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## **A Children's Orchard for Leith Links: Local pupils plant 100 rare fruit trees in park improvement plan**

**Photo Call** - Local school pupils and volunteers, with the help of the local fire brigade, will be planting fruit trees together on the North East corner of Leith Links at 10.30am on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2010. **Map** – see <http://schmap.it/ld4r51>

Local school pupils will be joining forces with corporate and community volunteers to plant more than 100 fruit trees, and 120 metres of 'prickly berry hedge' on an underused corner of Leith Links over 5 days in early May.

Charlotte Encombe, Chair of Greener Leith said, "Thanks to funding from the People's Postcode Lottery Trust, we're delighted to be able to plant a Childrens Orchard in Leith. As the trees grow they'll provide a great learning resource for the local schools, free food for passers by and a home for wildlife. We see this as a step towards developing an outdoor classroom on Leith Links, one that can be shared by all the local schools, nurseries and youth club."

"We developed this project in response to the Leith Links Ask consultation that we ran in 2008. This found that Leithers are really keen to see more than just grass on Leith Links. There is strong support for a better range of plants in the park, to encourage more wildlife, and to give local people more opportunities to get involved in the Links in a practical way."

The Leith Links Orchard was inspired by a national initiative: the Commonwealth Orchard.

John Hancox, Director of the Commonwealth Orchard said, "Our aim is to reintroduce fruit planting into cities and to encourage children and the wider community to grow fruit and enjoy picking and using it for the benefit of the whole community. It's great fun, it's healthy and it helps kids to realise that fruit grows on trees. (But only if you plant them!)"

This initiative is a perfect example of how practical local action can have bigger consequences in helping to create a healthy and more fruitful Scotland.

One of the aims of the project is to ensure that future generations know that there are a lot more varieties of apples out there, than the two or three that are commonly stocked by supermarkets. Greener Leith is delighted with the support we've received from other organisations including the Commonwealth Orchard, Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade, Sky TV, BTCV Scotland, local schools, the City of Edinburgh Council – and the local bowling club.

Ends

## Editors Notes:

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Greener Leith, established and run by local volunteers since May 2006, is a registered charity that aims to promote community involvement, sustainable development and better quality public spaces. You can find out more at <http://www.greenerleith.org>

The Leith Links Children's Orchard has been developed as a response to an innovative community consultation project that Greener Leith delivered over the summer of 2008 called the Leith Links Ask. The YouTube video clips and the final report are available at <http://www.greenerleith.org/leith-links-ask/>

The Aims of the Commonwealth Orchard are to plant at least 2014 fruit trees across Scotland, in about 100 sites as a lasting legacy of the Commonwealth Games. For more information, call John Hancox, Director, The Commonwealth Orchard - 0778 606 3918 or see [www.childrensorcharard.co.uk](http://www.childrensorcharard.co.uk) and [www.commonwealthorchard.com](http://www.commonwealthorchard.com).

Community groups, individuals, schools, housing associations, landowners, local authorities and government can all help to reach that target and get involved in something bigger.

There are about 150 apple varieties that grow well in Scotland, including around 40 which are indigenous to Scotland, such as the Bloody Ploughman, the East Lothian pippin, and the James Grieve.

The idea of urban fruit growing is not new – in fact the ancient cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh Stirling and Perth all had orchards in the centre – for instance Glasgow's merchant city is built on the site of an old pear orchard. Fruit trees last at least 50 years – and some fruit trees can last far longer – for instance the original Bramley seedling planted as a pip in 1809 is still growing today. Some of the pears growing in the Carse of Gowrie are over 250 years old.

For more information about the Peoples Postcode Lottery Trust see: <http://www.postcodelottery.com/Charities/PeoplesPostcodeTrustScotland.htm>

