

FREE

April—May 2011 Issue 14

# **KILLHOPE** Green Newsletter



*It's the start of another season at Killhope and we've got lots of new green stuff happening this year. We've now got a composting toilet plus a yurt in the woods to be used for workshops and environmental education. We've also been able to change all of our lighting in the shop and exhibition spaces to low energy LED bulbs which will make a big impact on our fuel use. All in all it's an exciting start to the season. Plus we've got a new events programme, see page 2 for more details.  
Thanks Helen*

## **What to do in your garden:**

Wash off greenfly from shoot tips with soapy water

Plant early potatoes outside in rows

Pick off developing seed heads on daffodils and spring bulbs

Sow seeds: the following crops outside or under cloches: carrots, beetroot, broad beans, salad onions, cauliflowers, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, spinach, leeks, lettuce, rocket, coriander, mixed salad and stir fry leaves, radish, turnip and peas.

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## **Events at Killhope**

This year we're running several new events with an environmental theme, or where you can learn more about the world and even universe around you.

Here are a few of these events:

### **Sunday 1st May—Forest fun and den building day.**

11.00am—3.30 pm. Den building, fire pits, toasting of marshmallows.

Booking is essential and lunch is provided.

### **Friday 13th May—Bat Walk and Family Sleep Over**

7.00 pm—9.00 am—Woodland bat walk with an expert from the Durham Bat group. Cosy up with a hot chocolate in our new yurt and wake up to a hot breakfast.

Booking is essential, families only

### **June to October 2011—BIRD by Diane Maclean**

A series of outdoor sculpture installations by Diane Maclean, sculptor and environmental artist. Large sculptures in steel explore birds and flight.

### **Saturday 1 October—Stargazing**

7.00pm—A stargazing evening with the Sunderland Astronomical Society.

Come and learn about our universe and then view the amazingly open skies of Weardale and the stars around us.

Throughout the season there will be a series of craft workshops held by local craft practitioners in the yurt. Watch this space for more details.

For further details about any of these event or to get a copy of our full events programme please phone Killhope on **01388 537505** or visit our website at **[www.killhope.org.uk](http://www.killhope.org.uk)**

## **Make woodwork gleam**

Mix two parts vegetable oil with one part lemon juice to make a fresh and effective polish that will give a deep, natural lustre and a refreshing scent to wooden furniture.

## **Save energy – forget the ironing**

Save your energy – do you really need to iron your clothes and bedding? Save time, cash and cut your carbon footprint, and live with the odd crease. If you have to iron some clothes, do it while they're still slightly damp to make ironing quicker.

## **What a drag**

If you have to use a car, save cash and cut emissions by making your vehicle more aerodynamic. Removing a roof-rack when not in use and keeping windows closed will help the car move through the air more easily, reducing fuel consumption.

## **Cut when you sup**

Next time you get a four-pack of beer, remember to cut up the plastic ring holder. These pose a danger to wildlife if they get into the environment, as animals can get their heads caught in them, birds can get their wings trapped and large aquatic birds can get them caught around their bills when they dive for food.

## CRAFT CORNER

### Make a Scarecrow

If you've just spent the weekend sowing all your seeds ready for a bumper crop in the summer then you don't want them all eaten up by birds and mice before they have a chance to germinate.

Make a scarecrow using recycled materials and see if it makes a difference to your crop.

#### **You'll need:**

Wood to make a cross frame, old clothes, straw for stuffing, imagination.

#### **How to:**

Make a cross frame to hold the body of the scarecrow. Secure the wood to ensure the scarecrow doesn't fall over.

'Dress' the scarecrow in the old clothes and then use the straw to stuff the clothes. Make sure the stuffing is nice and thick.

Make a head out of a pumpkin or an old pillowcase stuffed with straw. Decorate the head to make the face as cheery or as menacing as desired.

Put the scarecrow in your veg plot and enjoy the fruits of your labour!

# Energy and Money Saving Tips

We all want to save energy; of course we do. The trouble is that a lot of the things that are supposed to help the most, tend to be rather expensive to implement in the first place and often have a fairly slow pay-back period too.

However, you really don't have to spend a fortune to start seeing a difference, and to prove it here are five small changes which can soon fast-track you on the road to some real energy savings. Best of all, they're all easy to do, cost little or nothing – and you can begin using them straight away.

## 1. Pots and Kettle

Everyone's heard the one about only boiling as much water in your kettle as you need – but do you do it? If you don't, now's a great time to start and here's an extra tip to make it even more effective. Once you've made your cuppa, your kettle will be empty – but still hot. Refill it now, and let the residual heat – remember, you've already paid for it – warm the water up a bit for your next coffee ahead of time, rather than waiting and boiling really cold water straight out of the tap.

Cover your pots and pans when you're cooking and you'll avoid a lot of the heat loss – as well as the clouds of steam. Then if you switch the ring off a few minutes before everything's cooked, allowing the residual heat to finish the job off for free, you'll make even more of a saving.

