

Guerrilla Gardening Gets Going

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
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Planting flowers, shrubs and trees where you might feel they belong, without asking permission or waiting for red tape is the essence of guerrilla gardening. It's as old as the hills, but it takes on extreme importance the more people there are and the less land there is for all to share.

And we happen to be saddled with a disturbing tendency of governments not seeing the value of local food security. So what do you do? One step is to visit GuerrillaGardening.org.

Its slogan is Fight the Filth -- urban blight, of course. The most ugly thing in a city is the obviously fenced and paved portions devoid of life. Let us hasten to clarify that "pavements" in England means sidewalks, whereas in the U.S. and elsewhere pavement can refer to roads as well. Culture Change would like to see most of them depaved, but that's another subject we've dealt with and will return to.

Guerrilla gardening can help depave, because certain plants, especially trees, eventually tear up the pavement. And the day is ever nearer when all that pavement for motor vehicles will be devoid of the four-plus wheeled global warmers, as we get further on past the global peak of oil extraction. Of sudden urgency will be urban food gardens as the petroleum-based agriculture system fails, and people get hungry. Far be it for clever oil-addicted governments to look seriously at Havana, Cuba, where half the food is grown in the city.

This depaver's personal experience with guerrilla gardening includes placing chewed-down carrot ends in any soil, stem end up. You don't get carrots, but you grow a carrot plant that produces seed for more carrots.

Richard Reynolds is the principal organizer for GuerrillaGardening.org. The site maintains a community networking service, blogs on various projects from the trenches, and frequent speaking engagements Reynolds gives around the UK and Europe. No one person in the Americas is his well-known equivalent, although there are many programs and myriad unsung projects lifting people's spirits almost anywhere you care to look closely.

Here's an Amazon.com review of *On Guerrilla Gardening*:

Calling up images of Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara, Reynolds advocates for the guerrilla gardening movement with a handbook exhibiting an inquisitive nature, social concern, and an international perspective. The focus is on illicit activities, as Reynolds dismisses any gardening taking place with consent. He sets the tone with examples of his own efforts in London, and similar endeavors reaching from Milan to Chicago to Singapore, where individuals are inspired to enhance their communities by reclaiming garbage-strewn vacant lots, empty flower boxes, and neglected street-side strips of dirt. In tracing the history of the guerrilla gardening movement, be it for beautification or to grow food, Reynolds' voice is ardent as he writes about Johnny Appleseed and the Digger colonies that provided sustenance in seventeenth-century England. Reynolds is most assured when advising readers on choosing specimens for planting their own guerrilla gardens and when expressing love for gardening. - Alice Joyce, from Booklist

Go to the website and explore the ways to either go out on your own as a guerrilla gardener or join a cell (Community section). This is one-stop shopping: the links to global guerrilla gardeners are many! No text can be copied from this particular kind of website, so without further ado we send you there where you'll just have to read it yourself:

GuerrillaGardening.org

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Further reading:

"The World Turned Upside Down" on Culture Change