

## **ROCKDUST REVEALS ITS SOLUTION SECRETS**

Gardeners, Farmers, Waste and Quarry Managers, Nutritionists, Environmentalists and academics joined forces last Friday to reveal "The Secrets of Rockdust". The well attended conference in Pitlochry Festival Theatre provided a platform for the collective solutions that Rockdust, an untreated by-product of quarrying volcanic rock, could offer. These solutions would depend on the different disciplines working together to realise the extraordinary potential that has long been demonstrated, researched and promoted by Cameron and Moira Thomson, the co-founders of the SEER Centre, located near Pitlochry.

After a viewing of BBC's Landward's SEER Centre exposition, Cameron Thomson set the scene by outlining the 25 glacial / interglacial 'fertility cycles' of the earth's 3 millions years. Cameron advised we are now in the Telocratic era where soil fertility is lowest and the greenhouse gases that we pour into the atmosphere are speeding up both climate change and the catastrophic earthquakes and volcanoes now being witnessed. Whilst he explained the capability of Rockdust to bind up the commonest of the greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide, Moira went on to present the truly amazing crops they have produced at the SEER Centre by adding Rockdust to the composts and soils they have been working with. Not only have these crops, produced in a Highland glen where the local farmers said they "would never grow tatties", been larger than those produced in more standard growing conditions, but they have also had longer shelf life, been more disease resistance and been tested to contain more trace minerals. As explained, the 78 trace minerals locked up in the quarried rocks have been unlocked and are waiting ready for use if we will just wake up to their potential.

A parallel theme was the epidemic of diseases and obesity that is sweeping Britain. This is recognised as a direct result of the overuse of chemical fertilisers and pesticides plus the over-processing of food and the "cocktail of chemicals" being added to the vast majority of everything we eat. Whilst it is no secret that more research is needed, the potential for Rockdust to put the necessary nutrients back into our diet was expounded from the platform. Alistair Lamont MBE, President of the Chartered Institute of Waste Management, went on to explain the targets set in the National Waste Strategy to divert biodegradable municipal waste, to landfill. Alistair was instrumental in the setting up of Dundee's Discovery Compost which is the compost the SEER Centre mixes with Rockdust to produce their amazing results.

A delegate asked about Rockdust toxicity and it was explained that the SEER Rockdust™ is from Tayside Contract's Collace Quarry and it has been analysed, tested and trademarked as safe. The SEER Centre is happy to trial Rockdust from other quarries but this does take at least one growing season to test and analyse scientifically. A Farmer asked about the implications for lime spreading and was advised that Rockdust's natural balance of minerals and trace elements reduces the need for lime. Alistair Lamont added that compost also raises the ph of soil, so a rockdust / compost mix would be of maximum benefit.

All in all it proved to be a very thought provoking day. Whilst SEPA's John Ferguson confirmed that SEPA is very much in favour of co-ordinating further research into the carbon sequestration, soil and compost improvement and the nutritional benefits of Rockdust, delegates were encouraged to realise the benefits of using the SEER Rockdust™ in the forth-coming season. It is hoped that the political will can now be found to divert society from its unsustainable path of cheap, fast, chemical-dependant crop production onto the less disastrous path as presented at the event. Papers from the Conference will be posted on the SEER Centre's website: [www.seercentre.org.uk](http://www.seercentre.org.uk).

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