

October 29, 2012

the
Sustainable
Potatoes
United
Development
Study



Producers of
SPUDS.ie 'crisps
with a conscience'



So...what has the SPUDS Team of volunteers been up to since June?

...cultivating our own research plot of course! The Blue Danube potato seed planted on our own compost in the Sitric Compost Community Garden in May were generously mulched with...you guessed it... compost! They very rapidly burst the limits of the garden railings, creating a profuse display of deep green foliage and purple flowers as they spilled out into the street.

We couldn't resist gently stealing a few glowing purple spuds out from under one of the plants to taste and were astounded by their beauty and flavor! Can our copious use of compost be responsible? Comparisons with the results of other researchers will help us find out. Later in the summer we did get a touch of blight on the foliage and last week we decided to cut off the

tops and let the tubers cure for 3 weeks in anticipation of cooking them up for our Dublin SPUDS Taste Fest in November.



Darina Allen's verdict on the Blue Danube: "they were very, very good – flowery, dry and very delicious indeed"

**Introducing the
SPUDS Characters
with GIY @BLOOM**

In June we set up our SPUDS potato characters workshop on the GIY Ireland stand at BLOOM to promote equal rights for all potatoes no matter what their variety, size or shape.

Hundreds of visitors set to work transforming unusually shaped potatoes into hilarious personalities over the 5 days. Once we had them all photographed and uploaded onto Flickr we knew we had a very special project on our hands and decided to continue throughout the summer. There are now over 1,000 characters online, but this is still less than 1/4 of the potato varieties that exist in the world! View the SPUDS Characters Collection on Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/spudscharacters2012/pool/page5/>



SPUDS.ie 'crisps with a conscience' Launch @ the Electric Picnic

In August we commissioned our first run of SPUDS.ie 'crisps with a conscience' from Keogh's of Oldtown, Co Dublin as a pilot to see if we could use crisps as a vehicle to both raise awareness for our project and fund ongoing research. The first issue we chose to highlight was the fact that far too many potatoes are rejected by the market simply because of their shape.

Innovia donated a roll of Natureflex compostable packaging material to trial and the crisps were made for us out of these 'wonky' potatoes by Keogh's just in time to launch them at the Electric Picnic

on the Stop Food Waste Stand in the Global Green. They were extremely well received. People liked the fact that they were not overly flavored and enthusiastically commented: "they taste like potatoes! Quite unexpectedly, we were given a special Electric Picnic Bridgestone award for improving the taste of a traditional food product by giving it an ethical agenda. See coverage of the awards on the Daily Spud Blog: <http://www.thedailyspud.com/2012/09/04/electric-picnic-food-awards-2012/>

During September we traveled around the East of the country to festivals and fairs promoting SPUDS.ie and the crisps. At the GIY Gathering, held during the Waterford Harvest Festival, we met and interviewed several food celebrities who have experience growing naturally blight resistant potatoes and have become strong advocates including: Darina Allen (Ballymaloe Cookery School), Alice Fowlers (The Guardian), Mark Diacono (Otter Farm), Klaus Laitenberger (Milkwood Farm), Hans Wieland (the Organic Centre). I took part in a very stimulating panel discussion on Affordable Healthcare and the important contribution growing your own food can make to public health.

The Harvest Season GIY Gathering, Park(ing) Day, Spirit of Folk, the Dublin Community Harvest Festival...

As part of Dublin Park(ing) Day 2012, we took over a parking space on Stephen's Green for a day to demonstrate how a private car space can spontaneously be converted into a research station where social and ethical subjects are discussed with the public as they pass by. From Stephen's Green we travelled north to continue our quest for the quirkiest SPUDS character on the grounds of Dunderry Park in Navan at the Spirit of Folk Festival. While there we had a conversation with Peter Donegan of the Sod Show about the motivation behind SPUDS which he recorded for the show: <http://www.sodshow.com/2012/10/05/the-sodshow-spuds-ic/>.

As a grand finale to a hectic month on the road, SPUDS conducted workshops at the Dublin Community Harvest

SPUDS is a nationwide community based action research project which examines the sustainability of the Irish food system through the eye of the potato

This spring we gave away naturally blight resistant seed potatoes to 300+ growers to encourage them to cultivate these varieties and document their experience, from field to fork.

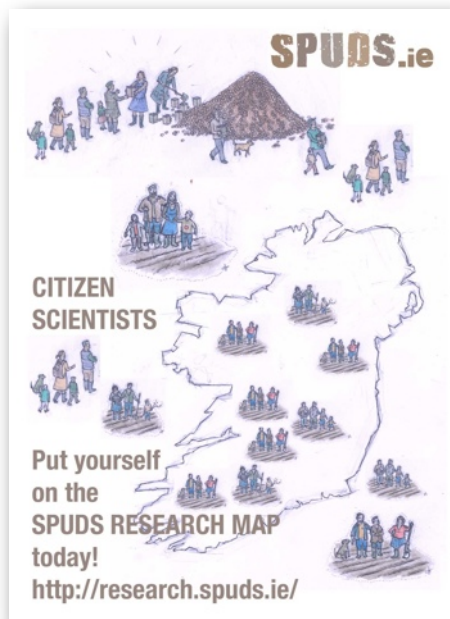


Festival and National Vegetarian Day. Our only regret was missing the National Ploughing Championships – something for next year!

...attention CITIZEN SCIENTISTS!

