



Irish Seed Savers



Summer Workshops

May to July
2022



About Irish Seed Savers

Irish Seed Savers is an environmental organization and social enterprise. We **Protect**, **Conserve** and **Utilize** Ireland's diverse genetic food crop heritage, safeguarding food crop biodiversity for present and future generations. Our vision is for all people to have access to healthy and nutritious food, grown within sustainable food systems that positively support biodiversity, in balance with the natural environment. Our core work is located within a wider constellation of skills and practices including agroecology, biodiversity and regenerative farming. We seek to educate and raise awareness of the art and science at the heart of sustainable food systems. This is reflected in our workshops which are designed to empower you to grow your own food, work in harmony with nature and to lead a more sustainable lifestyle.

Bookings & Information

For Information on workshop dates, prices and to book a place visit our website www.irishseedsavers.ie

There is a two week cancellation notice required for full reimbursement.

Courses are suitable for adults only. For safety, children under 18 years are not permitted to attend the workshops.

Lunch & Refreshments

The Honey Ball Café will be open during workshop days, serving soup, tea and coffee and home made cakes. The Café is vegetarian and uses local organic ingredients whenever possible.

Composting & Green Manures

Knowing how to nurture and develop the structure and biology of soils is essential to growing healthy organic crops. Composting and green manures are an integral part of supporting this. This one-day workshop will introduce participants to core skills, knowledge and equipment needed to successfully plan for and use compost and green manures in the garden. Part of the workshop will focus on learning how to select appropriate green manures and understanding the principles behind composting. Participants will spend a good proportion of the workshop in the gardens for demonstrations and the opportunity to gain valuable practical experience. This will include sowing, establishing and digging-in of green manures as well as building a range of compost heaps.





An Introduction to Scything

The course will cover how to set up the scythe and the mowing technique. We will spend time looking at the sharpening and maintenance of the scythe. We will also discuss haymaking, wildflower meadow management and all types of vegetation. Scythes will be supplied for everyone doing the course, but participants are welcome to bring their own. Scythes will also be available for purchase on the day.

Mushroom Growing

Want to learn how to grow Oyster mushrooms? Low-tech methods of growing will be covered in this one day hands on course. Based on the tutor's experience from his small Oyster Mushroom business, the facilitator will guide the participants through the process of starting a small scale mushroom production.

At the end of the workshop, each participant will take home their own Oyster mushroom growing kit. Topics covered: mushroom life cycle - straw substrate - straw pellets - low tech infrastructure needed - inoculation period: conditions required, time, temperature, humidity - fruiting period - harvesting - using Oyster mushrooms in the kitchen with mouth watering recipes - potential market.



Herbal Medicine Making – Blooming Summer

Let's immerse ourselves in the fragrant medicine, which in the height of the Summer is so abundant, with a morning stroll gathering and foraging, to an afternoon of making remedies. We will learn how to prepare poultices, oils, vinegars, directly from the plants, utilising nature's first aid remedies for our own first aid needs. Herbal remedy, identification skills, and handouts to take home on the day to aid future herbal alchemy.

Creating an Orchard

We are continuing to see a renewed interest in the revival of the traditional Irish Orchard and most people have fond memories of orchards from their childhood. This course will cover choice of site, layout of orchard, choosing rootstocks, soil preparation, drainage, maintenance, health and disease, and choosing varieties. Soil health and improvement as well as pruning techniques will also be covered. Whether you are a farmer, a small-holder, or an apple enthusiast, this workshop will provide you with a perfect grounding. Highly recommended for beginners.



An Introduction to Organic Gardening & Soil Health

Soil health is at the heart of deep organic growing systems. In order to achieve the best results a balance is needed between soil life fertility and the ecosystem supporting the crops. This one day workshop will introduce core skills, equipment and techniques to plan, prepare, sow, plant and care for a broad range of crops suited to home growers in our climate. There will be an emphasis on understanding the importance of soil health in developing an organic garden and using methods to enhance soil health as a central aim of your growing. Topics include: 'the living soil', composting and soil fertility, planning your garden, soil preparation, seed choices, propagation methods, planting and crop care, soil protection and green manures.



Making the most of your Polytunnel – from Spring to the abundance of Summer

If you already have a polytunnel or greenhouse and wish to learn how to make the best use of it then we highly recommend this workshop. The course will focus on ways to keep your polytunnel productive and healthy with vegetables growing throughout the year. It will include practical experience of sowing seeds, transplanting, crop rotation, compost making, teas, pests and diseases, weed control and the correct use of common garden tools. We welcome you to share your own experience and insight and each course will be tailored to the participants needs.



Natural Skincare & Cosmetic Making

Rejuvenate your senses as well as your skin. Experience the natural beauty of herbal preparations, gorgeous floral hydrosols and aromatherapy oils, skin-nourishing butters and detoxifying salts, clays and herbs to create a world filled with scent and aroma, nourishment and healing. This is a practical course where you will learn how to make Natural Skincare products for yourself and your loved ones, friends and family.

We will complete the day with a luxurious Herbal and Floral Footbath.

During the day we will make:

- Facial Clay Mask with Kelp and Rose Petal Powder
- Body Polish with Birch Leaf Oil and Lavender
- Emulsified Rose Hand Cream
- Silky Body Butter with Rose and Birch
- Detoxifying Herbal Bath Salts / Herbal Bath bombs
- All Heal Calendula Skin Balm

Participants will bring home all the cosmetics they make on the day including handouts and recipes.



