

Copper plate Gothic 36 pt

THE PLOTHOLDER

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

No 7 - June 2000

Times New Roman 12

Copper plate Gothic 14

HAMPTON WICK'S BEST KEPT SECRET IS ABOUT TO BE REVEALED AT THE

**18 ROYAL PADDOCKS OPEN DAY
ON 25 JUNE 2000 FROM 12.30 TO 4 P.M.**

Arial narrow 12

Why hold an Open Day? Because so many people locally don't know our site exists - because we need to attract new tenants and show them what's involved in having an allotment. Because we want to share the pleasures of time in the open air growing our own food, and our good fortune in having a stake in this patch of green in the middle of suburban London

Arial narrow 14 bold

What's happening?

- A barbecue - have lunch with us
- Drinks, refreshments, cake stall
- Tombola
- Quiz
- Gardening book stall
- 'Historic' Photo Display
- Children's activities
- Guided tours and advice for beginners

Can You Help?

- Staff a stall
- Welcome visitors, and show them your plot - it doesn't have to be perfect!
- Give a gardening book or second-hand tool
- Give a cake, preserves or quiche
- Donate a small tombola prize
- Lend us your 'before and after' photos
- Display a poster

Non-perishable donations can be brought to the office on Sunday 11 or 18 June between 11 and 12, or given to a committee member. Bring donations of food on the day. Phone Helga (8977 4809) or Susan (8977 4675) if you can help with donations or in person, or have any queries. PLEASE COME, AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS.

We need to know how many to cook for, so if you'd like a sausage put on the barbecue for you (meat or vegetarian, cooked separately), **please fill in the tear-off slip below and put it in the mailbox in the shed by the main gate.**

Cut here

Yes, I would like **meat** sausage(s) in a bun (70p each).
 Yes, I would like **vegetarian** sausage(s) in a bun (70p each).
 I will be bringing visitors.

I can help in the following way

.....
.....

Name

THE PLOTHOLDER

ANYONE FOR SQUASH?

A number of our tenants come from outside the UK, and bring new vegetables and gardening methods with them. Brenda van der Kooy, from New Zealand, took on plot 168f in '98, where she grows 'what we call pumpkins'. Brenda writes:

To me a roast dinner is not complete without the delicious sweet flavour of roast pumpkin. I was raised on a New Zealand farm where we grew all our own meat and vegetables, and Mum grew the round grey pumpkins between the apple trees in the orchard. They grew themselves, too from discarded seeds in the compost heap.

I couldn't understand why the British didn't share my enthusiasm until I discovered that what we call pumpkins are apparently a type of squash. No wonder people here weren't wild about eating pumpkin - the beautiful orange Halloween number tastes stringy and insipid compared with the dense flavoursome flesh of the kind I knew.

Two years ago I took over an abandoned half-plot, where I chip away at the couch grass as time permits, and leave the rest under carpet, so that if I don't get to it for a while, not all is lost. Last year I removed a big section of carpet and transplanted 12 'pumpkin' seedlings. I only dug a small area for each plant, and put in a quarter bucket of rotted stable straw. The slugs had a field day! One evening I gathered a kilo of slugs and put them in an old plastic bottle to eat each other, I was so cross. Pumpkin seed germinates easily so I repeated the exercise, with the same result - I must be a slow learner! The third time I resorted to a few slug pellets, and the plants quickly matured, producing tough leaves unpalatable to slugs.

I planted three varieties: the grey NZ variety similar to Crown Prince, little Gold Nuggets (wonderful for decoration in autumn), and a few Halloween pumpkins for Jack-o'-Lanterns. They needed several bucketfuls of water each week during summer, and the ends of the rapidly-growing runners nipped out when they got too long. We got a good crop of all three varieties, and too many Halloween pumpkins, which our 7-year-old daughter sold at our front gate to boost her pocket money.