The main objective of the study is documenting your experience with blight this summer. We look forward to the most important task of the project, gathering the research from all 300+ of YOU! Who could have predicted that this would have been the best summer in recent history to study blight? The initial feedback is exciting. There have been very few reports of blight and one member has reported harvesting 62 kg of spuds from 2.5 kg of Sarpo Mira seed! Please feel free to get in touch if you need help completing the form. For research queries contact:

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ATTENTION GROWERS! We are looking for blight resistant potatoes for our Tastefest. if you have a surplus you could contribute please give us a call

Volunteers needed!

As you can see we have been very busy since April and have lots more plans for the months ahead. After 6 months of running SPUDS, we have only begun to explore its potential and would love to take it to another level in 2013. In order to continue the development of SPUDS we will need many more hands on deck. If you have the time and would like to help out please contact us! The project requires many skills including IT, social media, administration, data entry, writing, event management, graphic design, PR, etc. If you have 2 hours or more a week to offer do give us a shout!

SPUDS Tastefest 2012 November 18th, 2-6 pm The Fumbally Cafe

The SPUDS team is joining forces with the street party loving Sitric Compost Community Garden and the Fumbally Café to throw a spudiferous Tastefest in Dublin city centre. We are pulling together a lively mix of spud tasting, science, stories, poetry and song, featuring Dr. David Shaw of the Sarvari Research Trust, the UK expert on blight, comedienne extraordinaire Maeve Higgins, artist/storyteller Paul Timmony, food blogger Aoife Cox of the 'Daily Spud,' zany competitions and our SPUDS Character workshop of course

Bring family & friends!

Funding - Research and Development

The Sitric Compost Community Garden provided the initial seed capital (literally) for SPUDS. We are now striving to make our research financially independent. It is our intention to develop the crisps as a funding mechanism - as well as their current role promoting sustainability in the Irish food system. We are looking at crowd-funding as a way to secure the initial funds necessary to develop our next edition featuring naturally blight resistant potatoes. If you would be interested in selling our crisps or have other novel funding ideas we welcome your suggestions.



SPUDS.ie 'crisps with a conscience'

It is our intention to develop the crisps as a funding mechanism - as well as their current role promoting sustainability in the Irish food system.

SPUDS.ie crisps are now for sale at the Ballymaloe Cookery School Shop as part of their corporate responsibility programme.

If you would be interested in selling our crisps or have other novel funding ideas we welcome your suggestions.



The Team

Who is behind the SPUDS Community Based Research? SPUDS is driven by a team of tenacious volunteers who benefit from the support of many generous contributors

Founder and director of research
Kaethe Burt O'Dea

Kaethe is passionate promoter of sustainable living who believes in the power of local projects that explore new models for urban living as a catalyst for positive change. Involvement with several such projects in her Dublin 7 neighbourhood, including the Sitric Compost Community Garden and the Lifeline Project shaped the development of her concept for SPUDS. Her consultancy, desireland, focuses on the socio-cultural relationships that influence human well-being.

Coordinator
Nike Ruf

Nike has a keen interest in growing her own food organically and uses every inch of her tiny garden both front and back to plant as many vegetables as she can. She combined her commitment and involvement with GIY with her professional skills as a producer and personal assistant to help plan and coordinate the launch phase of SPUDS.

The involved volunteer
Líadain von der Decken

Líadain is a mother of three young children, with a background in international Corporate PR, who, whenever she gets a few moments, gets involved in the communications and strategy development for SPUDS.

SPUDS Research Station
St Stephen's Green, Dublin
Park(ing) Day 2012

SPUDS.ie

the sustainable potatoes united
research study

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SPUDS Character Workshops 2012



Top Ten Tips for your SPUDS Tastefests Autumn 2012



HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

- 1) Your local naturally blight resistant SPUDS Taste Fest can be as big or as small as you can manage.
- 2) Sarpo varieties benefit from a rest after harvesting. Store them a couple weeks, then offer a bag of potatoes to your neighbours and ask them to cook them and tell you what they think. These varieties are high in dry matter and best cooked in their jackets to avoid falling apart.
- 3) You can ask different neighbours to cook your potatoes each a different way – roasting, baking, make a potato gratin, a potato salad and then gather together in one house and try all the dishes.
- 4) You can throw a potato party, where all dishes are made from potatoes (even breads and a cake!). Draw up feedback sheets and leave them on the tables and ask your friends to give their opinions on how each of the dishes tasted. You might try doing a blind test comparison with a variety you normally use.

- 5) Collaborate! Enhance another local event with your SPUDS Taste Fest, your community garden harvest festival, the night of your Residents Association meeting, a church gathering or pot luck supper...
- 6) Make more of the event and have a storytelling session at your potato party. As part of our SPUDS awareness campaign we want to collect Irish potato folklore. We believe every Irish man/woman has a story about potatoes and we want to record this indigenous folklore for posterity (and entertainment on our website!)...We hope to capture yours!
- 7) Donate some your potatoes to the local chef ask him/her to develop a recipe especially suited to the characteristics of this naturally blight resistant variety. Invite local residents and friends in to the restaurant to try the potato recipe. Get the local media to come along. The restaurant AND SPUDS will gain from the publicity.

- 8) We can send you a box of SPUDS.ie 'crisps with a conscience' for your event. 100% of the profit from your crisp purchase will go toward funding our research.
- 9) Take photos of your event and send them to us!
- 10) Run a SPUDS characters workshop at your event. As your neighbours to help collect any 'wonky' potatoes they come across and ask children to give them a 'make over' with markers on the day of your party. Be sure to photograph them and send us the images to upload onto our SPUDS Potato Characters Flickr Group!



Blight resistant 'Axona' grown by the Muck & Magic Community Garden Ballymun. Planted May 24th & harvested September 24th as part of SPUDS research.