

Wwoof IRELAND



Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter, 2016

Another summer is over and the cold weather is suddenly here. The long winter evenings will bring the cosiness of a roaring fire and the chance to curl up with a good film, a book, or even this edition of the WWOOF Ireland newsletter!

As you will find out when you read on, this year has been an exceptionally busy one. As well as all the normal office jobs to do on a weekly basis, and an important website development from Rob, we hosted the WWOOF European coordinators' meeting back-to-back with the launch of the LLOOF project and the third transnational project meeting. On top of that came filming with RTE, radio interviews, magazine articles and information stalls - all helping to promote WWOOF to a wider audience across Ireland and beyond.

There is also quite a bit about the Common Agricultural Policy in this edition as it was the subject of the keynote presentation in Bantry; then there was Cork 2.0 in September which provided an opportunity for input from expert groups, including WWOOF Ireland.

This is our first newsletter in colour throughout - we hope you like it. Please send us any stories or thoughts for the spring edition, and happy reading from all of us at the WWOOF Ireland team!



World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms

What's Inside?

WWOOF Ireland Round-Up

Grant Information

LLOOF Launch in Bantry

WWOOF gets out and about

EEB perspective on the CAP

Cork 2.0: European Conference on Rural Development

Cut out & keep recipes

Website update

Rabbit World

www.woof.ie

WWOOF Ireland Round-Up - a very successful and busy summer!

Annie King explains what's been happening at WWOOF Ireland since the last newsletter

As always, it's been a very busy time for WWOOF Ireland, with many things happening since the last newsletter. As well as the general running of the office, lots of new Hosts have joined us and there have been immigration issues to deal with, resulting from the transfer of authority at the point of entry to the Department of Justice. Most notably, we hosted the European WWOOF meeting at the end of May where 18 countries were represented, from Sweden in the north to Turkey in the south. This was immediately followed by the launch of the LLOOF (Living and Learning on Organic Farms) online guide, and the word about LLOOF was also spread at the Townlands Festival in West Cork in July and the Permaculture Gathering at Cloughjordan in August (*see report by Jenny on page 6*).

Other exciting events have included filming a feature with RTE Nationwide, who visited WWOOF Host Nick Addey near Schull in July (this will be shown later in the year), and radio interviews leading up to and following the European and LLOOF meetings, so word of WWOOF is spreading far and wide across the country! WWOOF Ireland was also invited to attend the Cork 2.0 conference in September, to have an input in the second Declaration for the European Union on Rural Development (*see more about this on page 8*).

European Coordinators' Meeting and LLOOF Launch

The three day European WWOOF Coordinators' meeting was held from 20th – 22nd May at Russagh Mill Hostel, Skibbereen, which is run by WWOOF Hosts and is a Creative International Adventures Centre. This meant that the 32 delegates had the

opportunity to try out rock climbing, night kayaking and archery but of course it wasn't all just socialising and making use of the marvellous facilities; feedback from delegates indicate that it was the most productive coordinators' meeting so far in terms of issues discussed and plans made. The days of intense meetings were followed on Monday 23rd May by the launch of the LLOOF website for which most delegates stayed on, being joined by local WWOOF Hosts and WWOOFers plus members of the press (*see full report on page 4*).

FoWO

Of course, although the LLOOF project is now launched, and the funding has ended, it does not stop there. FoWO is taking over the management of the website, supported by volunteers who came forward at last year's conference in Italy and at the launch day in Ireland; although I've served on the Board since FoWO's inception I am now stepping down as a director of FoWO but will still be involved in LLOOF as a member of the FoWO steering group. FoWO intends to become an Educational Charity in the UK and the continuation of the LLOOF website will be an important part of FoWO's service to its members as well as helping to spread the word about organic growing and sustainable living to a wider audience.

Charitable Status

WWOOF Ireland's application for charitable status had to take a back seat over the extremely busy summer, but during the quieter winter months to come the directors will be working to move it forward again. However, in April 2016 we did learn



that as we have been operating as a 'not for profit' company for the last two years we were entitled to apply for charitable status before completing the Governance Code (the declaration of the company's commitment to transparent and accountable operations). The application was sent in but the result will not be known until after October at the earliest.

