MAYO · WEST OF IRELAND

TILLED EARTH

TILLED EARTH · SINCE · 2024 · EDIBLE GARDENS

Spring and Summer Learning Programme 2027

JANUARY TO JUNE · PLUS OUR TEN-MONTH GARDENING COURSE



Tilled Earth is an organic garden and education centre created by organic gardener and author Klaus Laitenberger and Joanna Laitenberger. Located between Mulranny and Achill Island, it is a working garden where people can develop practical skills in food-growing, soil care, biodiversity, and sustainable land use.

The spring and summer programme combines classroom learning, practical demonstrations, and guided study tours of the walled garden, greenhouse, forest garden, orchard, medicinal herb garden, and wider grounds.

TILLED EARTH · TONRAGEE · ACHILL · CO. MAYO · KLAUSLAITEN@GMAIL.COM

The Self-Sufficient Garden

Grow, Cook and Eat - A Year at Tilled Earth

Ten days over ten months with Klaus Laitenberger | **January to October 2027 Maximum 17 participants**

There is something very satisfying about sitting down to a meal made from vegetables you have grown yourself. This course will take you through a complete growing season, helping you develop the skills and confidence to grow more of your own food.



We will meet one day each month, following the garden from the first plans and sowings through to harvesting and preparing for winter. Each day will combine classroom sessions, practical demonstrations, and hands-on work in the gardens at Tilled Earth, with a home-cooked lunch and plenty of opportunities to ask questions.

Throughout the ten months, you will develop your own garden plan and put what you learn into practice at home. We will work together as the season unfolds, sharing successes and tackling the difficulties that every gardener encounters along the way.

Monday, 11 January - Planning the Productive Garden
Getting to know your site, choosing what to grow and planning beds, paths, and crop rotation. You will begin a growing plan suited to your garden and the time you have available.

Monday, 15 February - Soil Health, Composting and Fertility
Understanding your soil, making good compost, and using organic matter to build fertility. We will look at preparing ground and keeping soil healthy and productive.

Monday, 15 March - Seed Sowing and Propagation
Sowing seeds indoors and outdoors, choosing composts, potting on and raising strong young plants. Practical work will help you get the timing and conditions right.

Monday, 5 April - Establishing the Vegetable Garden
Preparing beds, planting out, spacing and protecting young crops. We will look at the main vegetables to grow and how to organise sowings for a steady supply.

Monday, 10 May - Organic Pest, Disease and Weed Control
Recognising common problems and understanding how to prevent them. We will cover practical organic methods of managing pests, diseases and weeds, including encouraging beneficial wildlife.

Monday, 14 June - Greenhouse and Polytunnel Growing
Making good use of growing space under cover, including planting, supports, watering, feeding, and ventilation. We will also look at follow-on crops to keep the space productive.

Monday, 19 July - Harvesting, Cooking and Preserving
Harvesting vegetables at their best, making the most of seasonal produce, and exploring simple ways to preserve a surplus for later in the year.

Monday 16, August - Growing Fruit and Perennial Crops
Choosing and establishing fruit crops and perennial vegetables. We will explore long-term plantings that can provide food year after year and add diversity to your garden.

Monday, 20 September - Autumn and Winter Growing
Extending the harvest with winter vegetables and salads, making late sowings, and preparing beds for the months ahead. We will look at what can still be grown outdoors and under cover.

Monday, 18 October - Creating a Resilient, Self-Sufficient Garden
Reviewing the growing year, learning from what worked and planning the next season. We will bring everything together to help you grow a more reliable supply of food from your own garden.

Who the course is for
Suitable for beginners and gardeners who want to become more confident and self-sufficient. Throughout the course, you will develop your own garden plan and put what you learn into practice at home.

Included in the course
Ten course days with morning coffee and home-cooked lunches, two gardening books, 10 packets of seeds, and a dedicated WhatsApp group for questions and support throughout the season. If you miss a session, you may send a friend in your place.

€980 with Rural Skillnet support - full fee €1,400

Eligible participants receive 30% support (€420). Daily course times will be confirmed when booking.

