

Hempland Lane-Heworth Allotment Association



Spring Newsletter 2025 Hot from the Hut!

Committee Members

Name		Plot
Julian Ayres	Committee Member (Hempland Haven Rep)	67A & 67B
Ellen Bradbury	Committee Member	9
David Brinklow	Site Secretary and Treasurer	14
Nigel Collinson	Secretary	66
Alison England	Committee Member	49
Gayle Enion-Farrington	Chair and Publicity Officer	34, 35
Moira Grainger	Committee Member	93a
George Hughes	Committee Member	108
Vacancy	Committee Member (Hempland Haven Rep)	
Vacancy	Committee Member	
Richard Murgatroyd	Committee Member	62
Lorraine Wood	Shop Manager	64
Dave Wood	Shop Manager	64
Mark Farrington	Website Administrator (not part of the committee)	35

Dates for your diary

Sunday 13th July 2025 10am - 2pm - Summer Fair in the Haven at Hempland Lane Allotments 10am - 2pm. Starting at 10am with a coffee morning and merging into a 'Bring Your Own' BBQ lunch and refreshments from 12noon. There will also be a **table top sale**. If you would like a table please contact a member of the committee. More information to follow so look out in Facebook or the posters around our site

Sunday 14th September 2025 10am - 2pm - Autumn Show in the Haven at Hempland Lane Allotments 10am - 2pm. Starting at 10am with a coffee morning and merging into a 'Bring Your Own' BBQ lunch and refreshments from 12noon.

Scarecrow theme - please can we have your votes - would you like it to be

1) **Fairytales** 2) **Heros and Villains** or 3) **Vikings** for September 2025? Please let Gayle know on gayle.farrington@btinternet.com no later than 30th April 2025, or answer the poll on our facebook page. Our next committee meeting will be held on 12th May 2025 and confirmation will be made in the Summer newsletter, following the meeting.

Man with a van - available to new plot holders

If you have any landfill waste please contact our site secretary David Brinklow - email with name, plot number and how much waste you have and where it is located on your plot (It needs to be in one place that can be easy to get to, as the man with a van may come when you are not present).

Gayle Enion-Farrington

Plot 34

SHOP - Now open for 2025 - every Sunday 10am - 12noon, along with our **SUNDAY COFFEE MORNINGS IN THE HAVEN** also 10am - 12noon.

GETTING STARTED AND SKILLING UP

Having an allotment can be pretty daunting at first. There is so much to learn, so much to do. It's easy to start over-worrying about the weeds, watering and when to plant...?

But as any seasoned allotment veteran knows, it's not as bad as all that once you have learnt what's doable and skilled up a bit. While there are loads of books and videos out there that can help, actual experience is the best teacher. There is always something new to learn.

Lots of new people have got an allotment this year at Hempland. Others are fairly new to veg growing. The Committee is therefore currently considering ways to help. Some ideas are:

- Advice in this newsletter
- Running a few training sessions on the basics
- Running a mentoring scheme so there are some old hands to turn to for advice
- Open plot sessions - willing participants give access during key timeslots and show people round their plots, answering questions?.

But we first need to know whether these are something association members might want?

If you think any of these could be useful, please let us know. Please email

gayle.farrington@btinternet.com so we can discuss your views at our next meeting. **Deadline 10th May 2025.**

Richard Murgatroyd, Plot 62

New to allotmenting? Here is a guide for the next three months

March

Traditionally in March but not too late as this March was too cold and wet.

Overview

Hopefully by now we are now standing on the threshold of Spring and the new gardening season. The days are beginning to lengthen and although it may not feel like it at times the temperatures are slowly increasing day by day. More importantly the longer days are the real trigger to new growth and you will find that with the help of a little protection you can really go for those early sowings. They might not all make it but it is still worth a try and you will still have plenty of time to re-sow any misses. Your best friend this month is the weather man try to keep up to date with the local forecasts, better still ask the advice of the gardeners around you who have years of experience to draw on.



