

Hempland Lane-Heworth Allotment Association



Autumn Newsletter 2014 Hot from the Hut!

Committee Members

Name		Plot
Ellen Bradbury	Committee Member	9
David Brinklow	Site Secretary and Treasurer	14
Phil Copley	Secretary	89
Gayle Enion-Farrington	Chair and Publicity Officer	34,35
Ulrike Manara	Minutes Secretary	40
Lisa Tindale	Committee Member	59b
Lorraine Wood	Shop Manager	64
Dave Wood	Shop Manager	65
Ann-Marie Knowles	Committee Member	16
Available !	Easy Access Plots Rep	?
Nigel Collinson	Committee Member	65
Mark Farrington	Website Administrator (not part of the committee)	35

Would you like to represent the Easy Access Plots? If so please speak to a committee member

Dates for your Diary



Strimming weekend 20th September and 21st September 2014. 10am-2pm each day.

Just to remind you that it is our strimming weekend on Sat 20th and Sun 21st September 2014 and we need as many people as possible to turn up. Even if you can only spare 1 hr. Please come to the wildlife area (left hand corner of the site, with the shop behind you and the disabled plots to your right).

Come any time between 10am-2pm and you will see some very happy faces to greet you.

Traditionally very few allotment holders have come to help the committee with the task of preserving and encouraging conservation in the wildlife area. This year, however, we have had great weather and have achieved more on our own plots, we have many new members, more email addresses to reach out to and we really need your help. No matter how big or small a contribution you can make. Bring a strimmer, if you have one. But if not there are plenty of jobs that can be done with a rake, brush and or wheel barrow (which most of us have for our own allotments).

Traditionally we finish off with a BBQ for the helpers on the Sunday around 1pm (please bring something to sizzle and drink). We also do a giant pumpkin competition on the Sunday at 12 noon when the shop closes. If you wish to enter your pumpkin please ensure that it is at the shop no later than 11.30am on Sunday 21st September 2014. We look forward to seeing you there.

A big thank you to all those who attended our Summer fete and those who participated in our scarecrow competition back in July (Pictures on the website under 'Gallery - Summer Fete 2014).

Harvest Festival Display

Please can you help me? Gayle is putting together a large basket for our local church (Christ Church on Stockton Lane) for their harvest festival on 28th September 2014. We would like to say that it has been contributed from tenants on the Hempland Lane Allotment site. If we get lots we can also use it to decorate the church. After the service all produce will go to shelters for the homeless.

If you have anything to donate, please contact Gayle or follow instructions sent on previous email. Please can we have all produce no later than sat 27th September 2014.

Do you need to order any seeds?

Ordering using the Kings seed catalogue can bring big savings and is therefore recommended. All orders should be placed by October and a catalogue will be available at the shop for those who are interested.

Association Membership Benefits

If you are a plot holder, then please consider joining in the fun and become a member of the allotment association. It only costs £5 per year and this entitles you to a 10% discount on all garden related items at both Vertigrow and Deans Garden Centre.

If you would to make full use of our composting toilet whilst on your plot, please purchase a key from the shop for only £3.

Come to the shop and meet our **Police Community Support Officers** on the following dates if you have any concerns or wish to discuss Allotment Watch. **28th September 2014 and 26th October 2014 between 10.30am-11.30am.**



Skips will be arriving soon! - Be prepared. As soon as we have a date we will send around an email as we do not wish a sign to go up on the notice board or in our newsletter as non allotment holders have a tendency to fill them!



ALLOTMENT SHOP - Last Sunday will be 26th October 2014, which will also be the last Police Surgery date for 2014

New to allotmenting or just need a helpful reminder? Here is a guide for the next three months

September

September is the end of summer although we're often lucky to have an Indian summer with blue skies and sunshine, nothing is certain with the weather. The bulk of the harvest comes home now and as crops come out the plot begins to empty



Pumpkins ripening in the late September sunshine on the allotment.

Sowing & Planting in September on the Vegetable Plot

As we leave summer behind and approach autumn, the rush to get things into the ground slows to a near halt, which is not to say that work stops! This is one of the busiest months with harvesting. It's worth sowing some winter hardy spring onions ready for spring. You can sow lettuce like Arctic King now they'll be ready in early spring as well. We think of lettuce as a summer crop but actually they don't like too much heat and are surprisingly hardy,

Autumn onion sets can go in now to provide an early crop and plant out spring cabbages to slowly develop for next year. My onions and elephant garlic will be in before the end of this month.