## 2. Cooking Differently

Staying in the kitchen, how much use do you make of your microwave and do you have a slow cooker? For many meals, using a microwave saves a significant amount of energy – and money – compared with conventional cooking and while it isn't suitable for every kind of meal you'll ever want to make, using it when it's appropriate is a step in the right direction.

Slow cookers and crock-pots are another way of trying low energy cooking, particularly for recipes such as soups, stews and casseroles where all the ingredients simmer away together. The latest generation of slow cookers come with insulated lids and high efficiency elements, making them even cheaper to run. Couple this with their ability to turn cheaper cuts of meat into wonderfully tasty meals and you've got to be onto a winner here!

Energy Saving Tips continued.....

### **3. Turn It Down!**

Turning down thermostats has just got to be the simplest and cheapest way to save energy. Set your central heating down by just one degree and you'll soon notice a difference – saving up to 10 per cent of the energy you use for heating, which could make you up to £55 a year better off according to Energy Saving Trust figures.

While you're at it, make sure the thermostat on your water cylinder is no higher than 60°C – but don't go any lower, or you risk providing a home for the sort of bugs that cause Legionnaires Disease!

### **4. Turn It Up!**

On the other hand, running fridges and freezers with their thermostats set too low can lead to you wasting energy just as unnecessarily, so turn them up and start saving. Obviously you need to ensure that food is still being kept properly chilled or frozen, but that doesn't mean that you have to have them set so far below zero that you're providing the sort of Arctic conditions that would make a Polar Bear feel instantly at home.

### **5. And Turn It Off!**

The final one of the five is another well known tip, but it's still something that lots of people simply don't do – and that's stop using 'stand-by'. The Energy Saving Trust reckon that about 10 per cent of the electricity used in an average British home goes to keeping our various appliances slumbering away in sleep mode.

Taken overall, the figures for the whole of the country are staggering. Even before we've watched a single programme, British TVs gobble up an astounding £116 million worth of electricity annually and according to estimates, our sleeping video recorders and DVD players use twice that figure!

You don't have to replace all your appliances, rip out your boiler or install the latest all-singing, all-dancing micro-generation technologies to start making a few energy savings. Some of the smallest and simplest changes to the way you use energy can bring some of the biggest results.

## **Six steps to a cosy home**

Keeping your house cosy isn't rocket-science. Just follow these easy steps for an energy-efficient home.

### **1) 'Insulation is sexy stuff' according to Barack Obama**

Draught proofing is dirt cheap for windows and doors. So is a tube of silicone to seal the gap between floorboards and skirting. Find out about grant information from the Energy Saving Trust. You're looking at £200–300 for the loft in most homes, or less if you do it yourself. DIY stores often have discounts. If you can afford it, use a natural product like sheep's wool or hemp.

### **2) Heating controls are another essential**

You'll need a timer on the central heating, thermostatic radiator valves, room thermostat and hot-water cylinder – which should, of course, have a snug insulation jacket.

### **3) Have your boiler checked**

A service might be all you need, but an old boiler may need replacing with an efficient modern version, typically a condensing boiler. Even if it uses fossil fuels, it's £1,300 or so well spent.

### **4) Half a home's heat is lost through the loft and walls**

There are grants and discounts for insulating cavity walls. £125–160 per square metre to insulate the outside of solid walls. Budget for £35–60 per square metre inside, but prepare for mess.

### **5) After the walls, think of the floor**

This also, but can be surprisingly cheap. Lifting and relaying floorboards is about £35 per square metre, or maybe you can do this yourself. It's about £5 per square metre to lay a blanket insulation between joists held in place by chicken wire.

### **6) Double or secondary glazing**

It's never cheap, but is the icing on the insulation cake. There are a few specialists that recondition single-glazed windows. Otherwise, you're looking at secondary glazing or new double- or even triple-glazing.

## Seasonal Food

### Walnut Tossed Potatoes

**Serves 4**

#### **Ingredients**

900g/2lb small New Potatoes, halved

2 tbsp Vegetable Oil

2 tbsp Golden Syrup

2 tbsp Balsamic Vinegar

1 teasp Dried Thyme

Salt

50g/2oz Walnuts, roughly chopped

#### **Instructions**

1. Preheat the oven to 200C, 400F, Gas Mark 6 and lightly grease a shallow baking tin.
2. Arrange the potatoes in a single layer in the greased tin. Set aside.
3. In a small bowl mix together the oil, golden syrup, vinegar, thyme and salt until well combined.
4. Drizzle the mixture over potatoes and toss gently to coat on all sides.
5. Bake, uncovered for 20 minutes.
6. Add the nuts to the potatoes, mix well then return to the oven for a further 15–20 minutes or until the potatoes are tender, turning once or twice. Serve hot.