AGM

In August we held the WWOOF Ireland AGM while attending the Permaculture Gathering at Cloughjordan (*see Jenny's report on page 6*). Our first AGM at Glendalough in May 2014, which included talks and activities for members, was not very well attended by Hosts or WWOOFers so it was generally agreed that the spring is not a good time to ask people to come away from home. As a result, at this year's meeting it was decided to create an event around next year's AGM which will be held in the autumn so that Hosts and WWOOFers are able to come. This will ensure transparency of operations and enable socialising and networking. We will be

looking for somewhere to host this, so remember to watch your Dashboards!

WWOOF in the media

Press releases, mainly concerning LLOOF, have led to radio interviews and the Nationwide feature that will be broadcast later in the season. There have also been articles in *Organic Matters*, the IOFGA (Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association) magazine and a report in *The Irish Examiner* resulting from Faustine Bas-Defossez's presentation at the LLOOF launch. There have been further enquiries from RTE who are making a programme about off-grid living and people who exist without social media, internet, or other modern communication tools! Yes, we do still have Hosts who do not use the internet, and are contacted by WWOOFers using telephone, or even snail mail! A few Hosts have come forward to take part in this programme, so it will be interesting to see the result. With so much to report on, please forgive us for not including any articles from readers in this edition - we are keeping them for next time, and do keep them coming in!

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A £500 GRANT TOWARDS A PROJECT ON YOUR FARM

What's this all about?

Following the success of this scheme last year (generously sponsored and initiated by WWOOF Portugal), FoWO would like to support WWOOF Hosts with a development project via its Host Grant Program. A grant is directly awarded to the WWOOF Host that wins the program selection process.

What kind of projects are funded?

The program awards grants for special projects that help further the WWOOF movement, enhance the educational experience of visiting WWOOFers on Host farms, and promote small-scale organic agriculture.

The FoWO Host Grant Program encourages WWOOFer involvement in the execution and outcome of the funded project, and proposals from Hosts who are in need and are committed to the goals of WWOOF.

Examples might include (but are not limited to) the creation of new habitats, herb spirals, forest gardens or raised beds, tree planting projects, building compost toilets (or bins), water harvesting, creating or improving WWOOFer accommodation, and alternative pest control.

Proposals will be considered by a panel of judges where the following points are of particular interest:

- 1) will the project result in sustainable change to the Host farm?
- 2) will the project involve WWOOFers?
- 3) will the project demonstrate good organic farming and growing principles to future WWOOFers?

Who can apply?

All Hosts that have been members of a FoWO affiliated national WWOOF organisation for at least the last two years and haven't won this grant in the previous three years.

For more information and to apply, go to: <https://goo.gl/aw3iKf> complete the form and return it by 12 noon on the 15th December 2016 to amanda@wwoof.net

Living and Learning on Organic Farms (LLOOF) Launch

Catherine Weld reports on the project launch In May



Daniel Rideg (WWOOF Hungary) introducing the LLOOF Learning Guide

On Monday 23rd May, two years of hard work culminated in delegates from 14 European countries attending the launch of LLOOF at Organico in Bantry, West Cork. This unprecedented day of international speakers, films and practical demonstrations was also attended by over 50 members of the WWOOF community and press, celebrating the publication of the e-learning guide on line which you can see at lloof.eu.

The day began with a welcome in Irish by WWOOF Ireland Director Mike Randles, followed with a talk by Sue Coppard who founded WWOOF 45 years ago and has seen this extraordinary volunteer network spread to over 120 countries worldwide.

The Learning Guide was introduced by Daniel Rideg from WWOOF Hungary, who explained how short video tutorials complement more formal text based learning about organic farming techniques within the LLOOF online courses. This led to a

practical demonstration by local WWOOF Host Nick Addey showing WWOOFers Raphaël from France and Laura from Italy how to ‘pot on’ young plants, a film of which was uploaded to the LLOOF You Tube channel and shown in the afternoon.

After a delicious organic lunch provided by the award winning café at Organico, we showed the short film made by Lord David Puttnam in support of LLOOF.

Faustine Bas-Defossez from the European Environmental Forum in Brussels then delivered the keynote speech *Space for Sustainable Farming in EU Policy*, providing a unique opportunity for the very interested audience to hear first-hand how EU policy is shaping the future of organic agriculture and bio-diversity, and to participate in an in-depth and animated question and discussion session afterwards.

A final lighter note was provided by a charming talk by Yasmine Phillips and Laurence Horan on how the LLOOF learning guide will help them and



Sue Coppard (WWOOF founder)



Mike Randles (WWOOF Ireland)



Faustine Bas-Defossez (EEB)

other new entrants when starting out on careers as organic farmers. They focused on lessons from different WWOOF Hosts they have visited concerning the perennial question of how to deal with slugs!

