

A word about risk...

We're all for school grounds being exciting and challenging places. What's important is to strike the right balance - protecting children from harm while allowing them the freedom to develop independence and risk awareness.

Growing and grafting your own trees and orchard – like most things to do with the natural world, will involve an element of risk. The use of grafting knives, the fear of fruit being used as missiles or trees as climbing frames have all been raised as objections to school engagement in orchard growing projects. However, learning to take calculated risks is an essential part of young people's development. Encouraging them to take sensible decisions makes them safer. It also helps them to develop as mature adults, responsible and mindful of others. We've worked with many, many schools to grow orchards that would agree.

Furthermore, the Learning Outside the Classroom Council emphasises that '*not* allowing young people to engage in independent mobility and environmental learning, denies them the opportunity to develop the skills and resilience that they need to be able to be safe and manage complex environments. There are also indications that such restrictions have long-term implications for young people's future development, health and well-being.'

Getting the right balance is therefore vital. The *Fruit-full Schools* programme and our online resources have all been developed accordingly. For example, tree grafting sessions will be carried out in participating schools using one grafting knife per group, and with close supervision from our trained *Fruit-full Schools* Coordinators.

If you're interested in establishing an orchard in your grounds but are concerned about some of the risks involved we advise that you ask for help (and the right tools!) from your local orchard group, school grounds maintenance staff, Local Authority Tree Officer or a good, local community gardener.

We wish you every luck and enjoyment in your orchard endeavours!

Learning through Landscapes, Common Ground and Garden Organic