

## Rural Connect Newsletter No. 30

Things are really hotting up in West Lothian this month, with a wealth of activities and events for you and your family and friends to get involved with. It looks like our weather is improving and we can see the leaves forming on the trees, the spring flowers popping up and the season charging ahead, which is very welcome indeed. The [spring photo competition is underway](#) and you can send your spring shots to our website for the chance to win £50 of photography vouchers.

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# RURAL CONNECT

## DISCOVER

### THE JOHN MUIR FESTIVAL



[The John Muir Festival](#) will take place between the 17<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> April, with a series of events around West Lothian to celebrate the life of the famous man, as well as to celebrate the opening up of the new national pathway across Scotland which is named after him. John Muir (1838 – 1914) was born in Dunbar and emigrated to Wisconsin at 11 years old. He became very well known for his love of the outdoors and is considered the pioneer of modern ecology. The festival in West Lothian starts with [Finders Eaters at Polkemmet Country Park](#) on 17<sup>th</sup> April, then on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> you can head to [Almondell Country Park for some Easter willow weaving with the Rural Connect team](#). [The John Muir Festival celebrations will take place at Linlithgow peel on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April](#), between 9:30am – 11:30am, come along to learn more about John Muir, learn how to make seed bombs and get involved with more nature activities. The Rural Connect team have also been busy producing a John Muir education pack for Primary schools. [You can download them by clicking here](#).

## SHARE

Everyone is welcome to the [SRUC Oatridge Farm Open Day](#), being held on Sunday the 4<sup>th</sup> of May, 12pm – 4pm. There will be a mini-farmers market, environmental activities for families, demonstrations of old and new farming techniques, a vintage farm machinery display, your chance to get up close to a cow, and walk around a real working farm and find out all about the work they do. There will be something for everyone to get involved with and we are very much looking forward to seeing everyone coming along for an action packed day of fun on the farm. Don't forget your wellies!



## CONNECT



[The West Lothian Council Rangers Service have produced their 2014 events and activities booklet](#). There is so much to do and see this year with the Rangers Service we really recommend picking up a copy and finding out what is going on. To give you a few examples of their events: in May you can take part in Den building or go badger watching. In June, get involved with their guided walks exploring nature and do some pond dipping. So grab a copy and get planning your summer of outdoor activities with the Rangers Service.



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WEST LOTHIAN LEADER 2008 - 2014 PROGRAMME



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## 'Top Team Picks'

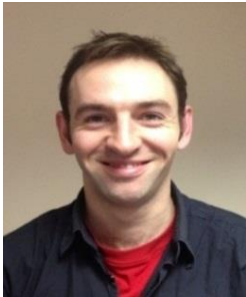
As always, our team gives their 'top picks' of things to see or do over the next two weeks.

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



**Eric**

**New Plants.** An ideal time just now for you to look round the garden centres and plant suppliers to see what they have on offer at present. Many of the plants will be in pots and have a label with them showing size and preferred position – make sure that you read these as many people buy in haste and repent a couple of years later when they have a giant lavatera or forsythia bush spreading out over a large part of the garden and blocking out other plants. RHS have developed a useful application to help you; add in any details into their online searcher and it comes up with some suggestions for borders, ground cover, patio areas etc ; <http://apps.rhs.org.uk/plantselector/>.



**Russell**

If you have ever wanted to get involved with growing your own fruit and vegetables but did not know where to start, [then a good resources to give you a helping hand is this one](#), it is a growing calendar that has been tailored to suit the Scottish climate and is good for all the wanna be green fingered beginner gardeners out there. You can download it from our website and use it as a guide to growing your own food. Then when next year's growing season comes around you will already be ahead of the game.



**Bernice**

This weekend I will be taking lots of willow down to Almondell Country Park (11-2pm) [were I will be doing a willow weaving workshop](#) alongside the West Lothian Council Rangers Service. The workshop will be aimed at children of all ages and will provide an introduction to willow weaving. Adults are also welcome and can receive tips and demonstrations on how to get started. Come along and give it a go!



**Jemma**

With the appearance of the sun, the plants are starting to buzz with activity! I've recently been on a Bumblebee ID course and it's so interesting once you start looking at bees closely! Bee's really need our help, and one way you can help is through the Bumblebee Conservation Trust! You can help through taking pictures of any bumblebee you see and sending it in with its location so that they can keep track of the different bumblebee species and their distribution across Britain. You can also help by signing up for a BeeWalk, where you undertake a survey monthly to help track changes! All info can be found at <http://bumblebeeconservation.org/get-involved>



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