



# Welcome to the Castle Garden Project!

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for the Castle Gardening project. This document explains a little bit of the background to the gardening project and information about volunteering here.

## About Castle Climbing [www.castle-climbing.co.uk](http://www.castle-climbing.co.uk)

The Castle Climbing Centre is the premier indoor climbing centre in South East England and receives more visitors than any other climbing centre in the UK. It is housed within a magnificent and imposing Victorian building which was formerly a water pumping station at Manor House in North London.

## Castle Environmental Policy

Very much aware of the looming crisis that climate change presents and keen to minimise its environmental impact, the Castle has been working hard to implement an environmental policy. This was launched on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2009 with the aim of “making the Castle Climbing Centre a benchmark for environmental and economic sustainability and to demonstrate that there is a place for sport and commerce in a sustainable future without compromising financial success and high standards.”

## Castle Garden Project

As part of this environmental policy since 2009, Castle staff, users and other volunteers have worked to develop the wonderful green space surrounding the centre in order to realise its full potential.

This has been an exciting project with the vision to create a productive and educational garden with areas for relaxation, based on the principles of permaculture design which looks at strategies create productive and resilient habitats and food production systems. The fruit, vegetables and herbs grown in the garden are used in the centres café, and since the pandemic in 2020, donated to National Food service London.

As much as possible we have been re-using and recycling materials, composting waste, using organic growing techniques and creating sustainable habitats for wildlife.

## What we have been up to:

- Built raised beds, growing vegetables and herbs for the Castle café
- Created a forest garden - based on edible and useful trees, shrubs, and perennial herbs and vegetables. These are mixed in such a way as to mimic the structure of a natural forest - the most stable and sustainable type of ecosystem in our climate. This continues to be a work in progress!
- Make products for the café and shop, with herbs and fruits from the garden such as dried herb tea blends, climbers hand and lip balms, chutneys, jams, cordials and ferments
- Use the vast amount of wall and fence space we have to grow climbing (espaliered) fruit trees and fruit bushes
- Planted a hedge at the front near the road with native English shrubs
- Using the roof space to harvest 10,000 litres of rain water used to irrigate the garden
- Dug swales on the hill planted with shrubs and diverted waste shower water to irrigate it
- Compost all the centre's food waste and garden waste which is then used in the garden
- Created mini-plots for people wishing to grow their own vegetables
- Create wildlife areas, such as a pond, bird houses, bug hotels
- Built a roundwood timber shelter with a green roof to demonstrate low impact building
- Built a cob oven for wood fired bread and pizzas for events
- Our apiary bee hives are managed using natural sustainable beekeeping methods
- Created the garden as a relaxation and exercise areas for climbers and staff

- Held regular events for Castle Climbing Members, the local community, and staff, to volunteer, take part in workshops and celebrate the garden
- During Covid Pandemic worked with the newly established North London Food Service to donate produce

## Information about volunteering at the Castle Climbing Centre Garden

- Before your first session, please ensure you have read and understood the Castle Garden Risk Assessment, Health and Safety checklist & Equal Opportunities Policy, and completed, signed and returned the Volunteer Induction Form.
- Please always enter through reception and **sign-in** there when you arrive. This is important for Health and Safety reasons.
- Please use the lockers in the centre to store your belongings away securely. We are not liable for any items lost or stolen.
- Please put away and clean any tools you have used to help for long term use of them! We have a system to do this which you will be shown in your induction.

### Volunteer hours: 11am - 4pm

Please arrive to start at 11am. We are far more productive if we can set tasks when everyone is in at the same time. If there are reasons why you are unable to arrive at 11 we will be accommodating but please communicate this with us beforehand if possible.

### What to expect as a volunteer

- As well as mucking in and getting your hands dirty at our regular work days, volunteers are invited also to play an active role in any new ideas for the garden. This garden is for all of us to enjoy and we value your opinions.
- We will give you a tour of the site and show you where we keep our tools.
- We will make sure you have access to the necessary protective clothing (work boots, gloves, etc) and tools and to received instruction and guidance on how to use them, if needed.

### Snack allowance

Volunteers participating in a **full day** will be entitled to a snack & drink from our café. You will also receive our staff discount of 25% on anything you buy.

**Please note you can only claim these on the day you are volunteering.**

### Climbing Credits

Regular volunteers have the opportunity to earn climbing credits. Please sign in and out of the Volunteer Climbing Credit book to keep track of your credits. If you do not sign in and out, your credit cannot be counted.

One full days volunteering = 1 Credit

After your third full volunteer session, you can start to claim your climbing credits. Each credit is for one off-peak entry to The Castle.

Credits are valid for 2 years the date given, after which they will be donated to our Inclusive climbing scheme.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak one of the garden team or email [garden@castle-climbing.co.uk](mailto:garden@castle-climbing.co.uk) or call the Castle on 020 8211 7000

[www.facebook.com/TheCastlegarden](http://www.facebook.com/TheCastlegarden) Twitter @TheCastleGarden