

South Seeds Croft



Welcome to
the community
space that
just keeps
on growing

Discover more
inside



NATIONAL
LOTTERY FUNDED



Welcome to the Croft

The Croft is a beautiful space sheltered by mature trees where South Seeds runs an adopt-a-raised-bed scheme from early April to early November every year.

South Seeds set up the Croft in 2015, on the disused courts of Queen's Park Bowling and Tennis Club, beside Queen's Park recreation ground.

Residents living within 20 minutes' walk from the Croft can apply for a bed in February by completing an application form from our office or website. Successful applicants become urban 'crofters'.

The following year the opportunity is put out again and a new set of residents look after raised beds at the Croft.

South Seeds provides gardening tools, advice and regular gardening workshops to enable crofters to learn how to grow food or to experiment and develop their growing skills.

In this booklet you can meet several of 2017's crofters, find out some of the many benefits they got from the experience, and how they plan to continue growing away from the Croft by using the skills, knowledge and confidence they picked up over the growing season.



MEET THE CROFTERS

P3 Growing family Laura, Panos and Ariadne

P4 Self-employed Tania

P5 María José and Richard – learning together

P6 Mother-and-son team Sandra and Kian

P7 New gardener Claire

Perfect place for a family to grow

Expectant parents Laura and Panos applied for a plot at the Croft so they could give their growing family fresh, locally produced vegetables and be outdoors in a quiet urban oasis surrounded by nature.

Baby Ariadne was born at the start of the growing season so the plants grew as she did. Laura had some knowledge about growing vegetables but her partner Panos, who is from Greece, was less experienced.

"The successes we had on our Croft plot, particularly with salad leaves such as rocket and lettuce, were a great confidence booster," he says.

The family loved their free, good-quality, locally produced food and access to a quiet outdoor place.

"Having a space where I could take the baby and chat with other people who were also working towards growing their own veg was really important for me while I was on maternity leave," says Laura.

The couple want to keep growing their own food and plan to speak to their neighbours about setting up some raised beds in their shared back court so their family can continue to benefit from produce that is fresh and, most importantly for many, free.

"We enjoyed our experience at the Croft a lot – we didn't want to give it back."



Green time beats screen time

Self-employed Tania spends a lot of time sitting in front of a screen. She applied for a plot at the Croft so she could be out in the fresh air and get back in touch with nature.

Tania hadn't cultivated much before but over the growing season, from April to November, she found that her confidence grew as a result of the advice given by South Seeds and talking to other crofters with more experience.

"It was really helpful to get advice at the start on how to set things out on my plot and how to grow without using pesticides. I used YouTube a lot as I went along to find out about growing specific things," she says.

Apart from growing her own tasty, ethical food, Tania found that her wellbeing benefited. The fresh air and access to a natural outdoor space cost nothing but worked wonders on her state of mind and productivity at work.

"For work, I spend a lot of time online and 'connected'. Having the Croft to go to gave me the opportunity to switch off and clear my head. I also liked the social aspect of having other crofters to chat to while I was there."

Tania now hopes to continue growing by exploring the possibility of establishing raised beds in her shared back court.



'We're living la vida local'

María José is from Chile and lives with her husband Richard in Battlefield. She applied for a plot at the Croft because she wanted to grow food but needed a reason to get started. She also wanted to get back in touch with where her food comes from – her family used to grow lots of things in their garden in Chile.

Glasgow has a very different climate to Chile – it's much wetter. But this turned out to be a good thing. "I was really surprised at how little watering I needed to do, because of the rain, and how fertile the soil was at the Croft," María José says. "In Chile we had to constantly water things and the ground was quite dry."

She was really pleased with how productive the plot was, growing lots of things that she and Richard use in everyday cooking such as chives, rocket, lettuce and spring onions.

María José found the support from South Seeds to get started, and speaking to other crofters, was invaluable.

"The first few support sessions run by South Seeds helped me to get going with planting. Being around other people who were doing the same thing – learning to grow their own food – also gave me lots of inspiration and motivation to keep experimenting with new plants or ways of controlling the slugs."

Growing at the Croft has given the couple the motivation and knowledge to start cultivating in their back court and on their windowsills, starting with containers of herbs and salads.



Outside chance proves a good bet

South Seeds had already supported Sandra to make her home more energy efficient and helped her apply for the Warm Home Discount. She heard about the Croft community garden and thought it would be a good way to learn how to grow fruit and veg, meet new people and get her and her 11-year-old son Kian out and about.

She has been on her local allotment waiting list for years so had started trying to grow veg in an old bathtub in her garden. However, she felt that the Croft could provide more support to help her and her son learn to grow together.

She joined forces with her sister, Michelle, and Michelle's kids to take on a plot at the Croft for the growing season.

They got loads of carrots, salads and other fresh produce.

The Croft was a really good experience for them because it was somewhere they could take the kids, and show them where healthy food comes from and how to grow it. It also gave them a chance to experiment with growing and eating different things.

"Working and then studying at college while bringing up my boy means that life is really busy, but with the Croft we could just go there whenever we had some spare time and it was nice to have a reason to get outside and do something as a family."

Sandra says she will definitely be telling her friends to sign up for a plot at the Croft this year.



A fresh beginning

Claire had never really grown anything before but seeing her friend, who has an allotment, getting free, fresh vegetables inspired her to learn more.

To get started growing she applied for a plot at the Croft, knowing she would have support from South Seeds and more experienced growers. Like many people on the southside, Claire lives in a tenement flat and although she has access to a shared back court, it's north-facing so doesn't get very much sun. The Croft is a nice open space, so the plots can be very productive.

"I was really surprised at how much food can come from very little input – just a seed, some rain, sun and good compost. I didn't even need to buy any tools as they were all provided at the Croft," she says.

Claire found that the introductory session and workshops gave her the confidence to give things a go. "I just needed a push to get started, to just shove some seeds in the ground and then learn about caring for them as they grew. I found it really helpful looking at other crofters' plots and chatting to them to find out their approach to growing."

Claire is now exploring other opportunities to grow her own food, even looking at shade-tolerant vegetables that she can grow in her back court. She has also been finding other uses for the herbs she grew, making infused oils with different types of mint that she plans to use in home-made face creams and balms.





A real community space
To find out about South Seeds' events and activities at the Croft, please get in touch



South Seeds' Croft is made possible with generous support from the Big Lottery Fund. For more information about South Seeds' Croft call us on 0141 636 3959, email us at info@southseeds.org, visit www.southseeds.org, or drop into our office at 514 Victoria Road, Glasgow G42 8BG.

To apply for a plot, download the application form from our website or pick one up from our office. South Seeds is a Scottish charitable incorporated organisation, registered in Scotland (No. SCO42244)

