benefit of people, wildlife and nature. Each has

different uses, histories, habitats, accessibility, models of financial support and diversity of users. As the RSPB put it in a [recent feature on E1CG](#):

Helping local people from all walks of life learn new skills and maintain the gardens builds a sense of connection, ownership and pride for the plants and wildlife. It's not all hard graft though, members are welcome to simply enjoy the green spaces. At the centre of every garden is a desire to build awareness and appreciation of nature in this urban environment

Of the diverse green spaces E1CG members maintain, several are shared spaces on former local authority housing estates, some have public access, some do not. Some were established by one body and managed by another, other pieces of land have been purposefully brought back into horticultural use after a period of neglect. All require ongoing communication with the immediate community living around them and often some form of negotiation with landowners, the council and other stakeholders with interests in the area. Its not always a walk in the park! Into each a community, however small or large



has formed and poured its hard work, good will, ingenuity and generosity to fashion environments which are supportive of mutually beneficial forms of life. However the therapeutic aspects are there for anyone to enjoy, whether for passers-by or deeply involved gardeners, our association promotes intergenerational exchange, helps older and isolated people meet each other, promotes a sense of pride and ownership of our local environment which by working to improve public access to green spaces also helps mitigate ASB and littering.

An orchard, tree-lined hedged path,

nursery greenhouses, herb gardens, shared vegetable plots, individually worked allotments, ponds, wildflower meadows, residents garden, raised beds in car parks, voluntary work on an unmanaged and under-resourced local park, *hugelkultur* mounds, chicken coops, hot bins, bug hotels, kill mulches, bird baths, boxes and feeders, wildlife awareness and wildlife conservation, indoor and outdoor composting facilities – all these are different elements and approaches to greening and improving the biodiversity in the small and medium available urban spaces which are shared in different combinations by our member gardens. Each is an answer to the question of what is a community garden.

– Anthony Iles



## Peregrine Falcons in Shadwell

Shadwell has been home to a breeding pair of Peregrine falcons for about 12 years and they were among the first pairs to successfully breed since these birds of prey started to colonise the London area in 1998. Although still very rare in London, numbers are increasing every year. In 2019 it was estimated that there were 53 breeding pairs of which 26 successfully fledged 69 juveniles. Nearly all were nesting on man-made structures.

Peregrine falcons are the fastest creature on earth – while flying, they can dive to capture and kill their prey in mid-air reaching speeds of up to 240 miles per hour. London, E1 being home to the world's fastest animal is definitely something to celebrate.

Here at EICG we know what a magnificent place Shadwell is to live so we're honored our resident Peregrines share this sentiment. Our close proximity to the river and areas of open water such as Shadwell Basin ensures a plentiful supply of prey species for these falcons who like to feed on ducks, moorhens and

sea gulls. Although they're also happy with feral (city) pigeons of which there is always a plentiful supply in London.



Watch out for the young fledglings in the summer months when they start to fly and learn to hunt. This is a photo by EICG Trustee taken on the balcony of a tower block on St George's Estate.

Last year, for the first time in many years, there were sadly no juveniles from our nesting pair but this year all the signs are that chicks have hatched so around St George's Gardens, we're looking forward to another summer of the now familiar soundtrack of the loud and distinctive screeching calls of the hungry young and their parents.

These incredible raptors live for 5–6 years but the oldest known Peregrine was more than 16 years old. There are only 1,500 breeding pairs in the whole of the UK so consequently Peregrines receive the highest protection in law being a Schedule 1 Listed Species making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb at, on or near an 'active' nest.

If you would like to learn more about Peregrine Falcons, I highly recommend an extraordinary and wonderful book, J.A. Baker's 55-year-old classic, *[The Peregrine](#)*.

You can also view [live webcam](#) of Peregrines nesting at London Metropolitan University.

– Julian Cole

## As I Sit Here of an Evening

As I oft times sit here of an evening, with my cup of coco and a custard cream with the countryside sounds drifting through the window, a car burglar alarm, the ambulance then the police with their melodic tones and my near neighbours at each others throats and their 6 children howling in the background, I occasionally drift off into that nebulous space between clarity and unconsciousness so beloved by other artists and free thinkers of the past.

And as I sit here lo, who do I see before me but Mr. and Mrs Micawber, no, surely no, but indeed tis they, James and Genia and as they pass I catch a whisper of their conversation, "didn't we have such larks Mr Micawber" "larks indeed Mrs Micawber, larks indeed."

Hullo, who could this be, in a pony and trap going to the coast, why it's Pat, no, it's Pegotty. The question is, is she willing and according to gossip she most certainly is!

Why, bless my soul, who could this be, why of course it's John, but wait, no, it's Mr Dicks, and of course if you ever want putting to rights then Mr Dicks is the man for you, and if you get donkeys on your green, then of course Mr Dicks can wave a broom with the best of them.

Is that Mr Rochester I see astride his favourite black stallion, looking all brooding and contemplating Greece, no it's Anthony. And what a fine figure of a man he is, ravishing here there and everywhere with a fiddlesticks and a heyho my hearties,

And would you believe it here comes Pip with that eager beaver look and aren't I a good boy demeanour.

Wait no, it's Julian, with his golden locks waving mischievously in the air, chopper in hand and ready to drill deep wherever it's needed. One of life's unsung heroes, satisfying here and satisfying there, gratefully received by all who have need. The very trees in their roots shimmer with fear as he approaches them, then sigh with relief as he marks them down for another day.

But they fade, come back I call come back, but into the distance they go whilst I open my eyes to see a young lady in a white smock, smile glued to face, offering me a selection of pills and a glass of water.

Goodnight she says, goodnight!!!!

– Melvyn Smith



## Newsflash: Good News About the Vacant Land Adjacent to Shadwell Station

For seven years residents of Tarling West Estate have been working to bring a piece of land, formerly a part of the gardens surrounding the estate, back into community use and enjoyment. [The land was sold by LBTH](#) to Transport for London (TFL) for the repair and improvements to Shadwell Overground Station. This seemed a valid use of the land at the time, but residents were disappointed that after the works were completed the land was not returned, but instead left vacant then leased for inappropriate business use as a 'Box Café'. After years of raising concerns about littering, noise and access problems, residents, with support from members of E1CG and LBTH, have negotiated an arrangement with TFL to restore a garden on the site co-managed by members of E1CG and local residents. E1CG received a legal agreement from TFL in April and have support from Tower Hamlets Council to provide funding. E1CG will be planning the garden design this year and implementing the plans over 2022–3. Watch this space...

\*\*\*\*\* PLANT SALE \*\*\*\*\*

**Seeds, Plants and refreshments**

**14 MAY 2022**

**12–4pm**

at Deancross Street Allotments, London, E1  
(Stepped access)

Come and grab yourselves a bargain!

<https://goo.gl/maps/CBLT8d7yv6r3tZm87>

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