Thanks go to everyone on the WWOOF Ireland team and the volunteers who worked hard to make this day a success and to the staff at Organico Cafe who made us feel very welcome, as well as efficiently and unobtrusively supplying us with delicious food and coffee throughout the day!



WWOOF Host Nick Addey giving French WWOOFer Raphaël Mariage a live tutorial in 'potting on'



Adam Cade (WWOOF UK) talking to Martin Reading from the Organic Producers Magazine

Words of Wisdom from John McKenna at the LLOOF Launch



Although disappointed that John and Sally McKenna were unable to attend the LLOOF Launch in person, we were delighted to receive these moving and inspiring words from John, which were read out on the day by WWOOF Ireland Director Mike Randles.

Dear WWOOFers

Organics was the past, and organics will be the future.

Organics was how people looked after themselves, their animals, and their world, and it worked for thousands of years, preserving the people and the planet

in a magical symbiosis. People lived on the land, they learnt from the land, and we can never be done with living and learning

Organics is sensible, sustainable, and affordable. Organics is the mainstream, and the cutting-edge, because it is a system with an in-built sympathy and an integral empathy.

Organics can read our intuition: in fact, I think it created our intuition, our ability to read nature.

The chemicalisation of our agriculture and our planet is a folly, a mistaken cul-de-sac that is leading us nowhere, whilst it bestows us with sickness, of plant, animal and person. Chemicalisation disassociates us from nature, as if we could live without it.

But organics reconnects us, and reaffirms the primary beauty and utility of working with nature, rather than working against nature.

LLOOF, like WWOOF, is that rare thing: it's both a great and simple idea, and a delightful acronym. It is both a doorway and a pathway for a new generation of farmers and growers, the farmers and growers we need in Ireland, Europe and the world. It's an inspired concept, and it will be an inspiring reality for those who choose to farm and work with nature, who choose to gift us with the blessing of delicious and healthful food.

John McKenna

Wwoof Ireland goes out and about

Jenny Greig reports on a couple of recent promotional activities that were social occasions too!

This year Annie and I actually got out to a couple of venues with our Wwoof Ireland general information stall. The first event was in July at the Townlands Festival held near Macroom, Co. Cork. The weather was dreadful but we were lucky enough to be in a marquee in the Green section. Our display featured information on Wwoofing both in Ireland and around the world.

Wwoofing is about sustainability as well as organic growing, so we gave demonstrations showing how to make a seed plant pot out of old newspaper. The method results in an 'origami' type seed pot in which compost can be added for transplanting young plants. Anyone who was interested could have a go, learn how to make the pot, and go home with their 'potted on' young tomato plant as well.

We were also able to meet a few Hosts who just dropped by and introduced themselves, something we very much enjoyed!

The second venue was at the All Ireland Permaculture Gathering that was held in August at Cloughjordan Eco Village, Tipperary (they are also Wwoof Hosts). Again, we had a great time meeting many Wwoof Ireland Hosts who were attending the event. It's always a pleasure to meet people in person with whom normally our only contact is by phone or email. It is our intention to visit all our Hosts at some point but by being out at these venues we at least get to meet some of you!

We were very lucky that we had two great Wwoofers helping us: Flora from California helped out at the Townlands festival and she was



Wwoofer Flora Lichtenstein from California helping out at the Townlands Festival

a 'dab' hand at mastering the origami plant pot. Lila from Hawaii accompanied us to the Permaculture gathering and was a great help putting up and manning the stall. They were also able to share their own perspectives when potential volunteers were asking questions about Wwoof; even though Annie is a Host and she and I have both Wwoofed, it added another dimension to the information that we could provide.

Next year we would like to get out to more venues so if you have any ideas about good places to set up an information stall, please let us know. In the meantime, we're looking forward to meeting more of you next year!

Wwoof Insurance

Last year saw the start of the FoWO insurance scheme for Wwoofers. The other countries involved were Norway and Canada, later joined by Switzerland, all of whom reported at the European meeting that it had been well received by their Hosts. Eight other countries have now expressed interest in joining the scheme, although due to declining Wwoofer numbers, Canada has had to pull out. Following this news, Annie attended a meeting at the end of September with Amanda Pearson, who is the administrator for FoWO, with the brokers in London, to review the pilot year and negotiate certain changes in the wording of the policy. Basically the policy is a personal liability for Wwoofers, but FoWO are trying to extend the cover to include severe damage to Hosts' property or possessions. In addition to this, all Wwoofers are advised to take out medical and travel insurance, and more information about the insurance can be found on the Wwoof Ireland website 'Help' section which will be updated if there are any changes.

