

**HorticultureWeek**

## Cultivation Street launches garden centre scheme

25 January 2016, by Matthew Appleby, *Be the first to comment*

National community gardening campaign Cultivation Street is bringing together garden centres and community gardening projects under a new scheme.



This spring the Cultivation Street campaign, now in its fourth year, is expanding to take the lead in building a national network of mentors to support community gardening. It will unite garden centres and communities to work together on community and school gardening projects.

The Garden Centre Ambassador Scheme is designed to nurture stronger and more supportive relationships that benefit communities and garden centres. It was borne out of a round table discussion hosted by campaign founder David Domoney including leading garden centre representatives, community leaders and schools.

It found that garden centres can receive dozens of requests from communities every week. There is currently no formal application process to help garden centres judge how to help local communities and schools. And often garden centres do not receive feedback from communities, preventing them from evaluating how effective their support has been.

The new Garden Centre Ambassador Scheme aims to change this "status quo". Under the scheme, each participating garden centre will nominate a member of staff to be their community ambassador. This Ambassador will be the point of contact between the garden centre and communities. They will build a dialogue with community members and foster a mutually beneficial relationship.

The Ambassador Scheme works in three ways:

1. The Ambassador will provide help and advice for community project members. This may include design and planting advice, tips on creating wildlife and allotment areas and seasonal help on what to plant when. They will be a dedicated point of contact and channel all requests into one place.
2. The communities can build closer ties with garden centres, providing the Ambassador with updates, photos and progress as the project becomes a joint venture. The garden centres will then be able to see the effects their support has and better forge their outreach plans.
3. And the Cultivation Street campaign team will provide support to the Ambassador along the way with resources, advice and ideas. Plus all community projects will be verified by Cultivation Street before being put in touch with the ambassador.

The Ambassador Scheme aims to streamline community outreach efforts from garden centres and steer them towards strong and active gardening projects. It also seeks to improve relationships between garden centres and their local communities.

The Cultivation Street campaign aims to support community and school gardening projects. It is run in association with the HTA and National Garden Gift Vouchers.

Campaign founder David Domoney said: "So many garden centres we speak to want to offer more help and support to local community and school gardening

projects. And members of those projects want to ask garden centres for help and advice, but they feel intimidated because many have never gardened before."

"We wanted to create a simple and effective way for garden centres and communities to join forces to drive community gardening efforts. The Ambassador scheme will support and educate this bond and bring the two sides closer together."

The benefits of the Ambassador Scheme aims to create a dialogue between garden centres and community projects with mutual benefits.

- The scheme is a clear and easy way for garden centres to get started with community projects
- The community projects are first verified by the Cultivation Street team
- The garden centre's efforts will be channelled through one dedicated member of staff – the Ambassador
- The scheme will empower the Ambassador to develop and nurture local community projects
- Cultivation Street will support the Ambassador and offer advice and resources along the journey
- The scheme's communities and schools will share photos, progress, ideas and feedback with garden centres
- Local community projects will get support and advice from garden centres and build stronger ties through the Ambassador

The Cultivation Street Ambassador Scheme will launch along with the campaign's fourth year activities in March 2016. Garden centres should register their interest in joining the Ambassador Scheme at <http://www.daviddomoney.com/cultivation-street/gcambassador/>

Alternatively, garden centres can contact the Cultivation Street Hotline on 01926 641997 or email [cultivationstreet@domoney.tv](mailto:cultivationstreet@domoney.tv).

They will receive a free Ambassador Pack in the spring, plus regular resources and support as needed from the Cultivation Street campaign team.

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