

Wider application

Detailed monitoring of the site by the University of Sheffield is guiding the direction of future management and the techniques are already being applied at a number of other locations, including Telford in Shropshire. There is a growing body of data regarding the best plant species to use.

Utilising mixed native/exotic planting and direct sowing can create high quality colourful urban greenspace that delivers benefits throughout the growing season. Perhaps most importantly, feedback from residents and users of land managed in this way has been very positive. If it can help communities in deprived urban areas to rebuild their confidence then it is an approach worth promoting more widely.

Further information

National Urban Forestry Unit

This leaflet is one of a series produced by the National Urban Forestry Unit. NUFU is a charitable trust which provides a national focus for the exchange of information and good practice in urban forestry. If you would like further information on other case studies, or if you have examples of good practice to share, please contact:

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Plant Publicity Holland promotes the use of Dutch hardy nursery stock in the Netherlands and other countries.

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Further reading

Dunnett N & Hitchmough J (2003) *Inner-city innovation*. Landscape Review, February / March pp 21-23

Dunnett N & Hitchmough J (2004) eds *The Dynamic Landscape: design, ecology and management of naturalistic urban planting*. Spon Press, London

Hitchmough J (2004) *Bold new ethic for green space*. Horticulture Week, 11 March, pp 20-22

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PRODUCED BY



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Urban Forestry in Practice

Achieving low cost seasonal colour through planting and seeding



Achieving low cost seasonal colour

Introduction

The value of high quality urban greenspace to health, recreation, exercise and stress relief has been increasingly recognised in recent years. Seasonal change and colourful flowers are particularly popular, but difficult to deliver within tight landscape budgets. One way of producing colourful landscapes at low cost is to employ a mixture of direct seeding and herbaceous perennial planting.

Specific example

Project name and location

FAIRLEIGH GATEWAY, Manor Estate, **SHEFFIELD**, UK

Grid reference: SK 382 855

Project partners

- Sheffield University (Department of Landscape)
- Sheffield City Council
- Sheffield Wildlife Trust
- The Manor and Castle Development Trust

Project objectives

- To apply results of experimental work relating to the establishment of more colourful and cost-effective urban vegetation
- To contribute to the wider regeneration of several degraded urban green spaces in the city of Sheffield
- To foster a sense of pride and ownership among local residents

Site description

The Manor Estate, in the Manor and Castle District of Sheffield, is regarded as one of the city's most challenging residential communities. The Fairleigh Gateway neighbourhood contained a degraded urban space which suffered from poor maintenance, rubbish dumping, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. It is at the centre of a residential area in which many of the houses are council-owned and it forms part of Sheffield's *Green Estates* programme.



Involving the estate's young people in the consultation process helped to secure the success of the scheme

The use of annuals such as poppies, corn marigolds and mayweed brightened the planting considerably in the first growing season



Project design and implementation

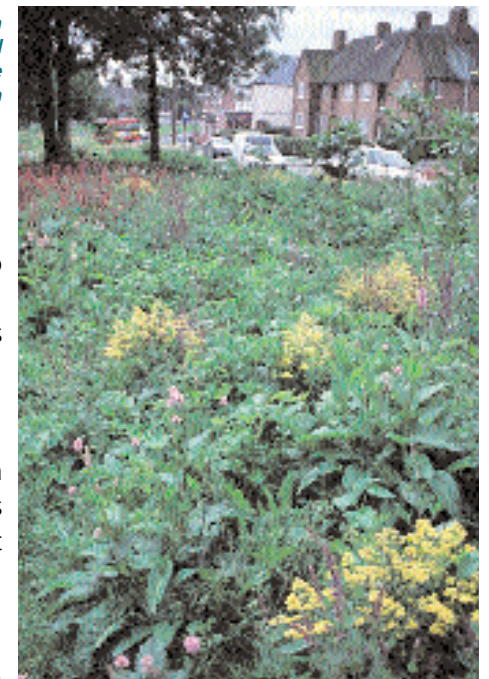
The Department of Landscape at the University of Sheffield researched the use of herbaceous plants in urban greenspace and Plant Publicity Holland supported trials run by the Department by contributing plant materials. This work provided key information on the establishment of visually exciting urban vegetation. Staff from the Department of Landscape have worked with Sheffield City Council and other project partners to put the academic research into practice by developing establishment and management techniques appropriate to residential areas.

After extensive consultation with local residents, using postal questionnaires, interviews and discussions with social and youth groups, the masterplan for the site was agreed and displayed in local shops and post offices.

The planting scheme used a mix of native wildflowers and generally colourful, cultivated garden plants. Container-grown herbaceous perennials and shrubs were used to define the layout, give structure in the first year and to ensure early success. Planting was combined with seed sowing, broadcast between the plants, to produce a low-cost naturalistic effect. The planting and sowing was carried out during winter and spring 2002.

The resulting landscape included 1200m² of sown meadow combined with planted perennials, a further 1800m² of native wildflower meadow and a little over 1000m² of woodland understorey and coppiced woodland edge.

Use of garden perennials helped to extend the flowering season



Results

Physical

Plant survival was very high - around 95%. The seeded areas also established very successfully, resulting in an average of 50 plants per m². The inclusion of annuals in the meadows helped to eliminate grass and weed invasion and to reduce maintenance costs.

Social

The community's response was overwhelmingly positive, with a marked lack of vandalism and damage to the site. The annuals were not re-sown in the second year and the relative lack of bright colours disappointed some people.

Economic

The establishment cost of this approach is approximately one eighth to one tenth of the cost of traditional landscape treatments such as shrubberies or annual bedding. The implementation costs of supplying seed and plants averaged £1.50 per m² and the labour for planting and seeding was a further £0.50 per m².

The vegetation is managed by infrequent mowing and the coppicing of some trees. Some additional sowing and replacement of plants is also necessary. The ongoing maintenance cost is comparable with that of standard mowing regimes of cutting every one or two weeks. An important feature of the green estate approach is that there is dedicated funding through an annual ground-rent levy on all new houses which is *ring-fenced* for future landscape maintenance.