

Hempland Lane-Heworth Allotment Association



Spring Newsletter 2013

Hot from the Hut!

Introducing the Committee

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

VOLUNTEERING SUNDAYS - 2nd Sunday in every month starting from May

2013 - Please report to the Allotment Shop between the hours of 10am - 12noon, where you can choose from a wide range of jobs that need to be done on the site. From planting seeds on the spare easy access plots (the produce of which will be sold in the allotment shop), to weeding, painting, ground clearing etc. Jobs ranging from 30 mins to 2 hours - whatever you can spare - still giving you time for your own plot. Associate Members also welcome to get an idea of what allotmenting is about.

News from the Chairperson

Despite best intentions, if you were unable to get your plot tidy before the winter set in, then you are not the only one! As soon as the weather permits we will all have a lot to do, but at the moment I am so grateful that I invested in a green house a few years ago, as I feel that I can at least do something. All my onions, Garlic set are planted in pots and seeds are germinating, in the hope that when Spring officially arrives I can transform my plot, with at least some decent things to plant. However with Easter being early this year, I am however, somewhat dubious as to if it is too early and if we get another harsh frost or more snow my efforts may be in vain! Does anyone have a crystal ball? I think I will plant out towards the end of April 2013.

Due to the poor weather you may still be behind on essential tasks - it is not too late to do the following as it is still so cold. This month pick and choose those garden tasks which are most suitable for your conditions. Here are some suggestions :-

Fruit and vegetables

- Complete any planting of bare -root fruit bushes, trees and cane fruit.
- Finish winter - pruning of fruit trees and soft fruit.
- Cut back stems of autumn - fruiting raspberries to soil level.
- Sprinkle sulphate of potash around fruit trees and bushes.
- Vegetables to be sown indoors include Brussels sprouts, spring cabbage, cauliflower, onions, leeks, lettuce and salad leaves.
- Vegetables to be sown outdoors, but in soil warmed with cloches, include broad beans, carrots, hardy peas, parsnips and lettuce.

Firstly, the soil in our gardens. It is vitally important to know whether it is acidic, neutral or alkaline. Many plants are happy in varying soil conditions but others need a specific type. Soil testing kits to check the ph of your soil come readily available from garden centres. If acid soil is required use ericaceous compost in the pot or a sprinkling of sulphate of iron around the plant if it is growing in the border. To achieve an alkaline soil for a plant add lime which higher the ph of soil, making it sweeter.

According to the weather forecasters there is going to be little or no reprieve so place straw around the base of each strawberry plant to protect from rot and grey mould.

April

This is the month for last chances and new beginnings, but with the extra and increasing hours of daylight we should have enough time to put maximum effort into our gardening tasks, weather conditions permitting of course! We shall be amply rewarded eventually - so long as the weather improves!.

Fruit and Vegetables

- If you use a spray to combat pest and diseases of fruit do so now, but I prefer to be organic.
- Plant out/sow such crops as carrots, Brussels sprouts, broad beans, peas, cabbage, broccoli, spring onions, varieties of salad leaves, asparagus crowns and onion sets. Have your fleece ready just in case of frost!. (If you are running out of room on the master plan, then why not try sowing dwarf French beans. Fill a large pot with compost and place the beans 5cm apart and 5cm deep. "Maxi" is a good variety to choose and, if you keep the pot under glass, you can pick an early crop in June.
- Cover carrot plants with fleece to deter carrot flies
- Plant onion sets (tiny bulbs that are ready to plant) by digging a shallow trench then putting the sets on to the ground at 10-15 cm intervals. Firm the soil around each one but leave the tip showing. Allow a hoe's width between the rows for easy weeding.
- Plant main crop potatoes. (Still many available from the shop)

- Sow herbs in pots. Also greenhouse crops such as tomatoes, aubergines, sweet peppers and cucumber and including climbing bean crops to be planted out later.
- Check rhubarb forcing jars/pots every few days for any ready tender pink stems.
- Spray such fruits as apples with a fungicide to prevent mildew disease.

