

The Permaculture Group's July Working Party

A small but enthusiastic team convened at Donna and Martin's beautiful property on Sunday July 9th. The weather was wonderful, the company convivial and the scenery breathtaking- a big relief as the last session scheduled here was rained off!



They have about 12 acres of land divided into 3 fields. The first 2 are already planted with young trees, this will become native woodland. They have an orchard planted with young trees and a growing area for potatoes, brassicas etc. The third field is currently let for grazing. The poly tunnel is crammed to the gunnels with a variety of edibles from the familiar to some rather unusual produce.

Donna and Martin had set clear and achievable goals for our day and, while we may have been small in number, we achieved a tremendous amount.

These were the tasks that were set:

1. To weed around the orchard fruit trees and sow annual seeds to attract beneficial insects.
2. To dig over last year's veg plot, add a bit of compost & sow some beans & kale.
3. To walk around the 'new woodland' checking that the trees are growing and replace any that had died. To pull out the long grass inside the trees' protective spirals (it was all thanks to Lynne we remembered to do that!).
4. To chop back the brambles to reclaim the old garden.
5. To dig out an old field drain/stream.



All the above targets were achieved apart from number five - due to the lack of rain over the last weeks the stream was dry and was too hard to trace. Donna had decided to recover the veg plot after adding the compost ready for new potatoes next year rather than sowing beans and kale.

The orchard planted with a variety of young trees promises to be a very fruitful area of the smallholding. Four of us made short work of clearing around the trunks and sowing the wildflower seeds at their feet.

As we moved the coverings a multitude of wildlife was revealed. A baby mouse, barely able to move and eyes still closed, was carefully placed in a position of safety after his nest was disturbed while we dug the compost. A small corner of the compost pile was left so that he would not be further disturbed. A bewildered frog was removed to the bracken.

Some of us crawled inside the low fruit cage and picked a few bowls of blackcurrants and gooseberries while David and Martin fearlessly ventured into the bramble covered old garden at the bottom of a steep slope and reclaimed a fair area of land.



To complete a perfect morning we had been invited to join the annual Cwmdu picnic party. We were warmly welcomed by the villagers on the green in front of the pub to enjoy our lunch. Vegan hot dogs, wonderful salads, sandwiches and dips washed down by elderflower spritzer- a true taste of midsummer! Donna and Martin have asked that their thanks be passed on to all who attended.

