

## News

### From South African townships to Brixton Allotments via the Chelsea Garden Show

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#### Top South African horticulturalist shares secrets of real drought gardening

After a hectic week at Garden Africa's stand at the Chelsea Garden Show, TV appearances and meeting the Queen, South African organic gardening expert John Nzira is coming down to earth with a visit to the threatened Windmill Allotments in Brixton.



Joh Nzira (centre) African Permaculturist, visiting the 'Windmill Allotments' on Brixton Hill, pictured with allotment holders and friends of Thatu.

He has been invited there by Thatu, a UK charity that supports John's work in introducing food gardening to residents in extremely poor communities in South Africa, "We thought it would be fascinating for John Nzira to share his experiences of cultivating in the often arid conditions of poor areas in South Africa with London allotment holders who are facing watering restrictions," explained Margery Povall, Chair of Thatu and Brixton resident.

"There are surprising similarities between allotment gardening in England and food gardening in poor settlements in South Africa. Obviously the need for nutritious food is acute in South Africa, but the methods of each group uses can be uncannily similar – all the more so now that southern England is facing water restrictions."

John will be telling Windmill allotment holders how they cope with so little water in Thatu's community and school food garden near Pretoria, South Africa. He hopes he might also learn some new ideas from the allotmenters. In South Africa, John and his team from Ukuvuna are helping to create the Thatu community food garden at Lotus Gardens School outside Pretoria. These gardens are important in many ways – they provide much-needed nutritious food in very poor communities and they teach how to produce food in very difficult conditions.

Thanks to John's guidance, the first crops of spinach and beetroot were harvested and sold within two months of the initial planting. The Lotus Gardens community food garden is one of the first five that Thatu, a recently established British charity, is funding in disadvantaged communities in South Africa.