The Common Agricultural Policy

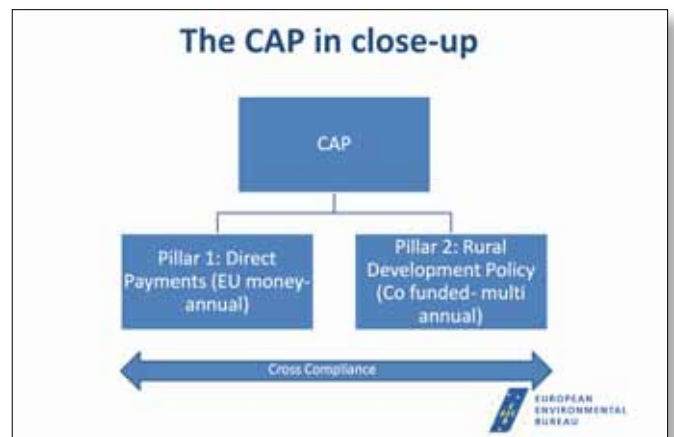
A brief summary of the EEB perspective on the CAP and what it means to the environment

At the LLOOF launch Faustine Bas-Defossez from the EEB in Brussels gave a presentation about the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Following on, the Cork 2.0 European Conference on Rural Development took place in September which Annie was able to attend, (*see her report on page 8*) and to help put this in context, below is an outline of the points made by Faustine in her talk.

To look at the CAP from the point of view of the environment, it is worth bearing in mind that the conservation status of 77% of habitat types and 60% of species of European conservation interest is unfavourable, and there has been a 57% decrease in farmland birds since 1980. There is a low level of biodiversity in 95% of all landscapes, and 90% of river basin districts, 50% of surface water bodies and 33% of groundwater bodies are affected by pollution from farming. There are over 400,000 early deaths in the EU every year due to air pollution and 90% of ammonia and 40% of methane comes from EU agricultural emissions, while 10% overall EU GHG emissions come from farming*.

As the environment and agriculture are so clearly closely linked, it would be natural to think it a good thing that there is a policy to promote their mutual interests; however, this is not always the case. The slide opposite shows how the CAP is structured. Pillar 1 is the annual direct payments that go to the farming sector based on eligibility criteria and Pillar 2 is rural development which among other areas (e.g. productive and non-productive investments in agriculture and forestry), also supports agri-environmental schemes, for example, the protection of certain bird species habitats and organic farming practices. Plus there is cross-compliance ensuring that a farmer who is receiving money from the EU isn't infringing rules; if they do not respect environmental, animal health or animal welfare legislation, their payments might be reduced ([click here for more information](#)).

So you would think – that doesn't sound too bad, there are payments for sustainable practice. But if you look behind the official figures in more depth, you realise that it is anything but green. The CAP costs €53 billion a year but we are still faced with a decline in natural resources; it is no coincidence that around 70% of the direct payments go to around



just 20% of the farmers, so you can guess that these are not the ones adopting the most sustainable practices. To justify this, the Commission introduced the idea of 'public money for public goods'; farmers are providing a service so we need to pay them. And to encourage sustainable practices they came up with the concept of 'greening'.

This resulted in 'Green direct payments', meaning that farmers receive part of the direct payment if they follow simple things they should be doing anyway, such as crop rotation (but in greening it is even simpler - in the form of crop diversification), leaving space for nature (ecological focus areas or EFAs), and protecting permanent grassland. Also, farmers complying with organic farming regulations are generally entitled ipso facto to the greening payment and can receive support under rural development for organic conversion and maintenance (as mentioned above).

Whilst this is good news for organic farming, the big agro-businesses and lobbyists have been striking deals where, for example, it is allowed to use pesticides on EFAs, and in France non-organic farmers still receive greening payments for planting monoculture maize when using catch crops/cover crops.

So the current CAP is green on paper but not on the fields – it is the result of the decisions between the agriculture ministers, the committee responsible for agriculture within the parliament, and the lobbyists with their vested interests. Let's hope that the next version of the CAP results in the real change that we as WWOOF Hosts practicing sustainable farming know is so vital to implement now, for the future of generations to come.

