

Spring Rebirth in EcoGarden

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Biology teacher and current Human Ecology Masters student, Ewen Hardie, is revitalised by the new environment he has found himself in at CHE.

After years of spending more time dealing with errant behaviour than teaching science and frustrated by a painfully prescriptive curriculum in which bewildering technical terms obscured the search for solutions to practical problems, Ewen came to the CHE in the hope of finding a new way.

He said: "Since then the course has informed my teaching and my teaching (now only three days a week) is informing my course work.

"I was recently approached by a member of our school council who had a budget of £2000 that they had voted to spend on an 'eco-garden' within the school grounds. They'd been told that I was the person to speak to. Was I interested? You bet I was."

"Since then the school has received delivery of numerous bird and squirrel feeders, several kilograms of seed and peanuts, bat boxes, and an insect habitat with a Perspex window to allow us to view its inhabitants. We have gardening equipment and books on creating a wildlife haven. Each of the three biology classrooms has an aquarium style wormery that allows us to view the worms in action, the home economics classrooms each have a receptacle for collecting compost and by the greenhouse there sits an enormous 'can-o-worms' composter ready for action."

Ewen added that in the not too distant future they will receive an exquisite piece of hand carved garden furniture from the Four Winds Inspiration Centre in Edinburgh. It will be designed with the dual purpose of encouraging wildlife (it incorporates a planter) and encouraging pupils to enjoy the space they have created.

"I have been working with a member of the art department who is keen to include her pupils in the design of the garden," he added. "Our vision is of a space that will act as an inner-city wildlife haven as well as an outdoor classroom for science, art, music...who knows what else?"

"Perhaps most exciting of all is the fact that Edinburgh City Council has agreed to provide money to clean up the site we have in mind. This should be completed when we return from our Easter break."

In fact, Ewen has been presented with not one, but several opportunities at once. He said: "I have also been creating a unit of work to fill a space in the third year course and the option of designing an elective module for second year. I've had a fantastic response to the work so far and the potential for linking things together is tremendously exciting.

"Anyone in Edinburgh can follow our progress simply by keeping an eye on the strip of woodland sandwiched between Drummond Community High School and the Mansfield Traquair Centre at the foot of Broughton Street.

"It is amazing what can change in the space of a few months! There is hope."

Link:

Drummond Community High School