

## The Sensory Garden in Beckenham Place Park

The sensory garden is the result of collaboration between London Borough of Lewisham, Groundwork UK Community Spaces and The Friends of Beckenham Place Park. The old rose garden was one of three suitable sites and was agreed by a poll amongst the members of the Friends as a suitable area.

There has been a great deal of work put in by a council officer, Groundwork UK and the Friends behind the scenes to allow this community project to become a reality. Up-keep, planting and general garden work will be carried out by several volunteer groups.

The garden is to be accessible to all and the raised planters bordering the path can be worked on by disabled volunteers.

The features that are roughly defined already are the five large beds each one reflecting a theme. There is a bed themed around sound, this has grasses, bamboos, tall spindly plants, plants that rustle and wave about in the breeze. A second bed is centred on sight, beautiful flowers, bright colours and interesting shapes. The third bed is scent based, plants that have strong perfumes, this includes roses (yet to be acquired in the coming months), daphne, freesia and lavender. Touch is the fourth sense represented in by echinacea, artemisia and stachys along with some prickly mahonia. Those plants mentioned are just a few of those already planted. The central bed is planted solely with lavender which is tended by the ornamental garden staff. It is intended to put in markers by the plants to help visitors identify them.

A number of fruit trees have been planted and several different types of climbers, clematis, vines, on the old garden wall.

Several pieces of hard landscaping are in place. The disability ramp, the wheelchair access picnic table, a bird table, several raised planters with a selection of herbs and smaller plants, a 'sculptural' log pile and a small pond designed to be a bird bath and a textured stone path. It is intended to put a serpentine gravel path through the sound and touch beds, the latter path has been installed.

Part of the brief for this garden is to attract wildlife which many of the plants will do, but it is hoped to attract more insects with the addition of insect homes in the future. Local bee keepers are already

installing a couple of beehives in a secluded spot, very near to the gardens. Nest boxes for birds will also be installed.

There is still much to be done and some plants will possibly need to be moved. Some plants fulfil several criteria, for example, roses will appear in the sight bed as well as in the scent one. Some seasonal planting of annuals and biennials will be carried out and some spring planting has been done with a few bulbs, pansies and wallflowers. Please bear with us as the garden establishes and matures. It will take time to get it into shape, but getting there should prove to be an exciting community enterprise.

**Basic Diagram of the Sensory Garden.**