Green Manure

Early September is the time to sow green manures as land becomes vacant. They perform three jobs for you.

1. First, they soak up any nutrients which would otherwise be washed away in winter rain. In fact, sowing a legume such as Winter Tares or field beans will fix nitrogen from the air.
2. Second, they provide compost material and improve the soil structure
3. Third, they prevent weed growth by crowding them out and that's less work for you

Mark (my husband is obsessed with green manure, but I don't mind as if you choose carefully is can add colour to what can usually be a boring and bland time of year on your plot - such as Red Clover). If you're blessed with a light soil then just leave them in over winter. In the spring you dig them in and allow them to rot down for a few weeks. If you've a heavy clay soil, dig them in when you do your late autumn, early winter digging.

Cultivating

Keep feeding your tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers but it's not really worthwhile feeding other plants at this time of year as they are nearly finished and the nutrients are best saved for the spring. Keep the side shoots in check on the tomatoes.

Don't give up on the hoe, it's far better to hoe weeds away when you can hardly see them than when they're established. As the saying goes "*Hoe when you can't see a weed and you'll never see a weed*"

Keep an eye on your brassicas for butterfly eggs and caterpillars, these will most probably be under the leaves. The greenhouse pests should be on the wane but keep an eye out if the weather is good as they can leap back so quickly

Composting

September and October are the right time to work on your compost. Usually the cool compost bins will have partially decomposed material at the top and rotted compost at the base.

Take the partially rotted off and then take out the rotted compost to spread on the ground or pile ready to add to the base of trenches when digging over to encourage the worms to deepen your top soil.

The partially rotted goes back in the bin along with fresh green materials (preferably shredded), some manure if you have it and lime in layers. Once a heap is built, cover with cardboard, plastic sheet or tarpaulin and, with luck, you'll get a hot compost going before the real winter chill hits.

Fruit

Tidy up the summer fruiting raspberries. Cut off the canes that have fruited and tie in the new shoots that will bear next year's fruit.

The summer fruiting strawberries can be attended to now as well. Cut off the foliage about 1" from the ground, clearing and weeding as you go. Any runners can be planted up to replace 3 year old plants that are best replaced now.

Harvest

The maincrop potatoes may be ready now. When you harvest your potatoes take care to remove all the tubers. Any left will not only sprout next year and become a weed but will also be a reservoir for disease and potato blight spores. It's often worth forking over a few days after harvesting potatoes because more seem to miraculously appear.

If blight has struck your potatoes the best method to preserve the crop is to remove the haulm and dispose of it then leave the potatoes in the ground for a fortnight or longer to stop the spores getting onto the tubers.

The runner beans and French beans will be continuing to produce until frost strikes. The last of the peas should be coming in as well. Compost the foliage of the peas and beans but leave the roots in the ground as the nodules on them contain nitrogen.

From the greenhouse you should be picking aubergines, chilli and sweet peppers as well as cucumbers and tomatoes.

October

October is really the last of the hectic months on the vegetable plot. There's little to sow and plant but still a fair amount to harvest and store away to eat through winter. This is the month when the first frosts usually arrive so killing off all but the hardy plants.

Over-wintered broad beans can go in from the middle of the month to provide an early crop next year. Whilst they're very hardy, they don't like sitting in water so on heavy soils they can be a gamble and you may prefer to just sow early on next year.

The last sowing of beet leaf spinach can be made early in the month and you may be able to just fit in some Chinese cabbage.

October is the last chance for planting out Japanese onion sets. These are hardy, short-daylight onions so will bulb up about a month earlier next year than the normal onions but they don't store as well so go for a smaller quantity rather than larger.

It's worth protecting them with a cloche or netting until well established as they hold a magnetic attraction for pigeons who seem to delight in pulling them from the ground and throwing them to the side.

You can plant out garlic in October but generally it's a November job. However, if the weather turns nasty then you'll have one less task to do outside.

General Garden Tasks for October

There's not a lot to do except for keeping weeds in check with the established crops. If you've got Brussels Sprouts it's worth checking they're firm in the ground as wind-rock breaks the tiny hairs on the roots that take in the nutrients. Earthing up a few inches around the stems and treading in or staking should be enough. In very windy areas a wind break can save the day.

