

Case Study: Phillip's Park Plant Nursery

Outline

Park warden & ecologist Dave Dutton had a dream of creating a plant nursery in Prestwich. A park volunteer called Peter took early retirement in 1994, and since then has coordinated plant production at the site that was set up, in return for shared use of the site for his allotment growing – a total of 4 - 8hrs a week depending on season. The nursery produces wildflowers and trees to order for the council, who place orders for planting parks, schools & church yards, and coppice areas in Philip's Park. As well as meadow wildflowers, there are wetland and woodland wildflowers, and across 20 years has produced more than 50,000 native deciduous trees, around 3,000 a year. Selling these generates £3-6k a year, which goes towards park projects.



Tree nursery



Meadow-wildflowers area

Features

- Has two large polytunnels, with heated propagation beds, and irrigation
- A secure strawbale store-room was built on site in around 2003, as part of a series of courses
- Grow mainly perennial wildflowers, started from cuttings and runners, division, and layering, as well as seeds
- Six tree-nursery beds with around 700 trees a bed, trees from around 1-5 years old grow from seed
- Heritage fruit tree orchard, to propagate specific fruit varieties

- Meadow vetchling
- Ragged robin
- Purple loosestrife
- Bugels
- Golden saxifrage
- Yellow pimpernels
- Red campions
- Birdsfoot trefoil
- Sneezewort
- Greater stichwort
- Meadowsweet
- Primrose



- Marginals inc
- Watermint
 - Marsh marigolds
 - Brook lime
 - Yellow flag
- Trees inc
- Hawthorn
 - Rowan
 - Hazel
 - Oak
 - Spindle tree
 - Birch

Strengths

Marginals

Woodland-wildflowers

- Very low ongoing costs, only have to cover cost of pots & maintain irrigation polytunnels and beds, to be able to generate moderate revenue
- Partnership with Bury Council, who agree to buy from them
- Plants cultivated from the wild, so all are very much local varieties, as well as species
- Project supports resources that bring a lot of people to the park, including
 - Apple Day linked to the orchard,
 - Coppicing, greenwood-working, and charcoal-making workshops
 - Wildflower-ID & seed-collecting walks
 - Hedge-laying, and weaving living willow
 - Fruit tree grafting, and all kinds of gardening

This project turned a little used corner of the park, into a great asset. It has gone on to be more-than self funding, and to drive and support wider engagement in the park, over decades.