



Getting Gardens Growing



The curriculum for excellence strongly emphasises outdoor learning and promotion of health and wellbeing. Children learn a great deal about healthy lifestyles and choices by planting seeds, finding out how crops grow, harvesting, cooking and finally eating their own produce. The additional life long skills and pleasures gained are part of what the Cairngorms Food for Life project (CFFL) aims to support.

CFFL education officer has been helping schools prepare their gardens for the growing season. Many head teachers rely on the good will and effort of parents but sometimes there is just too much to do to get gardens into a state ready for the children to grow vegetables. One big problem for Cairngorms schools however is rabbits. Many pupils see their efforts wasted due to these pests.



A partnership between CFFL and a local apprentice scheme run by the Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust (HCHT) started in March 2012 and promises to be fruitful all round. The apprentices spend three days a week in a local college learning plumbing, electrical, and engineering techniques etc. They then get practical experience with either contractors or community projects for the rest of the week. So far the boys have helped with church renovations, tourist trails and cottage hospital gardens.

CFFL education officer organised a day for the apprentices to learn to erect rabbit proof fencing in school gardens. The boys learn another skill and the school gets a garden free of pests!

The boys work really well saying they 'just love it' and are eager for further work with the project. They will be helping other schools by laying raised beds, erecting more fencing and even creating some gardens from scratch. The experience also contributes to the skills set the boys can use in further employment.



A Head Teacher praised the fantastic job done at her school and looks forward to a productive year in the garden.