If the leaves are looking a little yellow, apply a high nitrogen liquid feed around each plant and this should perk them up enough to ensure good firm sprouts for Christmas. With other brassicas, remove any yellowed leaves as they are of no use to the plant and will encourage botrytis to develop.

As ground becomes vacant, you can dig it over, With heavy clay soils just leave the clods unbroken and the freezing / thawing action of winter weather will break them up, giving you a fine tilth to work with in the spring.

Spread manure or compost over the surface and leave for the worms to drag down into the ground or lime if appropriate.

October and November are good months for serious digging. The deeper the fertile soil, the better crops that can be had. Double digging where you remove a trench and then break up the sub-soil with a fork prior to adding a good layer of manure or compost and then place the soil from the next trench on top will greatly improve your soil.

With light deep soils that don't benefit from annual digging, sow a green manure like field beans that will hold the nutrients in the soil over winter until spring when you dig them in to add both humus and nutrients

Now is the time to concentrate on your compost making. The last of the bulk foliage should be available to build a proper heap rather than a waste pile. Emptying one bin into another, layering with lime and nitrogen rich manure as it builds, will ensure decomposition gets off to a good start.

Consider where you intend to plant your runner beans and start a bean trench, digging it out and lining with newspapers (six sheets thick) before adding compostable kitchen waste, lawn clippings etc and covering with soil. (great tip to dispose of your grass clippings as there is no green bin collection from the council now).

Fruit

This is a good month to prune your blackcurrants, redcurrants and gooseberries. Your raspberries and blackberries need cutting back, tying in etc and these early winter months are ideal for planting out new stock.

October Greenhouse Tasks

If you've still got crops, open the vents on fine days to avoid developing a muggy atmosphere which encourages fungal diseases. As tomatoes etc. finish, clear them out and wash any old pots etc before putting them away.

If you can, give the house a good clean with a little detergent and disinfectant and a scrubbing brush. Clean glass will allow more light through in the dark days and cleaning the frame will remove pests looking for a good spot to over-winter. Once clean you can insulate it. Bubble wrap is good or heatsheets will do the job.

Sow a hardy lettuce like Arctic King and grow in your greenhouse border to give you a salad whatever the weather.

Harvest

Any remaining maincrop potatoes should be ready. When the haulm (leaves) starts dying back you cut it off and leave the potatoes for a couple of weeks. This will make the skins set and hopefully prevent any stray blight spores from the haulm infecting your tubers. Wait for a sunny dry day and dig up the potatoes, brushing off excess soil and letting them dry off before storing in hessian or paper sacks in a frost free, dark shed.

The last of the beans should be picked now, compost the foliage but leaving the roots with their nitrogen full nodules in the soil will act as a fertiliser.

Maincrop carrots should be dug up to be stored in sand or peat through the winter but leave the parsnips in the ground as they'll be sweeter after a frost.

Drumhead cabbages that are ready should be harvested. They'll keep remarkably well in a frost-free shed but be aware that a slug that may be lurking under the leaves. Sprinkling the outside with salt will deter them from eating away through the winter,

Any green tomatoes on outdoor plants can come in now before the frost gets them. You can make a green tomato chutney or ripen them up indoors. Green tomatoes will actually store quite well in cool conditions and slowly ripen or you can hasten the ripening process by popping them in a tray in a sunny windowsill with a ripe banana.

November

November is the month when the hard frosts and heavy rain usually arrive so it's important to grab whatever time you can on the plot in case you don't get another chance.

Sowing & Planting in November on the Vegetable Plot

Now is the time to plant out your normal garlic which likes a period of dormancy and cold prior to growing away in the spring.

If you've a heavy soil that tends to hold water there is the danger of the cloves rotting. To stop this, dib your planting hole as usual and then drop some sharp sand or fine gravel in the base of the hole. An inch of sand will provide enough drainage to save the day. Fill the hole above the clove with compost to get them off to a good start.

Autumn planted broad beans go in now but do be aware that in northern areas and wet soils the success rate will be lower than the drier and sunnier south-east of the country.

Hardy peas like meteor can also go in now.

