



Canalside Education Project **Teacher Information Pack**

Project/farm information

Contact details

Project name:

Canalside Community Food

Address:

Leasowe Farm
Southam Road
Radford Semele
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
CV34 5JB

Contact person: Ali Jeffery
(General Administrator for Canalside &
Education Project Coordinator)

Contact address: As above

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Website address:

www.canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk

Booking a visit:

Please contact us using the email address/postal address above, or use the contact form on our website.

Cost of the visit: free for visits of two or more hours that include a tour of the project fields and completion of an evaluation/feedback form

You will need to arrange and pay for

transport to the farm. We can offer a bursary to cover some of your transport costs if the visit would not otherwise be possible.

Cancellation arrangements

Please contact us as soon as possible if your visit will no longer be possible. If the notice period is less than 3 days, please use the contact phone number to let us know.

How to get here

Travelling from Leamington, leave the town heading east on the A425 (Radford Road, which becomes Southam Road at the edge of the village). Go through the village and continue up the hill out of the village towards Southam. The project entrance is after the first right-hand bend and is marked with a large wooden sign board on the left.

Travelling into Leamington, join the A425 into Leamington. After crossing/leaving the Fosse Way, follow the road up the hill and along the straight section of road. The project entrance is after the sharp left-hand bend and is marked with a large wooden sign, of which you will see the back.

Follow the track through the young woodland and park in the parking area.

For safe dropping off we recommend all coaches come to the car park, or at the very least to the bottom of the woodland.

What you can do on the farm

A typical visit includes:

Visits to our project begin with the group being welcomed in the pole barn, having left the coach in the car park. Bags are left in crates in the pole barn and everyone sits on the mats for an introductory talk about the project, along with a reminder about health and safety, and a visit to see the compost toilets, with a brief explanation of their use.

Everyone is taken on a tour of the project fields at some point during the day, as best fits in with the activities planned.

The activities will stop for a snack break at around 10.30am, and for lunch at 12 or 12.30pm. Before the snack break and lunch, children are taken to wash their hands at the hand-washing station by the compost toilets. Anti-bacterial gel is also available for use. Snacks and lunch are eaten in the pole barn if shelter is needed, or on the grassy area in front of it.

The visit finishes back in the pole barn with an opportunity to review the visit. It may be possible to arrange an "Ask the grower" session, when the children get a chance to ask questions about anything they have seen or done during the day. The education project coordinator (workshop leader) can also lead a question session.

Activities we can provide during visits:

A tour of the project fields

Hands-on/play-based activities to learn about:

- what vegetable plants need to grow
- the processes involved in growing vegetable plants
- how compost is made and how it improves soil fertility
- the importance of bees/other insects for vegetable growing
- where vegetables come from – which part of the plant (Foundation/KS1/ KS2); which vegetables can be grown locally (KS2)
- how the seasons affect vegetable growing in the UK
- what different vegetables are called and what they taste like

Some of these activities depend on the season.

Other topics which can be covered through discussion include:

- what organic agriculture is
- other ways of improving soil fertility in organic agriculture
- how and why biodiversity is promoted on the farm
- seasonal changes on the farm

Ask the grower – questions from the group – this can also be led by the education project coordinator

Paired visits (early summer and late autumn) can be offered if required to allow classes to compare the two seasons. If this opportunity is taken, the summer visit would think about the theme 'How does our garden grow?' and the autumn visit would consider 'Where does it come from?'

Facilities:

A covered area suitable as a meeting point, for packed lunches or for wet weather activities: the pole barn

Picnic area: the grassy area in front of the pole barn

Toilets: next to the pole barn

Hand-washing facilities: at the hand-wash station next to the compost toilets

Meeting point if children get lost: the pole barn

Emergency evacuation meeting point: the top of the drive

Farm/project profile

History:

Jane and John Ingall own Leasowe Farm and Canalside Community Food was established by Tom Ingall, their son, and his wife in 2006.

The whole farm covers an area of 145 acres, with approximately 120 acres in arable production. The remainder of the land is used for a variety of enterprises, including pastureland fields, woodland, a site for shiitake mushroom production and an extensive nut orchard. Canalside Community Food rents 7 acres of land for growing vegetables in three fields and six large polytunnels.

Educational visits to Canalside Community Food are offered to local school groups. Visits to the wider farm are not currently available.

The six polytunnels have been put up since the inception of the project, with the latest, largest one being installed in the summer of 2011. Other temporary and semi-permanent structures on the site provide shelter for workers and volunteers, the vegetable collection area, and a shelter for social activities with members/educational visits. The tree-bog composting toilet was constructed in 2011 and allows for toilet waste to be dealt with in a wholly environmentally sustainable manner.

A wide range of vegetables are grown throughout the year by three growers, ensuring that members of Canalside can receive a share of the vegetable harvest for every week of the year. The polytunnels provide protected cropping space for tender summer vegetables as well as helping to extend the cropping season of summer vegetables by allowing early crops to be brought on at the start of the season. The tunnels also allow salad leaves to be grown during the winter.

Members of the project are encouraged to be involved in the production of their food, by supporting the growers in the field. Opportunities are provided twice a week for members to help with tasks in the field, and veg share members are asked to try to commit 9 hours per year towards helping on the project.

Soil:

Most of the land has clay marl – this means a sandy clay. This is good land for growing cereals and vegetables.