Seaweed Foraging - traditional and reimagined ways of working with seaweeds

Foraging re-establishes our connection and relationship to place and nature. This is done in new and creative ways whilst also honouring tradition; from creative ways of cooking, preparing and wrapping foods, to using seaweeds in the treatment of various ailments as well as use in artwork and craft. This course will explore the uses of seaweeds, appreciating its unique beauty and the mysticism they hold from the sea depths... allowing them to inspire us to create in various crafts, reimagining the many ways in which seaweeds have and can be used.



A Beginner's Guide to Bird Watching

This course will cover everything you need to know to take up bird watching as a hobby, as well as providing practical advice on making your garden more bird friendly. You will learn to identify birds by sight and by song and how to choose the right binoculars for you. The day will be very interactive and will involve several walks around Irish Seed Savers 20 acre site to practice the skills you will be learning. The tutor is a Conservation Ranger with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and has over 10 years previous experience of working for BirdWatch Ireland.



Wild Food Foraging

This intro course is a culinary exploration of Ireland's edible landscape through foraging walks, cookery demonstrations and wild food experiences. This course offers an opportunity to learn about all things wild including many edible types of wild herbs, roots, flowers, fruits and nuts, insights into the history, folklore, nutritional, medicinal, and culinary uses of Ireland's wonderful wild harvest. This will include exploring the restoration aspects and importance of wild foraging for the times that we live in.

Design your own Permaculture Garden

Simple and effective steps to get started or enhance the creation of multifunctional ecological gardens that provide the things we need and the things we love while supporting nature: healthy food, water, natural medicine, perennial systems, biodiversity, natural beauty, play and community.

A playful and engaging experiential 1 day workshop covering:

- Introduction to Permaculture
- Observation methods and function
- Design: elements of a garden and patterns for arranging things
- Getting Started: starting from scratch versus working from what you have
- Planting: perennials, forest gardening, plant communities, planting up, down and sideways! Putting plant guilds together



An Introduction to Growing, Restoring & Regenerating Soils

This workshop is for people who are interested in learning about regenerative agriculture with a particular focus on soil and food production. We will look at simple ways you can incorporate these techniques in your own garden, field, balcony or whatever space you have available.

Learning to restore and protect our soils not only builds thriving soil biology and fertility for our growing crops but it draws down carbon from the atmosphere and stores it in the soil, instead of constantly emitting it into the atmosphere.

Topics we will look at:

- An introduction to principles and practices of soil regeneration
- Living soil – the relationship between roots, microbes and soil
- Understanding that soil health equals gut health
- Practical techniques to start your own living soil restoration-food production project no matter how big or small your space is

Soil can be dead or soil can be full of life. This workshop shows you how to bring life back into soils and in turn produce high yielding crops, reduce pests and disease, build a thriving soil ecosystem full of microbial life, improve your gut health and sequester carbon from the atmosphere by using techniques that store it in living soils.





An Introduction to Ireland's Wild Pollinator Species – their decline, regeneration and looking to the past for their future survival

This workshop will explore the impact that Ireland's modern land use practices have had on our wild pollinator species and the importance of regenerating traditional land use practices for their future survival and the most beneficial actions for wild habitats and private gardens. During the workshop we will look at the following:

- The co-existence between indigenous wild plants and pollinator species
- The vital role that flower- rich habitats such as meadows and semi-natural grasslands play in providing pollinator's year-round requirements and what these requirements are for different pollinator species
- How to become a citizen scientist and the role that citizen scientists play in assessing and tracking the conservation status of a species' from year to year

Practical sessions will include: pollinator identification in the field using recommended best practice; identification of beneficial habitats; identification of beneficial plant species; methods to naturally regenerate semi-natural grasslands and demonstrations of how to carry out a Flower-Insect Timed Count (FIT Count); and how to monitor bumblebees and butterflies.



Botanical Beauties – from growing a healing flower garden to botanical art

Experience a healing garden from an artist's perspective. Giulia will show you how to listen, observe and learn from a garden through drawing and painting as well as through the practice of wild flower "gardening". This process of tending to and healing with the beauty of flowers grown in a garden alongside vegetables, wild plants, animals, seeds and insects is Giulia's invitation. Imagine a patch of garden left to the wild and observed with the intention of learning the changing cycles of the natural world and recognising that rhythm as yours. This approach to drawing invites you to follow nature rather than control it. Slow down, follow your thread and the deepening relationship with your environment that ensues.

Flowers have always been admired and studied by master artists and a garden now has an esteemed place in mental, emotional and physical health. Growing flowers and painting them can be a huge support. On this course you will learn how to plan a year round flower garden as well as the foundational drawing skills to confidently practice botanical art. No previous experience required.



Natural Dyeing with Plants – focusing on Weld

Irish Seed Savers Association has recently started to grow natural dyeing plants for seed collection; plants that were originally available and used in Ireland to create colour on cloth and yarn. Weld is a biennial and will be ready for harvesting this year. This is a great opportunity to use the plants to dye!

In this workshop you will learn how to dye cloth and yarn naturally using fresh Weld. The tutor will explain the ins and outs of Natural Dyeing, how to mordant different materials and use what is locally available. Dyeing will be with yellow and greens, including an opportunity to experiment with an Indigo bath to create the famous 'Robin hood' colour known as Lincolnshire Green.



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Visit www.irishseedsavers.ie for dates and course fees.
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