General Garden Tasks for November

As with October, as ground becomes vacant, you can dig it over and spread manure over the surface. Leave the soil roughly dug in large clumps and the worms will break these up as they get the manure. The freezing and thawing of water in the soil will cause the soil to break up finely so becoming easier to handle in the spring.

Digging over introduces air into the soil, loosening it and avoiding it turning into a solid pan. It also exposes insect pests to the open air where the birds can eat them. Double or deep digging and introducing manure or composts to the base of the trenches will deepen your top soil providing a better growing medium.

With light, sandy soils digging every year is not needed but heavy soils really benefit from it. It's also the time to lime as required but don't add lime and manure at the same time.

Keep a close eye on your winter brassicas and remember that the birds are hungry at this time of year so cover with netting if required. With staked Brussels sprouts, double check all is firm or windrock will break the root hairs and cause the sprouts to blow.

If you're making a bean trench, keep on filling it, adding a little soil over each layer of kitchen waste as you go.

If you've a good supply of leaves, which should be falling fast now, make leafmould. Start by building a leaf mould cage. Very simple to do, you just drive four stakes into the ground and staple chicken netting around to make the cage.

Pile in the leaves and leave them alone for a year. You will find the pile reduces by two thirds at least, so keep filling the bin as more leaves fall. If you have one of those marvellous garden vacuum mulchers that suck up leaves and chop them, you will find the leaves rot down much more quickly.

Fruit

It's pruning time for apples and pears and they'll benefit from some compost around the base as a mulch. With younger, staked trees check the stakes are firm and the ties. Winter winds can shake the roots loose on young trees causing poor growth or even death.

As with October, November is a good month to attend to pruning the raspberries, blackberries and hybrid berries as well as being the ideal time to plant bare rooted canes.

November Greenhouse Tasks

If you didn't get chance last month, give the greenhouse a good wash down and clean up prior to insulating if you intend to use it through the winter. Reduce ventilation on colder days but give the house a good airing on sunny days which will stop fungal conditions and especially downy mildew developing.

You can continue successional sowing of winter salad crops.

Harvest

Your leeks should be coming ready now. Harvest every other one in a row leaving the rest to grow on. Brussels sprouts should be starting as well. Pick from the bottom of the plant upwards. A sprout is for winter, not just for Christmas!

Along with sprouts you can harvest kale and take up the winter cabbages and cauliflowers. A cauliflower tightly wrapped in cling-film kept in the fridge can be kept fresh for as long as six weeks.

Maincrop carrots can be lifted to store safe from pests in damp sand or peat in your store along with parsnips but they do hold in the ground better than carrots.

You could still be harvesting celery and celeriac, kale and kohlrabi as well as turnips, swedes and spinach.

Leek and Potato Soup

Helpful Hint

For thicker soup add more Leeks and Potatoes and keep the Liquid amount the same. You can always make it thinner after the event by adding more water and it means that it takes up less space when freezing

Ingredients

- 2 oz (50g) Unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 3 Leeks, trimmed and sliced
- 1 Onion, finely chopped
- 12 oz (350g) Potatoes, sliced
- 2 pints (1.2 litres) of water mixed with 4 cubes of Vegetable stock
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- A little freshly grated nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{4}$ pint (150ml) Single cream (optional)
- 2 tablespoons snipped chives or chopped parsley



Method

Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the Leeks and Onion and cook gently, without boiling, for about 10 minutes. Add the Potatoes, Stock, Seasoning and Nutmeg.

Bring to the boil, cover and simmer gently until the vegetables are tender.

Allow to cool slightly, then purée in a blender or food processor until smooth. (Some like to leave some chopped veg aside, so that you can add the chunks afterwards in to the soup, so that it is not all smooth and pureed).

Reheat thoroughly and check the seasoning. Stir in the cream, if using and sprinkle with chives or parsley.

For more recipes please look on our website - www.hempland-lane-allotments.co.uk

Just for fun on a raining day - Allotment Wordsearch

ALLOTMENT
GREENBEANS
MANMADE
SEEDS
VEGETABLES

CARROTS
GREENHOUSE
NUTRITION
SHOOTS
WARMTH

CHILLIES
GROWING
ONIONS
SOIL

COMPOST
HEALTHY
POTATO
SUNLIGHT

CRESS
HERBS
ROOTS
TOMATO

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