Cork 2.0: European Conference on Rural Development

Annie King reports on WWOOF Ireland's participation in this very important conference in Cork

WWOOF is beginning to get far more official recognition in the world, and our attitudes and opinions are being taken seriously. This became very apparent at the LLOOF launch in Organico, Bantry in May, when Faustine Bas-Defossez from the European Environmental Bureau based in Brussels made her presentation about their take on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funding programme (*read about the CAP on page 7*). Conor Power, journalist for *The Irish Examiner*, reported on her speech in an article that appeared in timely fashion a few days before the Cork 2.0 Conference – 2.0 because it is exactly 20 years since the first ground-breaking European conference on Rural Development was held in Cork, which concluded with the signing of the Cork Declaration on Rural Development.

Having looked through this previous declaration, I felt that there was not much that was covered in terms of sustainable development from a farming point of view, environmental protection or biodiversity. This time the conference was aimed at bringing together 300 or so stakeholders in order to discuss current and future challenges facing farming and rural areas, and a new Cork Declaration was drafted. Our involvement with Faustine and the EEB meant that WWOOF was invited to attend the conference and have an input to the Declaration.

So on the 5th and 6th September I ditched my

wellies, scrubbed my fingernails and headed for the Rochestown Park Hotel in Douglas on the outskirts of Cork city, where I was met by Faustine's colleague, Margherita Tolotto. She introduced me to members of other NGOs from Ireland, notably Alex Copland of Birdwatch Ireland, Fintan Kelly, the Natural Environment Officer for An Taisce, as well as Thomas Quinn, Agricultural Policy Officer for Birdlife Europe, and Thyge Nygaard, from the Danish Society for Nature Conservation. Informal discussions with this group were very reassuring as we all felt that the previous Declaration had really missed out environmental concerns, and we were keen to see these issues addressed more fully in this Declaration. However we were in a minority at the conference as it seemed most of the representatives were from some government department or other in Europe, usually connected to the agricultural industry, while environmentalists seemed only to be represented through a variety of NGOs.

The conference was divided into four plenary sessions: Jobs, growth and investment in the agri-food supply chain and the wider rural economy; Rural environment, climate and water; Targeting innovation to farmers' needs; and Rural viability and vitality, which was the one I attended. This group broke into smaller groups to discuss ways forward and I had input into discussions on young people and how to attract them to stay in, or return





Annie contributing during a group session

to, rural areas – this seemed the most relevant to what we provide and are able to achieve in very practical ways through WWOOF. The group of about seven or eight delegates was lead by Ryan Howard, the CEO of South and East Cork Area Development CLG, with assistance from Kirsten Lund from Denmark, a core team member from ELARD, the European Leader Association for Rural Development.

Discussions in the group mainly focused on the ways in which young people could be attracted to stay or return to the rural areas in which they had grown up rather than migrating to cities to find work or, as is often the case in Ireland, abroad. This resulted in the group recommending policies that would include building on a rural image of health, well-being, quality and innovation while putting people first (for more details see link at end). This is all very well and laudable, but the formation of a Declaration is far removed from the actual adoption of specific policies, let alone their implementation across such a wide and diverse cultural area as the European Union.

When the conference came to its conclusion and the Declaration to which we had input was read out, I felt that it was a great improvement on the last. The new Declaration identifies the rural potential to deliver innovative, inclusive and sustainable solutions for current and future societal challenges such as economic prosperity and to deal with food security, climate change, and developing and strengthening rural value chains and local productive networks. It also reflects emerging business opportunities for agriculture, forestry and rural enterprises related to the circular, green, and fossil-free economies. But time will tell how successfully these are able to be put into practice when there are still so many drawbacks embedded in the current systems that would hinder them.

Both BirdLife Europe and the EEB have already warned that these new proposals made by Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan who led the conference, to revitalise rural areas and promote sustainable farming, will be rendered useless by the current structure of the CAP funding which works against these new objectives. Faustine Bas-Defossez, who is Policy Manager for Agriculture and Bioenergy of the EEB, has said: “If the European Commission is as serious as it claims about a results-oriented policy then it cannot ignore the fact that the attempt to ‘green’ the policy at the last reform was a failure and is not going to deliver anything for the environment. Small changes to rural development policies will not have any impact unless the CAP as a whole gets a full overhaul.”

