

## Rural Connect Newsletter No. 16

Autumn is definately here! There's a chill in the air, and the mercury only read 5°C this morning (Brrrr). Although it's cold, Autumn is a great season, and if the rain ever stops hopefully we will get some lovely crisp clear days!

Thank you to everyone who came along to one of our recent events- we hope you enjoyed them! If there's anything you would like to see in the future – let us know!

**rural.connect@sruc.ac.uk**

# RURAL CONNECT

## DISCOVER

We have redeveloped our website, with lots of new sections covering everything rural in West Lothian; growing your own, food and farming, heritage, environment and countryside – plus lots of links and resources to download! [www.ruralconnectwestlothian.co.uk](http://www.ruralconnectwestlothian.co.uk)

We will be updating it regularly and we want to make it as interactive as possible; so if there's anything missing you would like to see, or even a burning question about the rural environment of West Lothian you would like answered – [get in touch!](#)



## SHARE

Last newsletter we gave you tips on preparing your soil for next year by turning it over; this week we are giving you some more tips about getting your soil ready for sowing.

Turning the soil with the addition of farmyard manure or compost will feed the soil and help prepare it for next years sowing. Another beneficial act for the soil would be to sow green manures, something like Italian ryegrass, which is sown now into beds and ploughed into the soil in early spring next year. Regarding what you can sow at this time of year, try sowing overwintering onions, turnip, spinach and oriental veg. Another useful thing to do would be to sow wildflower seeds now. Some wildflower seeds need a bit of a cold snap in order for them to germinate. You can sow them into a container with some seed compost and cover them with a light layer of gravel to allow in light but restrict moss and weed growth, and remember to date and label the pot so you don't forget what is in there.



## CONNECT

Rural Connect are looking to develop a 'Farming in West Lothian' education pack for primary schools, in partnership with RHET (Royal Highland Education Trust). We want this pack to be directly tied into the Curriculum for Excellence and so have two teacher placements available through EEBL (Excellence in Education through Business Links). If you are a teacher with a farming background or an interest in farming, and would like to get more information about the EEBL placements, please [click here](#) for further information. You can also contact Jemma for more information: [jemma.black@sruc.ac.uk](mailto:jemma.black@sruc.ac.uk) or 01506 864800.



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



THIS PROJECT IS PART FINANCED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.  
WEST LOTHIAN LEADER 2005 - 2010 PROGRAMME

# 'Top Team Picks'

As always, our team gives their 'top picks' of things to see or do over the next two weeks.

If you follow one of the team's suggestions, please let us know what you thought of their 'top pick'!



**Eric**

Why not spend this fortnight mapping out? I was doing a lot of walking last month and getting away from the television after dinner ( worst time to fall asleep) and wondered how far some of my walks were and I came across this great web site. This site lets you map your walk and give you a distance walked. Also has a post code search section highlighting walks in your local area. The site will even measure your fitness levels as you progress with your walking plan. Go on take and walk and surf this web site ; [www.walk4life.info](http://www.walk4life.info)



**Russell**

I will be doing a lot of walking this week to coincide with West Lothian Walking Week. The benefits of walking for our health have been discussed for years, and walking is a great way of keeping fit, but that is not the main reason, if I am being honest, why I enjoy walking so much. It's true that gyms are not for me, I prefer to be out in the fresh air with the chance to interact and observe nature; and it is for this reason that I walk. But that's the great thing about walking, you can have any excuse or reason you want, at the end of the day it means you have to get outside and be a part of nature. Have a look at the [Walking Week programme](#), I am sure that there will be a walk in there for everyone, or call/email the HITS team on: 01506 775626, email: [HIT@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:HIT@westlothian.gov.uk)



**Bernice**

The cold winds are coming in and it's the time of year for runny noses and soar throats. The food we eat is very important in providing us with the vitamins and antioxidants required in warning off nasty bugs. Everyone knows that oranges are a great source of vitamin C however these do not grow locally. Blackcurrants have just as much vitamin C than oranges and can be grown locally, ensuring your food miles are kept low. Garlic is also great for warding off colds as it contains Allicin which helps to boost the immune system. To find out more about what foods are beneficial at this time of year visit;  
<http://www.supersavvyme.co.uk/article/Five-foods-to-keep-colds-away>  
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vitamins-minerals/Pages/Vitamins-minerals.aspx>



**Jemma**

I love this time of year when the weather turns a bit colder and autumn fruit and veg comes into season, because it means a return to stews, soups and hot fruit puddings! This weekend I got a huge bowl of plums off a local smallholder and since I couldn't possibly eat them all, I made them into a crumble and chucked in some blackcurrants too. *For the crumble, rub 175g plain flour, 50g caster sugar and 50g dark muscavado sugar into 100g of chilled butter cut into cubes. Once this resembles fine breadcrumbs stir in the zest of two lemons and 100g rolled oats. For the filling put 15 ripe plums, halved with the stones removed, and about 200g blackcurrants into an ovenproof dish Sprinkle 100g of sugar and the juice of half a lemon over the fruit and top with the crumble mix.; bake at 180C for about 45 minutes!*