



# From playground to plate

Growing their own: Chef Felice Tocchini gives pupils at Woodfield Junior School some tips on healthy eating as part of the Farm to Fork campaign.

## Top chef will help pupils cook their own produce at city event

By Richard McComb

**P**UPILS preparing to cook alongside a top chef at a Birmingham food festival won't have to bother with the shopping - because they grow all their own produce at school.

Green-fingered youngsters from Woodfield Junior School, Wolverhampton, will be cooking alongside top chef Felice Tocchini, from Fusion Brasserie, in Worcester, at Taste of Birmingham.

The event, which starts a week today in Cannon Hill Park, will highlight the importance of the Farm to Fork campaign, a healthy-eating drive aimed at raising awareness of the benefits of fresh produce.

As part of the project, children in Years 8 and 9 have been working hard in their school allotment to grow a selection of stunning fruits

and vegetables. The wide variety of produce includes aubergines, melons, peppers, tomatoes and herbs.

They even have their own chickens to make sure there is a regular supply of fresh eggs.

Felice visited the school to talk to the children about the value of their lessons and stressed the importance of using good quality fresh ingredients to make tasty dishes.

He also discussed menu ideas with them and devised some dishes to cook at the Taste of Birmingham event.

Felice said: "When I arrived at the school, I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and knowledge of the children.

"The allotment looked fantastic.

"I was escorted from bed to bed, to the greenhouse, to the chicken

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## Pupils will cook with top chef

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pen, then the orchard. Following a quick chat to the kids, the recipes started to be created."

The Woodfield pupils will cook with Felice in a special demonstration next Friday.

They have been growing produce at the school for three years and their activities have formed an important part of the curriculum. The pupils say they love the chance to get out into the fresh air.

The Farm to Fork project is one of 29 health and well-being projects in the Living Well West Midlands portfolio, funded by BIG Lottery and supported by the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

It aims to improve physical activity, healthy eating and mental well-being. Living Well West Midlands will be hosting a stand at Taste of Birmingham, at which members of the public can have health checks – or help themselves to a smoothie drink made with a bicycle-powered blender.

The food festival features 17 of the West Midlands' top restaurants. There will be everything from Michelin-starred eateries, to a traditional fish and chip shop offering taster dishes of their finest cooking.

Meals are redeemed using crowns, which can be purchased at the show. The conversion rate is £1 = two crowns. Starters, main courses and desserts vary in price from six to ten crowns.

There will also be displays by regional producers, including Flights Orchard Organic from Herefordshire, Freedom Beer from Staffordshire and Fudge Heaven from Worcestershire; trendy bars; cocktail demonstrations; and cookery masterclasses in the Heart of England fine food Cookery Theatre and the Peugeot French Flair Kitchen.

David Hands, a former student of University College Birmingham, will be showcasing a saddle of local lamb "en persiade" with cauliflower cous cous, compressed cucumbers and cumin scented yogurt.

Live music will be provided by The Jam House and BRMB.

■ Taste of Birmingham is in Cannon Hill Park from July 9-12. Entry for under-16s is free when accompanied by a paying adult.

■ Tickets are available from [www.visitbirmingham.com](http://www.visitbirmingham.com) and at Birmingham's tourism centres at the Rotunda and New Street. Standard tickets are £10 in advance, £12 on the day.

■ For more details on Living Well West Midlands, go to [www.livingwellwestmidlands.org](http://www.livingwellwestmidlands.org)