All we can hope is that EEB and Birdlife Europe’s call for a strong review of the CAP is heeded, now that the Cork 2.0 Declaration has shown consensus amongst civil society and stakeholders about moving towards an agricultural policy which is founded on sustainable development. Following involvement in this conference I feel that rural development objectives are critical in maintaining and sustaining our environment and thus supporting our existence, and that they need to be given total priority in any new food and farming policy for Europe. Issues like organic growing and biodiversity need to be addressed more specifically, which is one of the main concerns of WWOOF, through the positive experiences and education that we are giving to the young people who are our future.

Resources:

More information about Cork 2.0:

[European Union website](#)

[The Cork 2.0 Declaration \(2016\)](#)

[Group reports from Cork 2.0](#)

[The Cork 1.0 Declaration \(1996\)](#)

Seasonal Recipes to cut out and keep

Thank you to **Stephanie O'Toole** for two wonderful ways to preserve surplus vegetables

MIXED CHUTNEY

Ingredients

1 kilo peeled and diced marrow
1 kilo green tomatoes peeled and diced
500 gram peeled, cored and diced apples
500 gram peeled and diced onions
500 gram sultanas
500 gram soft brown sugar
600 ml cider vinegar

2 tsp dried chilli flakes or 2-4 fresh chopped chilli
Salt to taste
50 gram finely chopped fresh ginger
1 tsp ground cloves
2 tsp ground black peppercorns
1 tsp coriander seeds

- Put all ingredients into pan.
- Bring to boil and let simmer for about 3 hours. Stir regularly.
- It's ready when glossy, thick and well reduced. It's thick enough if, when you draw a wooden spoon through it, the chutney parts to reveal the base of the pan.
- Pot chutney in warm sterilised jars and seal with vinegar-proof lids.
- Leave for a couple of months to mature before using.



CUCUMBER PICKLE

Ingredients

1.5 kilo cucumber
.5 kilo onions
1 green and 1 red pepper
2 tbs sea salt

310 gram brown sugar
2 tsp mustard seeds
2 tsp celery seeds
1 tsp turmeric
1 litre white wine vinegar

- Slice cucumber into 2mm slices.
- Peel and slice onions thinly.
- Seed and cut peppers into thin strips.
- Layer veg into colander spreading each layer with salt.
- Cover and leave for 3 hours.
- Drain, rinse and drain again.
- Put sugar, spices and vinegar into a saucepan and bring to boil over medium heat.
- Add drained veg, bring to boil and turn off immediately.
- Put veg into warm sterilised jars, cover with the vinegar and seal with vinegar-proof lids.



Rob's website update: the availability calendar

Rob Coppard introduces you to an exciting innovation on the WWOOF Ireland website



After various unforeseen delays due to difficult technical issues, we are pleased to announce the deployment of the Host availability calendar on Hosts' profiles on the website.

On the left are views of what the new Host profile page looks like with the availability calendar included.

The calendar has two options: **AVAILABLE** in green or **BOOKED** in brown.

To use, please go to your profile edit page and select and highlight the 'Fully booked' box above the calendar (when selected you will see a black dot highlighted on the left-hand side of the box).

Then click the beginning date and the leaving date of your WWOOFer visit; you will see the dates turn brown. Please now save the page and you will see on your profile the dates selected marked as 'booked' in brown.

If you want to make the dates available again, just reverse the process above and save the page.

To book out a whole month, simply highlight 'Fully booked' in the box above and click on the month you wish to mark as booked; the full month will be marked as booked, then save the page.

If you do not wish to have the calendar displayed on your profile, you will need to un-tick where it says 'Enable the availability calendar', then save the page.

There is also an option to display a message at the top of Hosts' profiles:

