

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS



HAMPTON
WICK

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

No 28 March 2008

THE PLOTHOLDER

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

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Contributions

A warm welcome to the following new plotholders –

Mark plot 20, Nafisa plot 21b, Francis plot 32b, Ian plot 33b, Scott and Zoe 36f, Helen plot 63, Robert plot 79, Rose plot 102, Tricia plot 105, Bob plot 115, Jason and Rebecca plot 130, Joel and Carol plot 132f, Len plot 134b, Claire and Jim plot 135b, Christine plot 136f, Gill and John plot 157, Ashley plot 169f, Karen and Andy plot 172b, Marianne plot 193b, Stephanie and Gordon plot 198f and Jacqueline and Flora plot 201.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!

Sunday 23rd March, 11.00 – 13.00

☘ Spring has sprung and so **The Seed Store Café and Plot Shop** will be open for business again! Our first trading day will be Easter Sunday. As always, there will be a selection of homemade cakes, tea and coffee on sale and the Sunday newspapers there for you to read. It's the perfect place to take a break and have a chat with fellow plotholders. Last year the café was a very successful fundraiser for the allotments and with your support we hope to build on that this year. We look forward to seeing our regulars again



A reminder of last year's seedling swap – despite the wet weather tomatoes, pumpkins, spare seed potatoes and herbs all proved very popular! And below, Amy in the café on opening day, providing warmth and shelter!



and hopefully some new faces too!

Sunday 27th April, 11.00 – 13.00
Grand Seedling Bring and Buy

Time to get sowing! The seedling Bring and Buy will be held on Sunday 27th April outside the Seed Store Café. Bring along your extra seedlings and plants to sell, and look for some different varieties to buy. All proceeds go to RPA site improvements. This year we're hoping for good weather and a great turn-out. So bring along all those interesting, unusual or just bog-standard spare seedlings and young plants – looking forward to some prizewinners.

Committee News

Bonfires

Due to continual complaints last year of smoke drifting towards the neighbouring houses, no bonfires or incinerators may be lit on plots as from 1st April 2008 until 30th September 2008. The incinerator near the office may be used unless a cricket match is being played.

Inspections

A reminder to those tenants who have not yet prepared their plot, that inspections are due to start in March.

Any ploholders deemed not to be complying with the conditions of tenancy, (paragraph 3), will be given a warning and expected to put the plot in order within 28 days. A further 7 days will given if none, or little progress has been made. This may be followed by a notice of termination of tenancy.

New tenants need not panic.

If for any reason you are unable to do your plot, please speak to Barbara or Marguerite.

Rent from 1st October 2008

Please note that there will be a small increase of £4 in the annual rent for a full plot and £2 for a half plot.

Parking on site

Would car drivers who park on the roads show consideration for pedestrians and cyclists. It should not be necessary for them to have to struggle to pass, or to walk on someone's plot to get past a parked vehicle. Thank you.

Nettle Leaf or Comfrey Leaf Plant Food

Comfrey is a great natural fertiliser as it is rich in potassium, calcium, iron and manganese. Nettle leaves can also be used to make an easy to use, if somewhat smelly, plant food. To make your nettle or comfrey leaf fertiliser you will need only four things:

Nettles or comfrey leaves

A watertight container – a large bucket is adequate.

Water, and

A weight.

First take your nettles or comfrey. Nettles are best as young stems but can be taken at any time. Quicker results are obtained if the nettle stems and leaves are bruised. Comfrey leaves are best cut in the early morning. Wear gloves for both as comfrey leaves irritate with their tiny hairs.

Then crush them. This can be done by scrunching the stems in gloved hands or by placing the stems on a freshly mown lawn and using your mower to chop and collect the nettles or comfrey at the same time. The addition of a few grass clippings that results from using this method does not affect the quality of the finished product.

Immerse in water. Stuff the crushed stems into your bucket. Place your weight on top of the stems. You may have to use a little ingenuity here. A brick and a piece of wire mesh cut to suit the container serves equally well. Fill the container with water sufficient to cover the nettles and... leave to brew. You may also consider placing the bucket away from the areas in the plot that you use most as the soup from either nettle or comfrey tends to get rather smelly.

After around three or four weeks the liquid should be ready for use. The mixture should be diluted until it is tea coloured – usually around 1 part liquid to 10 parts water. Water liberally around or on the plants and see the benefits.

Repeat until winter. Continue to top up your container with more leaves and water through the year. As autumn sets in put the remainder of the feed and the sludge in your compost heap. Give your container a rinse and store for next year!

Sarah Colclough

'Shed firebug on loose'

This was a headline in the Richmond *Informer* of 8th February this year. The Hertford Avenue Allotments in East Sheen had been targeted and two sheds were burnt down. Then the 22nd February edition followed with a report that sheds on Bushy Park Allotments had been broken into.

A timely reminder to maintain the security of our site as much as possible by ensuring the gates are locked at all times except for Saturday and Sunday mornings until 1pm.