Landscape:

This is a lowland farm, with the Grand Union Canal running alongside it. There is a 10 acre new native woodland which visitors pass through to reach the Canalside project site. The mature semi-ancient natural woodland (which is on the part of the farm on the other side of the canal) can be seen from some of the vegetable fields.

Climate:

The growing season for vegetables at Canalside is throughout the year. There is always something growing in the fields and polytunnels, even in the depths of winter. Climate is cold and of recent years very snowy in winter, and warm in summers with variable rainfall. Spring is generally a dry mild period, and autumn mild with variable rainfall.

Who lives and works here:

The Ingall family live on the farm, and Tom Ingall works part-time as a grower for Canalside Community Food. There are two other growers who work growing the vegetables at Canalside – Will and Abbie.

The administrative work for Canalside is done by Ali (general admin) and Gareth (finance). Gareth also maintains the fruit field and prepares fruit shares for collection.

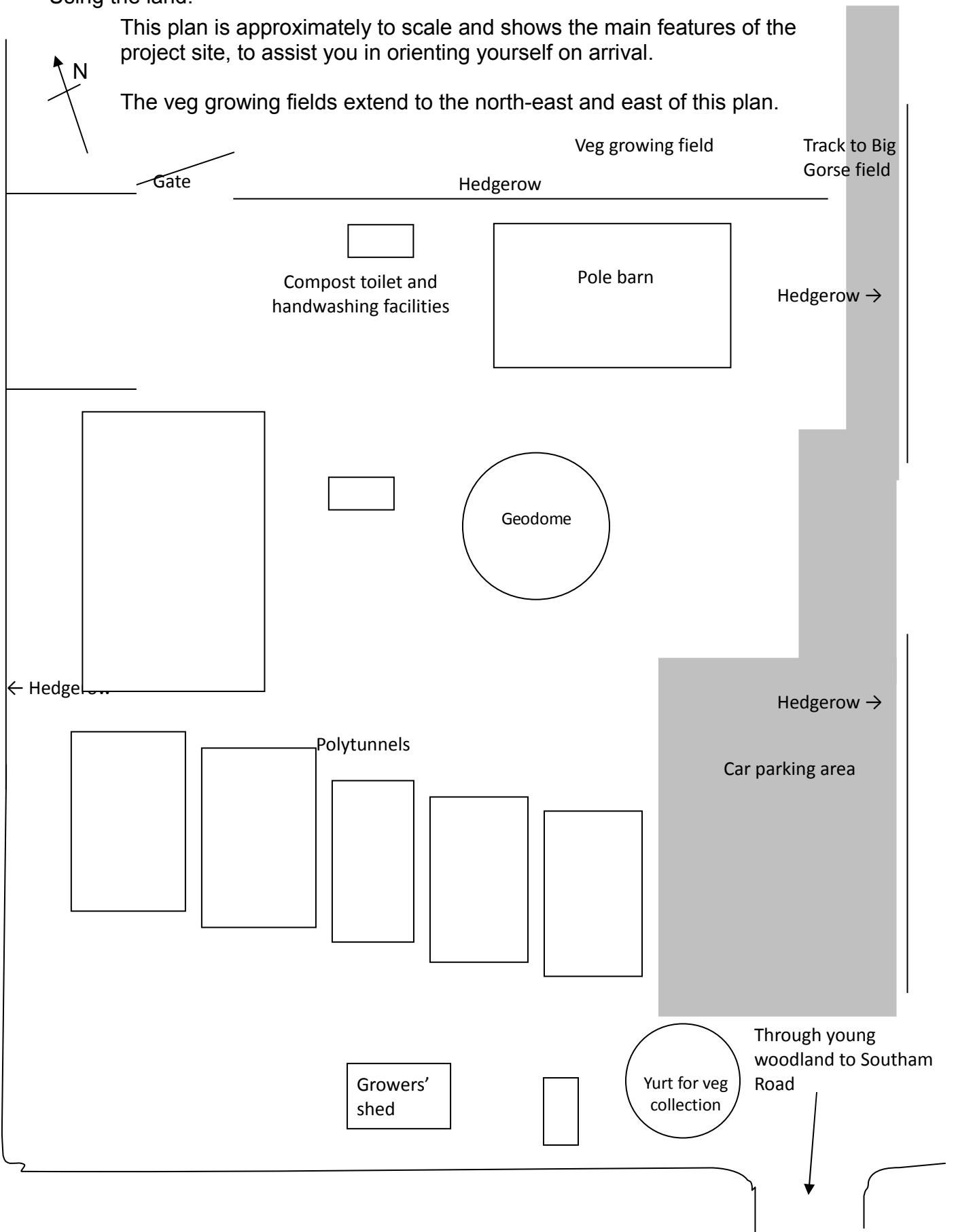
Encouraging wildlife:

The whole farm is now certified organic, with the Soil Association. This means that pesticides are severely restricted and artificial chemical fertilisers are prohibited. Both these have positive impacts on wildlife. In addition to this we actively encourage wildlife by having field margins. In other parts of the farm there are ponds and both new and mature native woodland.

Using the land:

This plan is approximately to scale and shows the main features of the project site, to assist you in orienting yourself on arrival.

The veg growing fields extend to the north-east and east of this plan.



This plan shows the wider area used by Canalside Community Food, and the adjoining fields used by Leasowe Farm.

