A Field of Flax: Sowing your seeds

A Field of Flax is a community growing project, which is inspired by Bootle's history of farming and growing.

We will be planting flax seeds across different sites in Bootle, to grow and harvest the plant to hopefully make our own community-grown linen thread.

We will be growing flax in the parks, next to the library, and in planters across Linacre — turning Bootle into a collective garden of flax flowers and talking about the environment as we watch our garden grow.

We would like to invite you to grow along with us in your yards, gardens and plant pots!

Planting Instructions & Care:

First put some soil to one side for after the seeds have been planted.

Sprinkle the seeds evenly in your pot or on your land. If you don't have a pot or can't access one, why not go sow them on a green spot in Linacre and see what happens

Depending on how much space you have depends on how much seed you will need — a heaped teaspoon will cover 25 cm by 25 cm.

Place your reserved soil you saved over the top of the seeds, so the birds don't eat them.

Give your soil a little pat — you're all done! All you have to do is wait and watch your seeds grow into flowers.

After a month or so, the tiny seeds will start to sprout to produce flax flowers for you to admire. The flax flower lasts only a day, but there seems to always be another to take its place. Your flax will grow big and tall, and flowers will blossom in June. After 100 days, the flax will ripen and be ready to harvest and process.

Caring for your flax flowers is very easy. It is not a fussy plant, and only needs to be watered if we have very hot, dry weather. Flax flowers are wildflowers, so they don't mind sand, clay and rocky soil. They like open spots with plenty of sunshine, so if you can, place it somewhere the sun will get to it.

Sow-along with us!

Marking 100 days till harvest, you are invited to join us over Zoom on the Saturday 3rd April 2PM.

Lead artist Raisa Kabir will introduce the project and tell us about some of the history behind Bootle's connection with flax flowers, as well as chat about some future events for you to look forward to.

Afterwards, everyone will be invited to plant their flax together in their gardens, or in their plant pots, to look after and nurture before harvesting in July.

If you would like to join us for the sow-along over Zoom, please email hello@ruleofthrees.co.uk. If you can't join online, not to worry, you can plant at the same time as us or whenever is good for you. We'd love to see pictures of your flax as it grows — so if you can, please send us pictures and keep in touch!
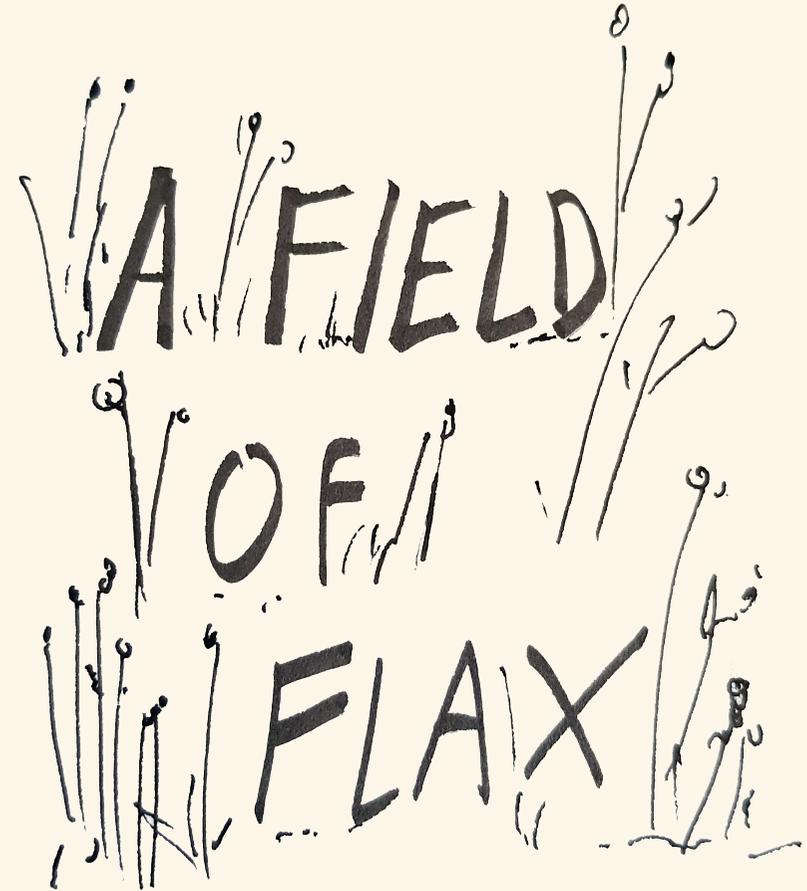
A bit more about Flax:

Flax is very environmentally friendly and can be described as a truly remarkable plant.

When grown as a crop, flax does not require a lot of water to grow, making it very different from cotton production which consumes around 7,100 litres of water per kilogram of cotton.

Another wonderful thing about flax is that it creates no waste. Every part of the plant can be used. As well as being used to make cloth and clothes, flax is also used to make paper or mats, and if you bake it, the seeds can be used to make oil for cooking and are even edible on their own. Flax's fibre is also recyclable and will eventually turn into soil when left in a compost heap, making it much better for the planet. As well as being good for the planet, flax is a very safe plant, and non-toxic to animals or people.

The ecological footprint of flax is quite impressive: one large field of flax absorbs 3.7 tonnes of CO_2 each year. In Europe, flax production helps prevent 342,000 tonnes of CO_2 greenhouse gas emissions, and save 300 tonnes of fuel and 300 tonnes of pesticides each year!

A Field of Flax is a project produced by Rule of Threes Arts, in partnership with Taking Root in Bootle, and funded by Arts Council England & Finnis Scott Foundation.

Instagram: @rule_of_threes   Facebook: @TakingRoot3

Website: https://fieldofflax.co.uk/