2027 COURSES

How the programme works

- Full-day courses usually run from 10.00am to 4.30pm and include coffee and scones on arrival and lunch. Most cost €130; individual fees are shown in the listings.
- Specialist guided tours take place from 2.00pm to 4.30pm and include coffee and cake (€35).
- Specialist workshops followed by a home-cooked lunch take place from 10.30am to 2.00pm (€55).
- Afternoon talks with a garden tour and supper take place from 2.00pm to 7.30pm (€85).
- Places are limited and advance booking is required. The two longer courses have their own timetables and fees.

SATURDAY
23
January 2027
Full-Day Course

€130

Grow Your Own Food

A practical introduction for anyone who would like to grow their own food, whether in a small garden or a larger plot. We will cover soil preparation, composting, seed sowing, crop selection and rotation, together with fruit, herbs, and organic pest control. Classroom sessions and demonstrations in our walled garden, greenhouse, and forest garden will help you get started with confidence. Coffee and scones on arrival and lunch are included.

SUNDAY
31
January 2027
Workshop + Lunch

€55

Soil Preparation and Composting

Get your garden ready for the growing season by understanding what your soil needs. We will look at converting a lawn into productive beds, improving soil structure, controlling weeds, and protecting bare ground. Learn how to combine garden and household materials to make good compost, avoid common problems, and use it effectively. Various ground preparation methods will be demonstrated. The morning will conclude with a home-cooked lunch.

SATURDAY
06
February 2027
Full-Day Course

€130

Growing in Polytunnels and Greenhouses

Discover how a greenhouse or polytunnel can provide fresh food over a much longer season. We will cover soil preparation, crop planning, early sowings, propagation, watering, and ventilation, with guidance on choosing suitable varieties. Learn how to make space for summer crops while enjoying early salads and other harvests. Coffee and scones on arrival and lunch are included.

SUNDAY
07
February 2027
Workshop + Lunch
€55

Choosing Fruit Trees and Planting an Orchard

Plan an orchard that suits your garden, your soil, and the fruit you enjoy eating. We will explore apples, pears and plums, explaining rootstocks, pollination, spacing, and variety choice for Irish conditions. Learn how to prepare the ground, plant, stake and protect young trees, and give them a good start. Our orchard provides practical examples of planting decisions and future care. The morning will conclude with a home-cooked lunch.

SUNDAY
14
February 2027
Herb workshop + supper club
€85

Growing Herbs and Supper Club

Spend an afternoon exploring herbs in the garden before gathering for a seasonal supper. We will look at growing and propagating useful culinary and medicinal herbs, choosing suitable sites, and harvesting them well. The garden tour will introduce plants that bring flavour, fragrance and interest throughout the year. Afterwards, enjoy a home-cooked supper with a Swabian or Greek theme, to be confirmed

SATURDAY
20
February 2027
Workshop + Lunch
€55

Composting

Good compost is at the heart of every productive organic garden. This practical workshop will give you the knowledge and confidence to turn garden and kitchen waste into wonderful food for your soil. Learn what to compost, how to balance your ingredients, and how to get moisture, air and temperature right. We'll explore different composting methods, build a heap together, and explain how to make the best use of it in your garden. The morning will conclude with a home-cooked lunch.

SUNDAY
14
March 2027
Workshop,
Coffee + Cake
€35

Coping Potatoes

Rediscover coping potatoes, a traditional Irish method of growing this valuable food crop. We will explore the approach through practical demonstration, looking at ground preparation, planting, and the care potatoes need as they grow. The session also covers variety choice, seed potatoes, spacing, harvesting and storage. Bring your questions and enjoy learning about a familiar crop through an older gardening tradition.

SUNDAY
21
March 2027
Workshop + Lunch
€55

Seed-Sowing and Other Propagation Methods

Learn how to raise healthy plants from seed and multiply favourites already growing in your garden. We will cover trays, modules, direct sowing, suitable composts, germination, pricking out, and transplanting. Practical demonstrations will introduce cuttings, division and layering, explaining which method suits which plant. Leave with a clearer understanding of timing, aftercare, and how to produce plants for your own food garden. The morning will conclude with a home-cooked lunch.

