

Digging in to spruce up gardens for the elderly

GREEN-fingered trainees have helped transform elderly residents' gardens in a Birmingham suburb.

Youngsters from the Employment Needs Training Agency have been working for Age Concern for the last three years in Great Barr to learn valuable skills to help them enter the workforce.

What began as garden

tidying has developed into full-scale landscaping and project work, which has gone from strength to strength thanks to a crop of satisfied customers.

Great Barr resident Ellen Darby has arthritis and was no longer able to manage her garden.

Mrs Darby said: "The lads and young lady worked in extremely cold conditions

and did a very good job in transforming my garden and making it low-maintenance."

The agency's estate improvement officer John Jones said: "The beauty of the projects is that the trainees are learning real and valuable life skills.

"They develop respect for older people and their property and build

relationships with them.

"They are also gaining technical and building skills such as slabbing, block paving and painting and the use of power tools such as slab cutters and chainsaws".

The agency has been working in Birmingham since 1977 providing learning opportunities, training and advice.

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