



EWWR good practices and case studies

1. Details of Action:

EWWR Organiser: Odile Le Bolloch, EPA Ireland
Country/Region: Ireland
Name of nominated project developer: Patricia Oliver
Name of nominated action: Harvest Project
Place:
Town: Dublin
Region:
Country: Ireland
Website: www.greenhome.ie
Nominee **category**: Educational Establishment
Dates of action: 23 Nov 2011

2. Please select the **theme(s)** highlighted in the action:

- Too Much Waste
- Better Consumption
- Better Production
- A Life for Products
- Less Waste thrown Away

3. Type of Action

- Action open to general public
- Action open to a target group
- Action based on the production of communication tools
- Other, please specify:

4. Please give a detailed and precise description of the action



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Each year hundreds of fruit trees all over Ireland go unpicked for a number of reasons including:

1. the fact that people don't notice them
2. people may not be physically able to harvest them or
3. there is just too much fruit at one time.

In light of this, the An Taisce Educational Unit organised a "Harvest Project" with the aim of reducing the amount of perfectly good fruit that is wasted each autumn. Allied to this is the considerable mileage much of the food we eat has to travel. The project also aims to raise awareness about the value of fruit trees and local food production in terms of human health, nutrition and ecology. This is particularly important when it comes to our children as a recent study conducted by the Irish Heritage Council has shown children are increasingly detached from nature. The "Harvest Project" encourages local groups, schools and enthusiastic individuals to harvest the abundance of fruit in their area during the autumn. This project commenced at the end of August and will culminate in a "Harvest Showcase" on the 23rd of November. On Wednesday the 23rd of November the Green Home team will host a 'Harvest Showcase' outlining the genesis, origin and evolution of the project and the positive contribution the project has made in terms of reducing waste in its many forms and raising awareness about the issue.

On the 23rd of November the Green Home team held a "Harvest Seminar" to celebrate the success of the project and to discuss the value of such initiatives in raising awareness about waste reduction and also to discuss how the project may be expanded in the future. Twenty people attended the event in the An Taisce Environmental Education Unit office. Speakers at the event included:

EWWR Seminar Agenda:

Registration: 10.45 am

Start Time: 11.00 am

Speakers:

11.00 - 11.10am:

Dr. Dorothy Stewart, Manager of the Green Home Programme

Dorothy opened the event by giving a brief introduction to the work of An Taisce's Environmental Education Unit and also a short introduction to the Green Home programme charting the involvement of the programme in the European Week for Waste Reduction since 2009.

11.15 - 11.35am:

Niamh McDonald, Green Home Programme Officer

Niamh outlined the genesis, origin and evolution of the "Harvest Project" for this year's European Week for Waste Reduction. Niamh also discussed the value of such initiatives in raising awareness and the projects' potential for future expansion.

11.50 - 12.10pm:

Professor Michael Hennerty

Professor Hennerty discussed the value of soft fruit and nuts in Irish society from antiquity to the present day.

12.30 pm – 1.00pm: Break for light lunch

1.10pm - 1.30pm:

Tine Ningal, PhD Candidate, School of Geography and Planning, UCD

Tine outlined his current PhD research that mapped trees on public property between the two canals in Dublin to calculate the amount of CO2 sequestered from the atmosphere by the trees and the monetary savings that accrue to the city by having the trees. There is a strong link between Mr Ningal's research and the Green Home programme 'Harvest Project' objectives i.e. the potential to share expertise, knowledge and resources when mapping public and private natural resources. In addition, a tree mapping exercise has also been incorporated into the Green Home programme five week 'Energy Vampire' Challenge for schools and householders.

1.30pm – 1.55pm: Discussion

1.55pm-2.00pm: Closing words Dorothy Stewart

The subject matter of the presentations was extremely thought provoking and contributed to interesting discussions on waste reduction and how the Harvest Project may be advanced in the future. Presentations for this event can be accessed here: <http://www.greenhome.ie/node/466>.



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5. Please describe the target audience and how the action motivated its public/target audience, as well as the number of participants

Several harvests took place and several fruit trees were mapped on the Green Home google map. Over 70 participants took part in the project directly and several hundred participants indirectly through social media such as facebook and twitter. The use of traditional and new media enabled the project to reach a wider audience. The Green Home network through Green Home participating schools, the link with the Green Schools programme of over 3,300 schools and other community groups facilitated dissemination of the Harvest Project objectives. The project aimed to be entirely inclusive, non-age specific and in fact encouraged intergenerational and peer to peer exchange of knowledge.

In order to capture as wide an audience as possible web based social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Green Home website www.greenhome.ie were used to spread the message about the project. Traditional media was also used to ensure interested parties who may not have access to virtual networks could participate. This was facilitated by a radio interview about the project on East Coast FM, articles in the Comhar Sustainability Newsletter and the Heritage Wicklow Newsletter.