SATURDAY
03
April 2027
Full-Day Course
€160

Growing and Using Herbs

Explore the rewarding world of culinary and medicinal herbs, from choosing plants for Irish gardens to propagation, harvesting, drying and storage. The day combines growing advice as well as making simple herbal preparations, such as salves, balms and lotions. The course is led by Klaus and Eleanor Sutherland, a community herbalist. Participants will be able to take home some of the herbal preparations they make. Coffee and scones on arrival and lunch are included.

SATURDAY
10
April 2027
Full-Day Course
€130

Spring in the Garden

April brings plenty to do in the food garden. This practical day will guide you through preparing beds, sowing and planting vegetables, caring for young plants, and organising successive harvests. We will also look at seasonal jobs in the fruit and herb garden, composting, weed control, and protected growing. Use the garden demonstrations to plan your next steps and make the most of spring.

SUNDAY
11
April 2027
Workshop + Lunch
€55

Bed Preparation and Soil Improvements

Good growing begins with well-prepared ground. Learn how to create manageable beds, improve soil structure and fertility, and choose where compost, mulch and other organic materials will be most useful. We will discuss drainage, compaction, paths, weeds, and the differences between preparing new ground and caring for established beds. Practical examples will help you work with your soil rather than exhaust it.

SUNDAY
25
April 2027
Workshop,
Coffee + Cake
€35

Composting Workshop

Turn garden waste and kitchen scraps into a useful resource for your soil. We will examine composting systems, the balance of green and brown materials, moisture and aeration, and the differences between hot and cool heaps. Learn how to recognise when compost is ready and troubleshoot slow, wet or dry heaps. Practical demonstrations will help you build a system that suits your garden.

MONDAY
26
April 2027
Full-Day Course
€130

The Wonder of Weeds

Throw away your weedkiller and join us at Tilled Earth for a fascinating glimpse into the uses of "Weeds". We will take a look at how weeds can indicate the state of our soils and their role in healing both the soil and ourselves through their resilience and tenacity which translate into their special benefits. Join Klaus in how to identify their life cycles and best practice in managing them in an organic garden. Eleanor Sutherland will lead you in a practical session making a useful hand salve to bring home while we discuss the affinities and uses of 'Wonderful Weeds'. Our day will include a 'weedy' lunch for us to share created by Thien.

SATURDAY
08
May 2027
Full-Day Course
€130

Growing in Polytunnels and Greenhouses

May is a busy turning point under cover, as spring crops are harvested and summer plants take their place. We will cover planting tomatoes and other summer crops, preparing soil, spacing, supports, watering, feeding and ventilation. Learn how to avoid overcrowding, maintain healthy plants, and organise follow-on sowings. Practical greenhouse demonstrations will help you make productive use of this important month.

SUNDAY
09
May 2027
Workshop + Lunch
€55

Planting a Tea Herb Garden and Other Culinary Herbs

Create a herb garden that supplies fresh flavours for cooking and leaves or flowers for herbal teas. We will explore suitable plants, their growing requirements, and ways to arrange them in beds or containers. Learn about propagation, harvesting and drying, and how to keep useful herbs within easy reach. A garden visit introduces familiar favourites alongside less commonly grown plants worth trying.

SATURDAY
22
May 2027
Full-Day Course
€130

Growing Salads and Herbs

Even the smallest garden can produce an exciting range of salads and culinary herbs. Learn how to choose varieties, sow little and often, use containers, and make the most of available space. We will cover soil, watering, harvesting, and maintaining a steady supply, alongside practical sowing and propagation demonstrations. Discover flavours beyond ordinary lettuce and build a more varied harvest for your kitchen.

SUNDAY
23
May 2027
Workshop + Lunch
€55

The Medicinal Forest Garden

Explore how medicinal herbs can form part of a layered forest garden alongside fruit trees, shrubs, and other useful plants. We will consider shade, shelter, soil, plant selection, and the relationships between different garden layers. A guided visit to our medicinal forest garden introduces individual plants, their traditional uses and cultivation. Learn how to create a varied planting that also offers habitat for wildlife.

SATURDAY
05
June 2027
Full-Day Course
€130

Grow Your Own Food

Start growing your own food with a practical day focused on the opportunities of early summer. We will cover suitable vegetables, herbs and fruit, preparing soil, sowing, transplanting and maintaining healthy crops. Learn about composting, crop rotation, succession, and organic pest control, with demonstrations around the gardens. The course will help you choose manageable next steps and develop a productive garden at home.

