

Tayside Biodiversity Partnership



BIODIVERSITY

THE VARIETY OF LIFE

TAYSIDE BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

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PHOTOCALL OPPORTUNITY

Glendoick Garden Centre:

Saturday 17th or Sunday 18th October

between 12 noon and 3.30pm

PRESS RELEASE

Apple Weekend Celebrations

For Immediate publication

A bumper crop of events is being planned for the second Carse of Gowrie Orchard Festival in mid-October. The first will be Glendoick's Apple Weekend on 17th and 18th October celebrating "all things fruit".

Throughout the weekend there will be pressing of the Glendoick organic apples so that everyone can try the fresh juice as it's made. There will be a children's art competition and "apple gifting" tags to make. A range of fruit trees will be available for purchase from the Garden Centre, including local Scottish varieties, apple books and foods for sale and an apple-themed menu in the Garden Centre restaurant. Members of the Carse of Gowrie Historic Orchards Forum will be on hand to explain the history of the orchards as well as gather more information for the orchard survey which started in 2007. There will be a display of Scottish fruit varieties on both days.

Each day will feature different guests. On Saturday 17th October Fiona Bird will be demonstrating how to make apple and chocolate pancakes, as well as signing her new cookery book "Kid's Kitchen". Kenneth Cox will also be signing his two books "Scotland for Gardeners" and "Garden Plants for Scotland".

Patricia and Kenneth Cox will be on hand all day Saturday to pass on their many years' experience in fruit growing. Cairn o'Mohr Winery will be offering tastings of their apple juice and cider.

On Sunday 18th October, Glendoick will be welcoming back pomology experts Willie Duncan and Will Stewart who will be “holding court” to identify any fruit that is brought to them.

There will be something for all ages at the two-day celebrations at the Glendoick Garden Centre which will take place between 11am and 4pm on both Saturday and Sunday.

Launched at the Glendoick Apple Weekend, the Festival will culminate with a Family Fruit Weekend on 24th and 25th October at Historic Scotland’s Elcho Castle, near Rhynd, Perth, where visitors will be encouraged to pick a bag of apples to take home to make an apple pie. Historic Scotland Rangers will be taking children on bug hunts in the orchard there and The Apple Man will be pressing fruit and identifying local varieties.

Last year’s Family Fruit Tree Planting Day at Errol created the first “fruit avenue” on the Carse at the beginning of what will be an Orchard Trail at Gas Brae. This year, the local community is invited to weed those trees for an hour on Saturday, 24th October (turn out with tools and gloves at 2pm) and then retire to the community hall at 3.30pm for tea and apple cake, children’s activities and fruit pressing.

Catherine Lloyd, Tayside Biodiversity Partnership’s Co-ordinator, is overseeing the week-long Orchard Festival. “Last year, over 3,000 people - local people and visitors alike - took part in the very first Orchard Festival and it was just assumed there would be another Festival to follow - and it has happened!” says Catherine.

“This year Cairn o’Mohr is holding its own Rootstock FruitFest to coincide with the Festival. This will take place as the grand finale of the Week on 25th October with apple pressing demonstrations, tours and tastings of wine, cider and Carse of Gowrie apple juice.” Catherine continues “Classical guitarist Dave Brace-girdle will be playing on the deck in the afternoon and there will be a bar and hot food on the day.”

Check the biodiversity website for full details of the Orchard Festival programme:
www.taysidebiodiversity.co.uk or ring Catherine on 01382 433042 (leave a message if necessary).

- ENDS -

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

- National Apple Day (21st October) is now 20 years old. Further details: www.commonground.org.uk.
- The Carse of Gowrie Orchard Festival is celebrating the work of the new community “Historic Orchard Forum” and the increasing interest in using local fruit.
- Traditional orchards have declined by 95% in some areas of the UK - in the Carse, of 51 known (mapped) orchards only 9 are in good heart and many have been totally lost in the past few decades.
- There is now a Traditional Orchards Habitat Action Plan for Britain as orchards can provide excellent “biodiversity hotspots”.
- The mosaic of habitats that comprise a traditional orchard provide food and shelter for hundreds of species of wildlife. This important habitat is becoming increasingly rare as we rely increasingly on imports to provide cheap fruit throughout the year. This has left the traditional orchard habitat at risk from neglect, intensification of agriculture and pressure from land development.
- In Tayside there is increasing interest in planting community and school orchards as well as safeguarding and managing the existing orchards. The Carse of Gowrie is one of the key areas in Scotland for orchards (the other is the Clyde Valley Orchards). There are orchards throughout Tayside, however - many of them pear or plum orchards, not just apple orchards. Most of them need safeguarding.