Sowing and Planting

Plant out early cultivars of potatoes as soon as possible and follow on planting out at regular intervals with the second earlies and first main crops until the end of the month. A little bit of forward planning, don't be tempted to plant out more potatoes than you can protect from any frosty weather further down the line.

Transplant any early peas, broad beans, cabbages or lettuce you may have started off earlier.

Sow the seed of Brussels sprouts, summer cabbage, broccoli, onions and leeks in short rows on a "nursery seed bed". These will be grown on to be transplanted in April. Sow in rows in the open ground seeds of round seeded spinach, Swiss chard, early types of beetroot, carrots, parsnips,

lettuce, Spring onions, peas, broad beans and turnips. Try sowing the seed of the white form of kohlrabi towards the end of the month.

Plant out onion sets, shallots and garlic before they start to produce shoots. If you are buying any from the site shed or garden centres reject any that are shooting they will only bolt during the summer. Transplant any onions that were grown from seed sown last summer into rows. It is best to treat these as a sacrificial crop to be harvested and used from August onwards.

If you can offer the protection of a greenhouse sow the seed of celery, celeriac, French beans (they are hardy enough to be planted out before the runners), cauliflowers to transplant on the open soil next month.

General

Complete any unfinished digging and winter pruning. Clear the old leaves off strawberry plants and clean up the ground in between the plants before giving them a top dressing of a general fertiliser. Keep some fleece handy to protect the developing strawberry flowers from frost. Any frost damaged flowers are easily identified as they display a tell-tale "black eye" at the centre of the dead flower. When the weather conditions allow it, complete the preparations of seed beds for direct seed sowing. Spread the job out over several days to allow the surface of the soil to dry out.

April

Overview

April is a 'let's go for it!' month on the allotment but proceed with caution. Hopefully we will all be feeling the benefit of the lengthening days and warm sunshine but beware there is always a price to pay with the threat of hard, night frosts never far away. Hold back and wait a day or two rather take a risk. It isn't the loss of seedlings or young plants that causes the problems but the loss of your precious time that you will never get back that does the damage. The allotment will always catch up eventually and reward your patience with bumper harvest.

Sowing and planting

Continue with planting out the seed potatoes; aim to complete the job by the end of April. Be prepared to cover the emerging shoots of the earlies with soil if a frost is forecast.

Complete the planting of onion sets and carry on making successional sowings of beetroot, carrots, parsnips, lettuce, spinach, spring onions, kohlrabi, radish, turnips, early peas, Swiss chard.

Sow maincrop peas and make the last sowing of summer broad beans. You could try an early sowing of dwarf and climbing French beans towards then of the month. Use the darker seeded varieties they are hardier and more suited to the early sowings. Protect them from frosts. On a prepared seed bed sow the seed leeks and summer cabbage. Plant out celeriac grown on earlier and keep the plants well watered all through the summer.



Sow under glass, in pots and trays filled with fresh seed compost, the seeds of runner beans, sweet corn, courgettes, pumpkins, squashes, outdoor/ridge cucumber.

It is now safe to transplant the cold greenhouse tomatoes in to their final positions keep some frost protection handy.

Plant out globe artichokes, either by slicing slips off the sides of main plants or plant out bought in roots. Seed raised plants sown earlier are best planted out towards the end of the month. Water well and feed regularly to build up the crowns removing any buds that may form as soon as possible.

Plant out Jerusalem artichokes but don't allow them to overrun the allotment, if left unlifted at the end of the summer they will quickly develop into an impenetrable jungle.

Plant up a new asparagus bed but it will take two more years to establish before producing succulent shoots.

General

Early sowings of Brussels sprouts will need thinning out this month and the soil for next month's transplanting of sweet corn, courgettes, marrows, pumpkins and outdoor/ridge cucumbers will need preparing.

Put up the runner bean poles and start to support the growing peas with brushwood or netting.