Complete Gardening Course

Monday, 21 to Friday, 25 June 2027
Five days | Maximum 17 participants

Join us for a week of growing, foraging, and good food at Tilled Earth. This course will give you a strong foundation in organic gardening, with morning teaching, practical demonstrations, and hands-on work, followed by afternoon activities connected with food, wild plants, herbs, and the local landscape.

Suitable for beginners and anyone who would like to become more confident in growing their own food. There will be plenty of time to ask questions and exchange ideas.

Monday - Planning, soil and composting
Choosing a site, planning beds and paths, crop rotation, understanding your soil, and building fertility. Practical soil assessment and composting, followed by a guided tour of the gardens at Tilled Earth.

Tuesday - Sowing and propagation
Seed-sowing indoors and outdoors, composts, germination, transplanting, spacing, and succession. Try cuttings, division and layering. Afternoon seaweed foraging explores identification, responsible harvesting, and uses in the kitchen and garden.

Wednesday - Fruit and perennial food plants
Tree fruit, soft fruit, unusual fruits, perennial vegetables, and edible forest gardening, including rootstocks, spacing, pruning and propagation. Afternoon guided wildflower and foraging walk with traditional uses and folklore.

Thursday - The self-sufficient garden
Planning what and how much to grow for a steady supply of food, including storage crops, perennial foods, and protected cropping. Practical organic pest, disease and weed management. Afternoon fermentation workshop with Marie from Ballymaloe.

Friday - Herbs, fruit and seed-saving
Growing, harvesting and propagating culinary and medicinal herbs, caring for fruit plants and exploring unusual fruits. Learn the principles of harvesting, drying, cleaning and storing seeds. Afternoon herbal preparations with Eleanor Sutherland.

Daily timetable

9.30am start, 11.00am coffee break, 1.00pm lunch, 2.00pm afternoon activity, approximately 4.30 - 5.00pm finish.

Food and Supper Club

Morning refreshments and lunch are included each day. One evening, we will sit down together for a seasonal Supper Club meal prepared by Thien, using garden produce and local ingredients where possible.

Course fee

€805 with Rural Food Skillnet support - full fee €1,150

Eligible participants receive 30% support (€345). Includes five course days, specialist afternoon activities, morning refreshments, daily lunches, one Supper Club evening, two gardening books, and ten packets of seeds. Accommodation and other evening meals are not included.







The Garden, the People

Klaus Laitenberger has spent more than twenty-five years teaching people how to grow food in Ireland. His books, including Vegetables for the Irish Garden, have helped many new gardeners develop the confidence and knowledge to grow their own food.

Joanna Laitenberger runs Green Vegetable Seeds and manages the Tilled Earth project, including courses, educational visits, and events. Together, Klaus and Joanna are developing Tilled Earth as a centre for practical horticultural education, biodiversity, and sustainable food production.

The grounds include a red-brick walled garden and greenhouse, forest garden, young orchard, medicinal herbs, wildlife habitats, and an expanding collection of more than one thousand edible plants.

Food served during full-day courses is prepared by Ballymaloe-trained chef **Thien Laitenberger** and is based, wherever possible, on seasonal produce from the garden.

Green Vegetable Seeds



Our family seed company, Green Vegetable Seeds, grew out of our love of growing good food. We stock vegetable, herb, and flower seeds, choosing varieties for their delicious flavour and suitability for the Irish climate. Alongside reliable favourites, you will find unusual crops to bring something different to your garden and kitchen. Joanna runs the company, and we are always happy to help you choose what to grow.