A big THANKYOU TO ALL THAT HELPED with our AGM on Tuesday 15th January 2013. I can confirm that we now have an allotment database consisting of all members who have renewed their association members, so that we can contact you more easily. We have renewed the website fees and are working on a new emailing system as we speak using mail chimp. Once it is up and running you will receive a welcome email.

Gayle Enion-Farrington, Chairperson

Gates



We have been losing padlocks and chains during the summer months. "Visitors" seem to think that it is funny to remove the chains and take them away or just throw them where they cannot be found. This is wasting our subscriptions since these items have to be replaced. Could all allotment holders please make sure that the chain and padlock are securely fastened when the gate is open or closed and **please** lock the gate when you leave the site.



Vandalism and theft



We know that there is an ongoing problem with vandalism and theft on the allotment site. Recently some shed have been burnt down. The Neighbourhood Policing team are patrolling the site but it is very difficult for them to catch the culprits. Please report any incident to the Police and also visit the Allotment Shop on a Sunday morning to record it in the Incident Book. Any crime on your plot must also be reported to the police personally by yourself and in addition please report to David Brinklow Site Secretary Tel: 421979

Skips



Green and landfill skips have been booked for delivery on Friday 12th April and collection on Monday 22nd April 2013. Given the lack of movement on most allotments so far this year this should be a good time for most tenants. Please use this as an opportunity to tidy up your plot.

Car Parking

Parking is at a premium on our allotment site so please park your carefully and be considerate to others. DO NOT park any cars in front of the Chippings, Manure Bay and Skips.



Date for your Diary - Summer Fete 2013

This year it will be held on Sunday 28th July 2013, 10am - 2pm. A scarecrow completion will be run again, so start your preparations! And the usual BBQ, tombola, and sales of produce, plants, jams and pickles etc

News from Nigel`s Allotment Plot 65

The weather had dried up a bit over the past few weeks and then the weekend of the 16/17 March arrived ☺

I, like several other plot holders have had problems with rats during the winter months but at present I seem to be winning no bait taken for 10 days now, a positive sign. If you are experiencing problems with rats on your plot, you can contact the Allotments Officer on 01904 553399. On a negative note in my greenhouse at home despite having recently concreted the floor, mice are still getting in and have attacked a batch of "*Early Onward*" peas. Another favourite for the mice are sweet peas so these are on a high shelf well out of reach! I have re-sown some more peas which now have some strong small mesh wire over them.

I have continued late winter digging as the land has dried up a bit, but several places are still very boggy underneath, about 6 inches down. I have filled six full bags of bindweed root's, it certainly deserves its name as it is a "bind!" The soil condition was generally improving but is still cold to the touch, apart from where I have had some plastic sheets in place to warm up the soil for some early sowings.

I have taken a bit of as risk especially with this late cold snap we are experiencing at present. I have sown 3 rows of Parsnips "*Tender & True*" with some protection for the minute. I have also sown 3 rows of Broad Bean "*Imperial Longpod*" & chanced some early Sugar snap peas as well. The early pots of mixed salad leaves are all germinating well as are the radishes, sweet peas, beetroot, cabbages, kale, cardoons & broad beans ... all inside my greenhouse at present.

On some of the bitterly cold windy days we have had my unheated greenhouse has seemed quite cosy. Last Monday 11/3 I have sown a batch of chilli peppers to go into a heated propagator; they do in my experience need some gentle bottom heat to get good germination. I have used general purpose compost well moistened and allowed it to drain, the seeds are then sown on the surface and just covered with a fine grade vermiculite. Germination is greatly reduced if your seeds are covered too deeply.

Life on our allotments is generally a happy atmosphere with people always willing to help each other and invariably they will strike up a conversation when passing. The weather is always a favourite subject for gardeners/allotmenters in general. Unfortunately recently the conversation has focused on two plot holders sheds having been set alight by vandals and burned to the ground. As well as this wanton vandalism, the inconvenience and upset to the plot holders concerned is the wasted time of the fire brigade having to attend. This followed by the time and expense to the council to come along to "tidy up" all the mess and debris for the plot holders. The community police officers visited Sunday morning after the event but sadly prosecutions never seem to follow, I would like to be proven wrong.

