



FLOURISHING GUERRILLA GARDENS

Just over one year ago, we began work on a new project on Cornmarket St. A derelict site at the entrance to Portney's Lane on the historic Coal Quay had been left lying in ruin and was covered in weeds, rocks and rubbish. As well as this, the space was a hotspot for anti-social behaviour and was becoming a makeshift car-park with people abandoning their vehicles there.

For months we had been looking at the space and imagining its many potential uses. Luckily, on the back of a successful grant application to GIY and Energia Ireland, we were able to secure the funds and materials to transform the space into a flourishing fruit and vegetable garden.

Months of hard work by the Mad About Cork volunteers followed. The site was cleared out with shovels and a pick axe, while large wooden planters were built and installed after levelling the ground with gravel and rolls of grass. Over the following weeks and months, the garden was tended to twice weekly by the volunteers and, as a result, we managed to harvest a bumper crop of potatoes, cabbages, beetroot, runner beans and much more from the garden the following autumn.

Over the recent winter months, we've been making further additions and expanding the garden. New large planters have been built and installed in the garden, each containing a native tree species with wildflowers planted around their base. What a thrill it was to see an oak, aspen, hazel, and whitethorn tree flaunt their leaves recently and bring even more colour to the garden this spring.

In keeping with our aim of aiding the city's biodiversity in 2018, we've also been working on adding a new wildflower section at the Coal Quay garden. Even more wooden planters have been built and planted up with native wildflowers to create an urban refuge for



butterflies, bees, and other insects. We've also made several simple hoverfly lagoons and placed them around the garden in the hope of creating a suitable habitat for them to thrive.

While all this work was being done, we were also making plans to build on the success of last year's crop from our veg garden. This year, we're using a variety of heritage seeds and trying some different veg. Over the last few weeks the volunteers have been busy doing the ground work that will hopefully pay off in a few months time. Expect potatoes, kale, onions, French beans, radishes, turnips, blackcurrants, gooseberries, and more. We've also built our first greenhouse using some upcycled materials and, for the first time, we have some tasty tomatoes

growing in the garden.

Over the next few weeks and months we'll be busy tending to our crop on the Coal Quay and also looking after our other guerrilla garden sites across town. With so much going on new volunteers are always welcome to join us and pitch in. Just get in touch at madaboutcork.com.

Keep up to date with our work @MadAboutCork on Facebook, twitter and Instagram, and to get involved email info@madaboutcork.com.