



The Lost Effra Project, Lambeth

“Schemes like this bring together local communities and, by education and demonstration, show people what can be done to improve rainwater drainage and increase wildlife. I was inspired to depave my own front garden!” – Emily Montague, Herne Hill resident

The story so far

Throughout the catchment of the ‘lost’ River Effra, an area that has a history of flooding, London Wildlife Trust has been working closely with local people to create gardens that are both practical and beautiful. These wildlife-rich gardens soak up rainwater, making the area more resilient to flooding while improving neighbourhoods for wildlife and enabling people to take action in their own gardens and community spaces.

The area has been made more resilient by:

- Building six living roofs designed for wildlife
- Removing seven areas of hard paving and creating free draining gardens in their place
- Creating three rain gardens from downpipes and one to capture runoff from roads
- Involving more than 1,000 local people

How has it helped wildlife?

- More than 900m² high-value wildlife gardens and green roofs have been created
- Each garden design supports urban wildlife - bees, butterflies, birds, moths and bats

How has it helped people?

- Local people have been given the skills and knowledge to create their own rain gardens and small green roofs
- Unloved and underused local spaces have been transformed into attractive gardens
- Local people now have opportunities to get involved in urban gardening projects, increasing access to nature for diverse communities in south London

How does it protect against flooding?

By soaking up rainwater, the gardens reduce pressure on the Victorian sewer network that can be inundated in times of heavy rain. The project promotes household-scale actions in an accessible and appealing way to encourage Londoners to make small scale changes.

Partnership organisations

London Wildlife Trust, London Borough of Lambeth, Thames Water, Greater London Authority, many local community groups and associations.



DURING – Community members planting rain gardens on a pedestrian traffic island in Herne Hill ©London Wildlife Trust



AFTER – Volunteers at the green roof group build workshop at Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses, where participants learn about green roofs through practical experience ©London Wildlife Trust



Nearest Station: Herne Hill/Brixton