

Press Release

Pioneering eco project wins support from water company

31 August 2012



Tina Cresswell (left) and Glenda Sprake demonstrate their aquaponics system to Roger Harrington, Managing Director, Sembcorp Bournemouth Water

It may have been the wettest summer for 100 years but a pioneering eco project in Dorset is showing how healthy fruits and vegetables can be grown in near drought conditions.

Tina Cresswell and Glenda Sprake have developed an aquaponics system in the back garden of their Tuckton home.

Housed in a garden polytunnel, the sustainable food production system uses nitrate from fish waste and the same fresh water, used over and over again, to provide excellent, non chemical nutrition for vegetable and fruit plants.

To date the two women have been able to harvest mange tout peas, courgettes, peppers, lettuce, runner beans, broad beans and mustard leaves. The only water loss has been through evaporation and plant transpiration.

Tina, who has a BSc (Hons) degree, said: "The project is going very well and we're delighted with the results so far.

"When the system is in balance the plants grow exceptionally quickly and produce large and luscious vegetables much quicker than would be expected in an agricultural system.

"We hope to be able to help other people better understand the advantages of using an aquaponics system instead of throwing good clean water onto the ground. It could be the solution to drought conditions."

The Tuckton project has won the support of Sembcorp Bournemouth Water (SBW) which has funded ten per cent of the set-up costs. It has also provided a water butt to capture rain water from the roof of Tina and Glenda's garden shed.

Roger Harrington, SBW's Managing Director, said: "As the worldwide demand for food continues to increase it will become even more important that ways are developed to use less water in its production.

"This project is really inspiring and demonstrates what might be achievable on a commercial scale.

"Although we are not short of water here in Bournemouth now, pressure on our water environment will only increase in the future and we must think longer term."