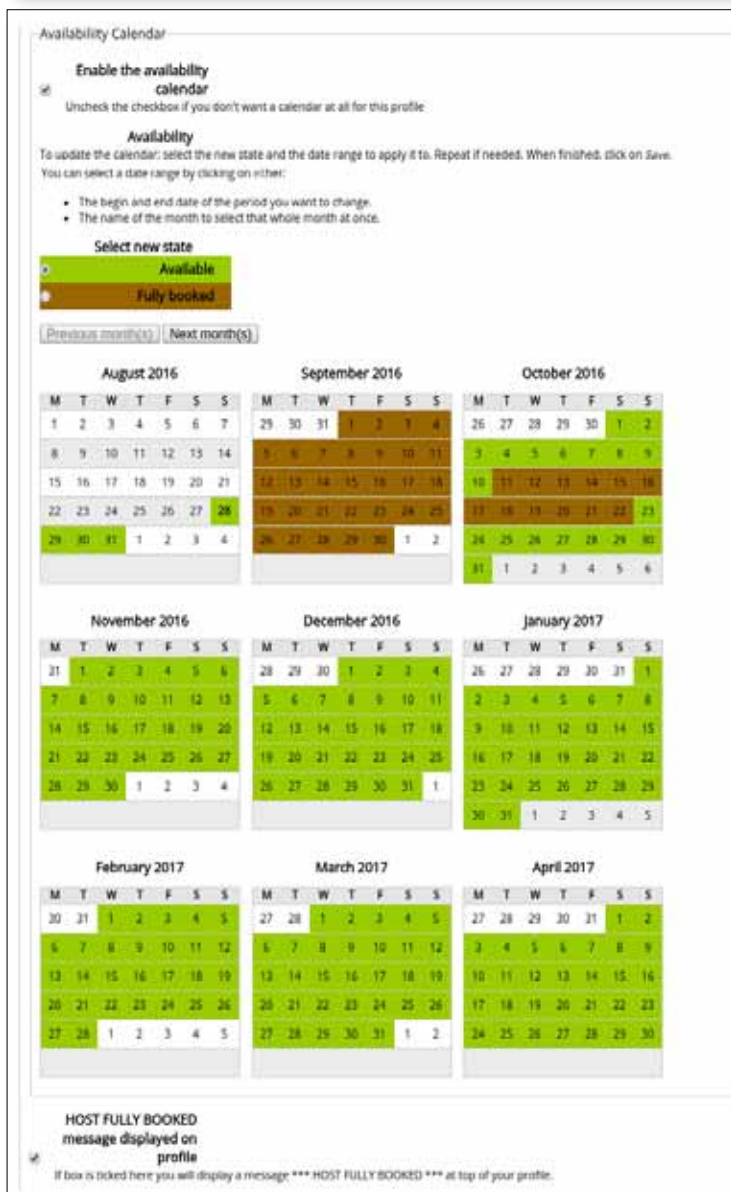
*****Host Fully Booked*****

To display the message, please tick the box below the calendar on the profile edit page where it says 'Host fully booked' and save the page. To remove the message, simply un-tick and save.

Please note that there is no longer a direct link to your Google calendar. You will, of course, still be able to use your Google calendar if you wish, but it will not be accessible from the website.

If you have any questions about any of this I will be happy to help,

Rob, WWOOF Ireland website manager



Rabbit World - WWOOFing with a difference

WWOOFing projects come in all shapes and sizes. **Susy Greaves** shares this little gem!

WWOOF Host Susy Greaves runs a small rabbit rescue for domestic rabbits, usually those who have arrived in a home by mistake. Sometimes this is because when a family acquires a female they don't know that she is already pregnant, or it could be because the children have grown up and the rabbit is no longer wanted. The aim is to re-home the rabbits, but of course, there are some who become long-term residents. Susy has several cages with runs dotted around the back garden where the rabbits socialise together loose in the garden during the day and then go away at night.

Susy had long wanted to have a bigger enclosure; the rabbits could then live more naturally, with their own space but also within a bigger family unit as they would in a wild warren.

The chance to do this came recently when a friend mentioned he was dismantling a trampoline. With WWOOFers due to join Francis and Susy, 'Rabbit World' became the first task for them to achieve.

- Firstly, while the base of the trampoline was kept intact, the upright poles were attached with wire to form a teepee shape. This makes it possible for someone to stand up inside, making cleaning easier!
- Then the whole structure, from floor to ceiling, was encased in fox-proof wire, with the sleeping pods coming in round the edges, again safely wired in.
- Next a central door was made that is big enough to crawl through, and in the centre of the run an activity climbing frame is being built.
- The finished article is perfect, meaning that now, on days when the rabbits can't come out, they have plenty of safe space to socialise in. And the garden looks better without rabbit hutches cluttering up every corner.

Thanks so much to WWOOFers Sara, Kalin, Ben and Fiona for all your hard work and design ideas too.



www.woof.ie

WWOOF Ireland is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee

Company Reg. no. 520342. Registered address: Milbeg, Coomhola, Bantry, Co. Cork

© WWOOF Ireland This newsletter is printed on paper from sustainably managed forests