The Harvest Project involved three key elements, the success of which relied heavily on the use of social media. The three elements of the project included i) Harvest Interactive Map ii) Community Harvest iii) Foraging Walk.

i.) Harvest Interactive Map:

The interactive Harvest Google map was created by the Green Home team in order to allow members of the public to map[1] fruit trees and bushes they were aware of around the country. Participants were asked to pinpoint trees as accurately as possible with a short description of the tree/bush e.g. the variety of the tree, when they are ripe, the size of tree. By creating a visual of fruit trees and bushes around the country it was hoped that people would harvest what was growing in their vicinity. The map generated an interesting alternative perspective of the city/town or village as an orchard and indicates where there may be gaps in fruit trees.

ii.) Community Harvest:

A second strand of the 'Harvest Project' involved a Community Harvest. This encouraged individuals to link with others in their community, such as a group of neighbours or an existing network, to harvest surplus fruit in their area rather than letting it go to waste. Participants were encouraged to share skills such as preserving, baking and juicing when making use of their harvest. Participants were then asked to document their harvest by forwarding photographs of the group at work and various anecdotes to the Green Home team. The photos were then posted on the Green Home Facebook page. By posting images of groups involved in the project on Facebook the Green Home team were able to generate further interest in and enthusiasm about the project, thus expanding the message about waste reduction. From a sociological point of view harvesting fruit can develop ties between neighbours and promote an interest in fruit trees, thus building community knowledge, social capital and a greater understanding about our natural capital.

iii.) Foraging Walk:

The third part of the Harvest Project involved a foraging walk led by Mary White of Blackstairs Eco Trails. The Harvest Walk represented an educational/social element of the project where community harvesters and other members of the public were invited to participate in learning how to identifying different types of fruit and herbs as well as familiarising themselves with flora and fauna. The Harvest Walk brought a strong social dimension to the project and it also had a huge impact in terms of environmental education. Although the authors were not able to definitively quantify the effects of the walk and the harvest project, many participants have contacted the Green Home team with stories about foraged food that they found on their own walks. Anecdotally it can be said that the project has been successful in raising awareness about local food production and reducing waste. The walk was hugely successful and is hopefully the first of many walks to come in the future.

The success of the Green Home Harvest Project demonstrates how social media can be used to develop, expand and strengthen “virtual” and “real world” connections between people. Social media also helped to spread the message about waste reduction, to organise activities and essentially raise awareness about the Green Home programme.



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This project sparked huge interest among the general public with involvement from groups such as Tidy Towns groups, academics, local authorities and enthusiastic individuals. Such is the interest in the project that the Green Home team have been invited to speak on regional radio stations and articles have also been published on the project in regional newspapers.

In light of the success of the project to date, it is envisaged that the mapping of fruit trees and the community harvest become annual events and that they continue to be developed into the future. It is hoped that over time a considerable data base of fruit trees in Ireland will be developed which will hopefully help to reduce the waste incurred by importing fruit rather than using Irish produce that are in season at that time.

A further tree mapping initiative involving University College Dublin has evolved from the 'Harvest Project'. The Green Home team are liaising with a PhD student from University College Dublin to provide him with additional data from our 'Harvest Project' and we will continue to collect this data throughout the year by incorporating it into the Green Home programme. The PhD student will use this data to calculate the amount of CO₂ sequestered by trees in urban areas. The data that we have contributed to this study will facilitate Ireland in finding ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through more sustainable planning and development.

6. Please explain why you have decided to nominate this action for a EWWR Award, following the main criteria listed here below

- 1) visibility and communicational aspects
- 2) good practice, originality and exemplarity
- 3) quality of content and focus on waste prevention,
- 4) European reproducibility
- 5) follow-up in long-term and lasting impact

In the true spirit of the European Week for Waste Reduction our 'Harvest Project' generated zero waste while still managing to reach a very broad and diverse audience with the message of waste reduction. We feel that the 'Harvest Project' could be replicated in other EU countries.

The originality of this action included using Google Map is being used to enable project participants to map the location of fruit trees and berries that they know of around the country. As well as creating a very valuable data set that did not previously exist in Ireland, the map also highlights public spaces where people may take advantage of the abundance of fruit such as roadsides etc. The map also provides an alternative perspective of the towns, cities and villages of Ireland and highlights where there may be a need for more fruit trees.

This innovative action has significantly helped to reduce the amount of fruit that is left to waste in the Autumn by heightening people's consciousness about the abundance of fresh fruit that grows in their area that may otherwise go unused and how it can be used. This project has developed a strong sense of community amongst participants to tackle a yearly challenge of finding ways to harvest fruit and berries in their locality and put them to good use.

7. Please provide us with photos, videos, weblinks or any other material that would help to better understand the EWWR action.

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msid=200146165615008946765.0004a7df299f79b85f8ba&msa=0>

<http://www.greenhome.ie/sites/default/files/files/field/attachment/Harvest%20Showcase.pdf>

<http://www.greenhome.ie/node/466>

<http://www.wicklow.ie/Apps/WicklowBeta/Publications/Heritage/Heritage%20Wicklow%20Autumn%202011.pdf>



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