Prepare seed beds for outdoor sowing of main crop vegetables next month.

Pest and diseases

Check over top and soft fruit for the first broods of aphids and take appropriate action; spray the plant with soapy water (diluted washing up liquid) or squash the flies with your thumb and finger. You can buy insecticides if you prefer, including a fatty acid soap to spray on the plants

Protect any early strawberries with netting to keep birds and squirrels out.

May

Overview

May is always looked forward to as the first month of summer but it marks the end of the spring. It is a month when we can get caught out by mini droughts and heat waves. The biggest threat is to any young plants that have that have recently been transplanted into the open ground and any freshly emerging seedlings. Be sure to keep all of them well watered and if the young transplants look as if they are flagging give them some shade protection from the heat of the sun or drying winds. On the other hand May can be a complete disaster month bringing damaging frosts, cold winds with heavy rain or hail, so be prepared to take steps to protect plants if it is necessary.



Harvest

Sprouting broccoli, cabbage, spinach, rhubarb, spring onions, early sown lettuce, beetroot, radish and peas. Cut asparagus regularly to maintain the supply. Start to remove the side shoots on tomatoes. Use up of the last leeks. Clear away any old or finished crops and dig over the soil and prepare the site ready for the next crop.

Sowing and planting

Plant in pots or trays under glass, Dwarf and climbing French beans, runner beans, sweet corn, outdoor cucumbers, courgettes, pumpkins, squashes, outdoor cucumbers - all which can be planted out next month.

Savoy cabbage, winter cabbage, endive, kale and sprouting broccoli can all be sown in the open ground now, ready to be planted out next month.

Continue making direct successional sowings in the soil of lettuce, radish, spinach, turnips (switch to kohlrabi when the weather becomes hot) beetroot for summer use and also main crop beetroot to put into store at the end of summer. While the leeks, Brussels sprouts and French beans sown last month under glass, can now be planted out.

This is also your last opportunity to sow peas and parsnips this year

General

Thin out whilst still very small, the seedlings of beetroot, carrots, lettuce, onions, parsnips, turnips and always water along the row to settle the disturbed seedlings back in, once the job is completed. Put up poles for runner and climbing French beans. Support peas and broad beans before they become too tall. Start to earth up potatoes especially if a frost is forecast.

Keep hoeing between crops to control weeds and also create a "dust mulch" to conserve precious soil moisture. Try to water in the cool of the evening if possible using a watering can to direct the water around the root area of the crops.

If you can get it, put some straw underneath the developing strawberry fruits to keep them off the soil and try to avoid watering overhead to reduce any problems with mildew.

Pest and diseases

look out for blackfly on broad beans, greenfly on peas, lettuce, cabbage root fly, carrot fly, thrip damage on brassicas especially when the plants are small. Spray the affected plants with soapy water (diluted washing up liquid) or squash the flies with your thumb and finger. You can buy insecticides if you prefer, including a fatty acid soap to spray on the plants.

Watering

Watering the soil at the base of plants (under their foliage), using a can, (without rose) will direct more water towards their roots. If you water in the middle of a sunny day, a lot of the water will evaporate before reaching your plants. If you can water early (before the ground gets hot) or late (after the sun has set) your plants' roots will have more chance to absorb the water.

Some plants (like seedlings and those in small pots) may require watering little but often, (daily) over the summer. It can be beneficial to water seedlings in pots in a water filled tray. Established plants need to be encouraged to search for water; frequent light watering encourages roots to stay near the surface but a good soaking once a week encourages them to grow down into the soil. Water soil lightly before, rather than after, sowing seeds to prevent soil slumping and capping as this can inhibit the growth of seedlings.

Some species (for example, peas and beans) have particular watering needs, and may benefit from periods of reduced watering. In most soils, root vegetables like carrots and parsnips do not need water once established. Rainwater can be harvested from the roofs of sheds, greenhouses or polytunnels. Some sites ask plot owners to collect and use rainwater, if possible. Swales or shallow gullies can be used to direct rainwater to plants.