www.greenvegetableseeds.com



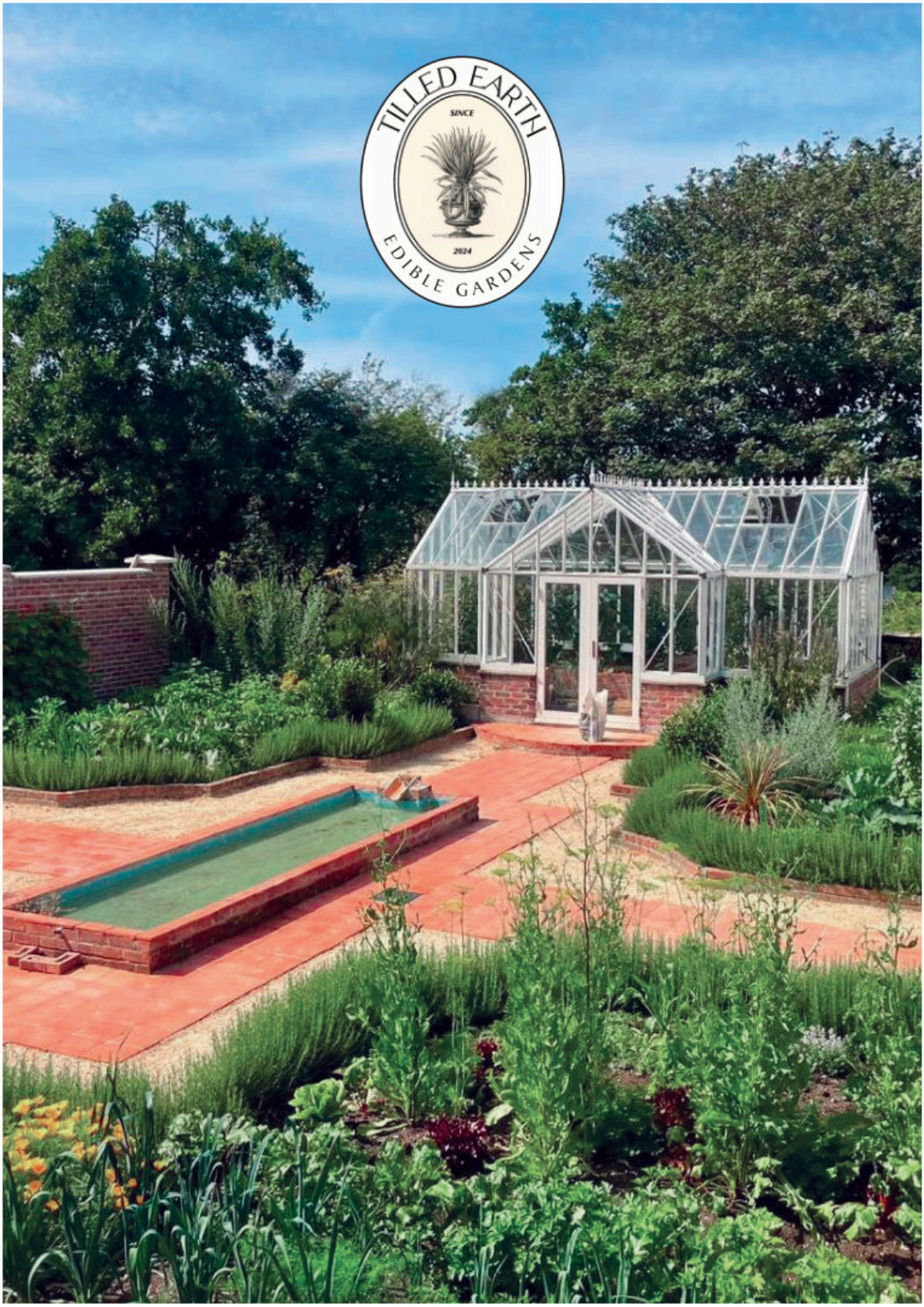
Visits and Group Learning

We welcome garden clubs, schools, community groups, training organisations, and active retirement groups. Visits can combine a talk, practical demonstrations, and a guided garden tour, tailored to your group. The classroom and dining space are also available for staff meetings, planning days, and garden-based CSR programmes.

Please get in touch to discuss a visit or a programme for your group.






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Alan Reid Design

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Find us and book

Tilled Earth
Tonragee, Achill, Co. Mayo
Eircode F28 Y036

Klaus Laitenberger
klauslaiten@gmail.com
www.greenvegetableseeds.com

Please book in advance. Workshop times not shown in the listings will be confirmed when booking. Provisional fees will be confirmed before bookings are taken.

We look forward to welcoming you!

Join us for a day, follow the growing year with us, or spend a full week exploring organic gardening, food, and the gardens at Tilled Earth.

For the full programme and bookings:

www.greenvegetableseeds.com