

# Would your child like to join an after-school gardening club at the school?

## Which day will the gardening club be on?

To plan around current staggered school finishing times and bubbles, we will see what interest there is in the club amongst different age groups, and then work with you to find suitable days and hours. We would hope to start at least one group in the next half of term, on a Wednesday. The club will be based in the school polytunnel and gardens.



## Who will be running the gardening club?

The club will be run by the school (on the same basis as the art club) and led by Ellen Weaver, our most recent addition to the outdoor education team. Many of the children will already have been in curriculum sessions with Ellen. You can find out more about her extensive experience in working with children on the [www.appletreeinitiative.co.uk](http://www.appletreeinitiative.co.uk) team page.

## How much will gardening club cost?

Typically there are six sessions each half term and children are signed up for all sessions at a cost of £36. School will set up payment for you on SchoolMoney and payment is in advance for all sessions. If only five sessions are possible due to a short half term, total payment is £30.

## What will happen to any profits from the club?

Potential profits from the gardening club will be used to fund more in-curriculum outdoor sessions, helping us to make the outdoor education initiative sustainable long-term.

## Why start a gardening club now?

Despite the Covid lockdown, outdoor education at Appledore School has gone from strength to strength, with the Garden Connections project creating new outdoor learning areas around the school, including a WW2 garden, a larger orchard and of course the valuable new polytunnel. A medicinal garden, foraging garden, water conservation and recycle/reuse garden, pollination garden, craft materials garden, wellbeing garden and others are also at different stages of production, and new trees have been planted in the woods. Activities the children have been involved in have included surveying areas and producing accurate scale drawings, weaving willow edgings for borders, digging, weeding, planting, testing soil, planting trees, planting willow hedges and much more. They have been learning about parts of a plant, what plants need to grow, photosynthesis, germination, properties of wood, companion planting, sustainability, and biodiversity.

In their feedback, the children are telling us that they find these sessions interesting and fun, and they are eager to do more. Because of this level of interest in gardening and the development of these new garden areas to enjoy, and because we want to offer more outdoor opportunities after the pressures of the Covid lockdown, we felt that this was the right time to start a gardening club. From September, the school will also be starting up a child-led eco-committee and working towards **eco school** status.

## How do I express an interest in my child/children joining the club?

Email Ellen and Lucy at: [lucy@appletreeinitiative.co.uk](mailto:lucy@appletreeinitiative.co.uk), giving details of your name, your child's name and year group, and preferred days of the week for your child to attend gardening club. We will then get in touch with you to make further arrangements and to answer any questions you have.

## Can your family please help us with watering?

**We are hoping to create a rota for watering in the polytunnel, and in some other areas when the weather is very dry. Could your family commit to one watering session every two weeks or so? If there are enough of us it becomes a small commitment from each of us, and we can adjust the rota as required if you need to work around other events, so a very flexible system.**