Water flowing down slopes can be trapped using terraces or French drains (gravel filled trenches). Consider how runoff from paths and other areas might be directed into soil. A popular (and cheap) option for water storage is the use of plastic barrels (200 litre). Normally you'll be able to use about 80% of collected water (as some will be lost in storage due to evaporation).

Please refrain from using hosepipes to water your allotment plot. A hosepipe is permitted to fill up a water butt only!

Suppressing the Urge!

I penned this in February but the sentiment is the same every year! Each season is different be it on an allotment, in a garden, a greenhouse, a tunnel, a raised bed or even in a cold frame. But some things are constant from year to year such as weeds, pests, successes and failures and dare I say it "the urge to sow our seeds too early".

As I currently look out of my window at the beautiful blue sky and sunshine (5th April), what a contrast to last spring! Pam my significant "other half" has found the perfect way for me to control my urge to get sowing. In recent years she has booked us a holiday in February/early March so I can't physically get at my seed packets.

This time round it was a little jaunt to Fuerteventura, whilst I do appreciate this is an extreme measure we did enjoy the sunnier climbs after a chilly spell at home. So now we are now in what seems to be a sowing frenzy, where to start? I have a little heated propagator with seven little trays in which is great for chillies, tomatoes, cucumbers and the like. That bit of extra bottom heat make loads of difference.

On my allotment the extra protection provided by my tatty cheap plastic tunnel helps my trays of multi sown vegetable plug plants make an encouraging start. It is a great way of sowing Beetroot, Lettuce, Peas, Spring Onions & Leeks to name a few. It's a lot of production from small amounts of space, and compost. The plug trays are just such a cost effective & efficient way of sowing multiple seeds.

I don't harden the plugs off in the "traditional way", I just plant them straight out fairly deeply and immediately cover with 30g fleece. At present in the lovely spell of spring weather I am watering each plug hole before popping the plug in. It is a bit of a "leap of faith" initially but it is one of the many Charles Dowdings ways I have adopted. All the seeds mentioned above are pretty hardy but I would be more cautious with the likes of squash, dwarf French beans and chillies for example. Mentioning the No-Dig guru Charles Dowding, his latest book simply entitled "Compost" is an interesting read. The front cover says "transform waste into new life that sums up composting. When new plotters ask what to grow, always tell them a compost heap, no allotment should be without one, two or three at least!

There is always room for a "Did you Know?"

This is an old one but most likely the most amazing one of all "One teaspoon of soil contains up to 40 billion micro-organisms". In comparison the population of the entire earth there is approximately about 8.2 billion. That shows just how amazing the soil below our feet really is! So look after your soil, and it will look after your plants.

Nigel Collinson, Plot 66

The Good Old Days?

One of my guilty pleasures (for I have far too many books already) is buying old gardening books in charity shops. It is fascinating to see how much gardening practice is "of its time," and affected by fashions far more than we might think.

The era in which we garden doesn't just shape the types of plants that we grow on our allotments but also "the science" behind the way we grow them. It seems that the science isn't quite as scientific as we might think. New ways of thinking, backed up by research, can very much alter what was the received wisdom.

I recently came across a splendid hardback called "Mr Middleton's book of gardening". Published in 1935, it is based on a series of talks that the author gave on BBC radio, where he was clearly the Monty Don of his day. According to him, it was open warfare out there on the vegetable plot. There is no sign of today's notions of trying to work with nature. Nature was The Enemy, and he tells his readers to attack it at every turn, shooting squirrels and blasting pests and diseases with a frightening array of chemical weapons. Soil isn't an ally to be nurtured and worked with, it must be dug vigorously and wrestled into submission.

