

LONDON WIDE

LWN



‘Scrumping for Lumleys’ a threat to new bridge’s core purpose

THE Garden Bridge is set to bear Absolutely Fabulous new fruit – growing Britain’s most exclusive apples which are tipped to be known as “Lumleys”.

The apples, named after Garden Bridge originator Joanna Lumley to stand alongside Cox’s, Braeburns and Russets, will be grown with other fruit when the bridge opens in the summer of 2018.

The first apples could be available soon after and the Garden Bridge team is now to discuss whether the limited run of the fruit could be sold for charity as a highly-prized special edition at a store like Fortnam & Mason or Selfridges.

However, gathering the exclusive apples could face a threat – from scrumping. Pundits believe that among the seven million people expected to use the Garden Bridge each year there are certain to be a number who want to go “scrumping for a Lumley”.

Plans to grow fruit in the garden on the bridge were revealed last week.

“It is going to be a very traditional British garden and we have plans to grow wild strawberries and plant apple trees,” said a spokeswoman.

The garden designer, Kew-trained Dan Pearson, is aiming to have 700 species of plants of the bridge, many of which will be British species. The plan is to have 100,000 plants and 270 trees growing on the bridge.

Apple bobbing

“But it’s not going to be an allotment,” said the spokeswoman.

Although the Garden Bridge team has no plans as yet to sell the apples and strawberries, they admit that they will have to devise some way to distribute the fruit at harvest time. They won’t be in vast quantities so there are no plans currently to sell any produce. But this is something we can look at,” said the spokeswoman.

A standard-sized apple tree can bear up 200 lbs of fruit a year. With an average of four apples to a pound and possibly 10 trees on the 366-metre bridge, in a good year the garden could bear up to 8,000 Lumleys, insufficient for commercial production but enough for a limited-edition premium product.

Possibilities for distribution of the Lumleys could include:

■ Selling the exclusive apples for London charities through high-end stores.

■ Making toffee apples for children in the capital’s hospitals.

■ Presenting Lumleys to The Queen and the Mayor of London as a rare gift for visiting dignitaries and heads of State.

■ A huge apple-bobbing competition for children at Halloween.

■ A highly-limited run of Britain’s most-exclusive apple juice or apple-infused vodka sold at a premium price for charity.

“The garden will be an enchanted space in the middle of the busy city. It will feature an abundance of plants, trees and shrubs indigenous to the UK, Northern Europe and other parts of the world,” said the spokeswoman.

■ **LET’S GROW:** Kensington and Chelsea’s Mayor, Councillor Robert Freeman, was the VIP guest at St Mary’s Catholic Primary School in East Row last week – to officially open the school’s stunning new garden. Despite some showers, the launch of the new garden went well. The mayor was said to be ‘most impressed’ with the children’s efforts at planting of vegetables and herbs. Parents and residents are invited to have a look at the pupils’ hard work. The school is looking for volunteers every Tuesdays if you are interested to help them with their gardening activities.

Pictures: Richard Austin