The Autumn Social – Sunday 7th October 2007

The Autumn Social was a great success – great weather at last and a great turn out. Thanks to everyone involved in setting up the site and running the stalls and refreshments – Bring and Buy, Tombolas, Kidzone tent, 'Splat a Rat' and 'Hook a Duck' – all were enjoyed by ploholders of all ages, with lots of money raised, to be spent on site improvements. The Seed Store Café did a roaring trade in teas, coffee and cakes, providing a warm welcome to all. John Greenhalgh organised the hugely popular pumpkin competition, set up by a team of helpers and judged by Andrew from the National Physical Laboratory – it was the highlight of the afternoon and Andrew's presentation was a delight!

Donations for raffle and tombola flowed in, especially at the last moment, so next year we'll request earlier contributions to allow us time to organise, especially the tombola. Thanks to all the ploholders who contributed to the Bring and Buy, donated prizes for the tombola and raffle and who turned up to spend their money and to make it such an enjoyable and profitable event! Lastly, many thanks to the Social Committee team: Gill Hiley, Amy Greenhalgh, Sarah Colclough and Sue Croft for their hard work, energy and enthusiasm. We're looking forward to an even bigger and better Autumn Social this year and will be asking for volunteers to lend a hand!

Jenny Bourne

(Thanks to Jenny for all her hard work, and her success in encouraging local businesses to donate excellent raffle prizes. Also to John Greenhalgh for sourcing butcher's vouchers for the raffle. Ed.)



What a whopper!



Left, a budding artist, and above, a study in concentration



The weigh-in

Fedging the Compost Toilet

The compost toilet has now been successfully 'fedged'! Two living willow fences have been planted alongside the toilet building to provide green landscaping and to act as a barrier around the slope. This was carried out by Susan and Andrew Saunders and Bryn Hird during the work party weekend of 1-2 March. Ian Hopkins and Jean Blanc also provided invaluable help in preparing the site. First the uprights were stuck into the ground to a depth of 30cm, held in place by binders woven across, then the weavers were stuck in and bent carefully into place, forming a decorative pattern. As the willows shoot and grow the temporary string bindings will be replaced by a flexible binding material. The ground covering membrane is to suppress weeds and the area will have to be watered regularly during the first few weeks to ensure that the willows establish well.



Scented climbers to grow up the walls, roses and single flower perennials providing nectar for beneficial wildlife – bees, hoverflies etc – have been planted around the building. The compost toilet will hopefully become an attractive and sweet smelling landmark as well as an invaluable convenience for us all!

Jenny Bourne

Useful browsing!

www.farmgarden.org.uk
(The Allotments regeneration initiative)

www.edenproject.com

www.gardenorganic.org.uk
(Celebrating 50 years of organic gardening)

www.rivercottage.net

www.nsalg.org.uk
(National society of allotment and leisure gardeners ltd.)

www.salvo.co.uk
(Find old beautiful garden benches, antique garden items)

<http://green-cuttings-blog>
(useful growing tips)

www.mytinypot.co.uk
(blog about vegetable growing and seasonal cooking includes a tutorial on creating a blog)

www.onemanandhisdig.blogspot.com

<http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/allotment>

www.readerssheds.co.uk
(A whole website full of photos of people's unusual garden sheds – quirky!)

www.kitchengarden.co.uk

<http://rhubarbinfo.com>
(If you want to find out more about rhubarb this is for you!)

Compiled by Sarah Colclough



RHUBARB AND GINGER CHUTNEY

Try this with grilled trout fillets, smoked mackerel or cold ham. It's a good alternative to apple sauce with roast pork.

Makes approx 4 x 450g jars

2 medium onions
300 ml cider vinegar
2 allspice berries
2 whole cloves
1 cinnamon stick
1 tsp ground ginger
1 heaped tbsp grated fresh ginger
300g soft light brown sugar
200g dried apricots
1kg rhubarb, trimmed weight



Put the onions in a preserving pan with the vinegar, spices, fresh ginger and sugar. Slowly bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Then simmer for 5 minutes. Chop the apricots into raisin-sized pieces and add them to the pan. Wash the rhubarb and cut into 2cm lengths. Add these to the pan and bring back to the boil. Lower the heat and simmer for about 40 minutes until thickened and the rhubarb is really tender. Remove the whole spices and pour the chutney into sterilised jars. Cover and leave to cool. Store for 4 weeks before serving.

Sarah Colclough

PRIZE WINNERS!

Congratulations to the following
plotholders for their success last year –

First prize for the best kept full plot in 2007
Elizabeth and Gray Rigge on plot 83
(they were also the best newcomers)

Second prize for the best kept full plot in 2007
Corrine Ransom and Jon Turlton on plot D

First prize for the best kept half plot in 2007
Peter Caughey on plot 39b

Second prize for the best kept half plot in 2007
Caroline Dick on plot 194f

CALLING FOR CONTRIBUTIONS!

For this newsletter – photographs, stories, information about allotmenting and using produce. Contact jennybourne@beeb.net

For the Seed Store Café – volunteers always needed to run the café on Sunday mornings 11.00 – 13.00, working in teams of two. Cake contributions always welcome. Contact john@igtec.net