"Manure alone will not maintain the fertility of the soil", he says, "you might as well try to keep fit by eating several meals a day and taking no exercise. You must dig, and dig deeply, if you want to keep the soil in a healthy condition". And by deeply, he meant at least to a depth of two feet. The no-dig movement would not, I feel, have found favour with him.

The "ladies of the house" are happily exempted from all this violent activity. Their role is to gratefully receive the spoils of the manly labouring and wrestling. He suggests to the reader (presumed male) that "the ladies" be confined to visiting a small row of flowers for cutting, to prevent them from interfering elsewhere in the garden. Ladies presumably were also excluded from his suggestion that "we light up our pipes" while contemplating a tricky horticultural problem. This is not an approach I've heard recommended recently on Gardener's Question Time. I can only guess what he would have thought of no-mow May.

It is no great surprise that the emphasis is on the size of vegetables, and that growing for taste is never mentioned. Rather astonishingly, Mr Middleton (he does not give us his first name, matters were more formal then) remembers when he first saw that exotic fruit the tomato. He is very firm that they can't be grown outside in the north, so the pounds I got off my allotment last autumn and the entries in our show would have surprised him.

Talking of shows, this final quote might give the committee pause for thought this autumn: "I judged a village show where the prizes in one class were a ton of coal, a load of manure, and a leg of mutton".

Those were the good old days indeed.

Alison England

Plot 49a

It's no too late to join or renew your 2025 Hempland Lane Allotment Association membership fee now! Nigel our membership secretary is ready to take payment. The fee is £5 per person and the membership will run through until the 28th of February 2026.

HEMPLAND ALLOTMENT SHOP PRICE LIST 2025

POTASH - £3.50(per sack £35.00)
COMPOST MAKER - £3.00
POTATO FERTILISER - £3.50(per sack £35.00)
FLOWER & VEG FERTILISER - £3.00
CHICKEN PELLETS - TUB £10.50(per sack £25.00)
CALCIFIED SEAWEED - £3.00
GROWMORE - £3.50(per sack £34.00)
FISH/BLOOD/BONE - £2.50(per sack £23.50)
LIME - £2.75(per sack £5.00)
CANES - 6FT 60p/8FT 70p
CABBAGE FLY NET - £3.00 PER METRE
BLACK NETTING - £2.50 PER METRE
GROUND COVER FABRIC - 75p 1 METRE WIDE/£1.50
2 METRE WIDE LANDSCAPE FABRIC - £1.00 PER METRE
FLEECE - 50p PER METRE
SLUG PELLETS - £4.50
VITAX SLUG GONE - £3.50
VERMICULITE - £1.00 PER BAG
PERLITE - £1.00 PER BAG
ROOTING POWDER - £2.50
6" PLANT LABELS - 15 for 50p
4" PLANT LABELS - 15 for 30p
ROOT TRAINERS - 28 CELL £2.50
ROOT TRAINERS - 45 CELL £2.50
MAXICROP - £4.75
PLASTIC PEG PACK(10 PER PACK) - £1.75
TOMERITE - £5.00
DOFF LIQUID GROWMORE - £3.00
ROSE FERTILIZER - £3.50
VITAX HYDRANGEA COLOURANT - £4.50
SHALLOTS - 10 for £1.20
ONION SETS - 50 for £1.00

Technology



MailChimp

Our database and MailChimp system. Should you wish to get a message to all allotmenters via this system, please email gayle.farrington@btinternet.com and it can be sent to everyone on the database. Please also email Gayle if you are not receiving allotment email notices, so that we can get you on our database or double check the spelling of your email address.

For latest newsletter and diary information please visit www.hempland-lane-allotments.com

Gates



Could all allotment holders please make sure that the chain and padlock are securely fastened when the entrance and exit gates are opened. Please lock yourself back into the allotment site to prevent visitors to the site driving in and getting locked in. **Please** lock the gate when you leave the site. Thankyou for your co-operation.



If you would like to write something for the next newsletter, please email it to gayle.farrington@btinternet.com