Is Spring just around the corner, not if the 10 day forecast on the internet is anything to go on, it`s showing more unsettled cold weather with possibly more snow and frost. On the morning of 18/3 there is no sign of spring. I went down to the allotments and my plot no 65 &

Keith & Marys next to me no 66 & Dave & Lorraine`s No 64 were all partially under water again! Gardeners tend to be impatient bunch but you sometimes just have to bide your time and wait for the conditions to improve. The cooler weather has certainly extended the season of the snowdrops as mine on the allotment are still going strong.

I have planted two new Gooseberry bushes recently "Invicta" a long established cooking variety & "Hinnonmaki" a red variety which has a superb flavour. I have planted a row of raspas (Rubus idaeus) "Twotimer Sugana" although they are standing in water, not good. Well that`s if for now, thanks to those who called by the allotment shop in March, when I was on duty, the conversations on a miserable morning were much appreciated. Happy gardening & allotmenting, Nigel

(If you wish to submit an article for the next newsletter please send it to gayle.farrington@btinternet.com)



Recipe for Rhubarb Cake

3oz of butter	3oz self raising flour
3oz caster sugar	1lb Rhubarb
2eggs	
1tbsp Demerara sugar for the topping	
2 x ½ oz butter	3oz plain flour
1oz caster sugar	

Method

Preheat oven to 190C

Grease an 8in round cake tin. Cream the butter & sugar, beat in the eggs, fold in the flour & a pinch of salt.

Slice the Rhubarb into 1inch pieces & toss in the Demerara sugar

For the topping, rub the butter into the flour & stir in the sugar.

Pour the cake mix into the tin & arrange the Rhubarb on the top

Sprinkle the topping over & bake for 40 - 45minutes

Thoughts: - Serve warm with double cream! As with in any recipe, if you want a larger cake or are making a batch just increase pro-rata the ingredients.

Nigel & Pam Plot 65



ALLOTMENT SHOP - We are pleased to announce that the allotment shop is holding prices from last year and is full of a wide range of seeds and stock including potatoes and onion sets. Shop is open every Sunday 10am - 12 noon. We look forward to seeing you there.

Easter Weekend report from Nigel



Some recommended varieties & thoughts in this continuing unseasonal cold start to spring! Over the Easter w/e I have been busy in my greenhouse in the hope that warmer weather is "just around the corner". I do not usually grow tomatoes but am going to have a go this year so have sown the good old trusted variety "*Moneymaker*". A tomato many plot holders will know, usually quite prolific in producing medium sized fruits & can be grown inside or outside, will need support.

For a cherry fruit variety I have sown "*Sub Arctic Plenty*" which according to the packet is of a bushy habit & does not require support, we shall see. I am sure if germination is successful there will be some plants available at the allotment shop in due course. A couple of the hot chilli peppers I am trying are "*Habenero Yellow*" & "*Filus Blue*", both regarded as "hot" but not "burn the roof of your mouth hot! Ongoing sowings of mixed lettuce leaves inside goes on each week, hopefully first pickings will be available from pots in the greenhouse shortly.

To brighten up the garden & plot & hopefully to attract more bees & insects in I have just sown a batch of the Hardy Perennial "*Gaillardia Goblin Dwarf*" which should produce a mass of yellow/orange blooms, gets to about 12in tall. As a contrast the half hardy annual "*Cosmos Purity*", with any luck the insects will be buzzing around these two varieties.



I have been pricking out lettuce, cabbages, early broccoli, onions & chillis. The big problem soon will be space & getting trays outside to "harden off" has been difficult in the cold but the main problem has been the chilling wind. Still we live in hope. A sign of how cold it has been inside my cold greenhouse is the first potato in pots has just shown its first leaves. That has been 8weeks, really slow, the pots will be gradually topped up with compost as they start to grow away & should produce some early clean tasty spuds, fingers crossed.



Happy allotmenting to all, Nigel

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