



REPORT

Green Foundation Ireland
invites you to an evening online TALK by
Mary Reynolds of **We Are The Ark**

Weaving a Patchwork Quilt of Hope Around the Globe



Venue: by Zoom *(details given after registration)*
Monday 21 March 2022 – 19:00 to 20:00

Admission to this event is **FREE** but you **MUST** register beforehand.
You can do so through **our Eventbrite page here**

This talk forms part of Green Foundation Ireland's project,
"Our Soil Underfoot – Protecting our underground life".

Weaving a Patchwork Quilt of Hope Around the Globe

THEME

Our talk explored how each of us needs to start at home if we have any land under our care, restore its true nature and grow our own healthy, chemical-free food.

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ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

Mary Reynolds



Mary is the founder of We Are The Ark. She designs gardens that marry the needs and wishes of the land's guardian with the needs and wishes of the land itself. With her roots in natural gardening theory, Mary seeks to create spaces that are healing, truthful and magical.

She has designed gardens internationally, including a commission for a wild garden at Kew Royal Botanical Gardens in London. Mary's journey from rank outsider to winner of a gold medal at the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show (the youngest woman to do so) has been the inspiration of the film *Dare to be Wild* (2015).

As well as occasional stints of garden television presenting for RTÉ and BBC, Mary has written a comprehensive and ground-breaking book *The Garden Awakening – Designs to Nurture Our Land and Ourselves* (Green Books, 2016). Her new approach to garden design is a practical treasure map that leads gardeners into a gentle and healing relationship with the land. This book is a step-by-step instruction manual, drawing on ancient methods of working with the land and using them to invite the power and energy of nature back into your life and surround your house and life in its life giving healing embrace.

However, one day Mary was sitting at her desk looking out over her garden when she saw a fox run past and We Are The Ark was born.

You can find out [more about We Are The Ark here](#).

ABOUT OUR TALK

Donna Mullen, Chair of Green Foundation Ireland, welcomed everyone to our talk and introduced **Mary Reynolds**. Mary began her talk by discussing the importance of wild spaces existing for animals to live. She detailed how current commercial and gardening practices, such as forestry and farming in Ireland are inhospitable to wild animals.

She emphasised the importance of native plants, which have developed complex co-evolved relationships with native animals, and discussed how fashionable gardening, which seeks to display extravagant non-native plant species, is not beneficial to wildlife. Similarly, she discussed how certain plant species considered pollinator-friendly are not truly of benefit to our native pollinators, and that tidy gardens are not conducive to biodiversity.

To assist wildlife and to provide sanctuaries for biodiversity, Mary's solution was to establish an ARK (**A**ct of **R**estorative **K**indness) space, which is a natural space that is un-maintained, and filled with native plants, allowing a safe zone for native biodiversity to flourish. Mary demonstrated several practical tips, such as replacing white lighting, which can impact the life cycles of nocturnal animals, with red lighting, which causes less disturbance, and provided several helpful tips for establishing your own Ark.



58 people registered to attend or expressed an interest in our talk, while 35 people participated on the evening. Attendees were very engaged, with over 10 minutes of questions being asked, and reception was very positive.

You can [access our video of the talk here](#).

Green Foundation Ireland

7 April 2022