The grey NZ variety takes a strong arm to cut through its skin before cooking, but keeps well for months, and is fantastic roasted. It makes delicious velvety soup, too, and produces a mass of seeds to plant the following year. This year I'm planting the seed straight in the ground, with a few slug pellets, and we'll see what happens.
Brenda van der Kooy

Times new roman 11 B

*Wing Ding
12*

~~~~~ COMMITTEE BUSINESS IN BRIEF ~~~~~

*TNR 10 BI*

**SUNDAY PARKING FOR ORANGE BADGE HOLDERS:** *Some tenants have a family member who holds an orange badge, and the Plotholders' Committee have agreed that they should be able to park their cars on site on Sundays. But for the rest of us, the Sunday parking ban remains. Please, do keep to this rule, and help keep our site tranquil - parking is unrestricted on the other six days.*

**SECURITY:** *DIY gatekeeping is working pretty well, but the site security we all value is being made more difficult by the condition of the double gates, which are out of alignment. The committee are in communication with Ray Brodie, the Park Superintendent, about this, and the breach in the fence running along the Avenue. While we wait for repairs, please do your best to get the gate bolts well into position.*

~~~~~

THE PLOTHOLDER

~~~~~  
**WELCOME TO NEW TENANTS** Richard Austin Stickney (30), Mark Avery (65) Mr Brewer (126), Lottie Dodds (161), Charmaine Farrugia (74b), Mr & Mrs Ian Gillespie (140b), Sarah Levine and Matthew Allchurch (25), Marc Muir (27), Catherine Mukhopadhyay (28), Sarah and Eugene Palamartschuk (181), and Paul Yarlett (188). \*\*\*\*\* Sadly, we say goodbye to Richard Emerton and Norman Simmons, long time tenants who have retired, and to Patricia Nicholls who has had to give up due to pressure of work and other commitments.

### **GARDENING CAN (SOMETIMES) ENDANGER YOUR HEALTH**

Some years ago there was a very sad report of a keen gardener who died of tetanus after an injury sustained by walking into a fishing rod held by her garden gnome. There have been no reports of gnome-sightings in the Paddocks (though anything could be lurking by the pond in the furthest southwest corner), but we should all keep our anti-tetanus injections up to date.

Last month there was an accident on site which entailed a visit to casualty - luckily a fellow plotholder was on hand to take the victim to hospital, and he has now recovered. We have a first aid box in the shed by the gate, which is there for any tenant to use. But please replace what you take out, and

let a member of the committee know if you think there is an item missing. We'd be very glad to hear from anyone who has first-aid training.

### **SWEEPING IT UNDER THE CARPET**

Old carpet is a cheap, non-polluting way of suppressing weed growth in those areas you haven't got round to yet - and it really works. Problem roots like bindweed are easier to get at and dig out after a few months in the dark. If you're replacing your carpets, or have a neighbour who is, don't have the old ones dumped - bring them down to the Paddocks. If you don't need the carpet yourself, the Plotholders' Committee will take it off your hands - it's a good way for us to keep as-yet-unlet plots from getting too overgrown.

### **WILL YOU BE A WINNER?**

This year, judging the Best Kept Plot will be an entirely home-grown affair - the Plotholders' Committee will be judges, which instantly cuts out ten people from the competition. (Did we hear anyone say Not much competition there?) Full plots and half-plots will as usual be in separate categories, and the criteria are simple: a well-managed plot with a good variety of produce. A shortlist will be drawn up at the last plot inspection before mid-July, and you'll be notified if you're on it, so that you can do some last-minute grooming. [Could we have a prize for Best Newcomer this year? Ed.] Look at the back page for summer notes from last year's winners, Wally and Annemarie Locher.



It was late May when I met Wally on his plot, after yet another shower of rain during this wet spring. His autumn onion sets (from the Seed Store) are now well-grown, with bulbs approaching 2ins across. He's harvesting another autumn-sown crop, Valdor lettuce, these grown by Fred Adams, who has generously shared out his surplus seedlings among a number of tenants. Plenty more lettuce seedlings of several varieties have been planted out: the Lochers are serious salad-eaters! Wally is also cutting asparagus now, and last year's chard is still producing.

The strawberry plants, from Martin-next-door's runners, are vigorous, and with fruit now forming have just been strawed up. The redcurrants have been netted: these are the ones the birds go for, even while the fruit is green, in preference to blackcurrants or gooseberries. There's not a great deal of fruit on the Victoria plum - the hailstorm in mid-May knocked quite a bit of it down. Runner bean seedlings, on another plot, are about 3ins high, and growing where they always do - there seems to be no need to rotate them, Wally thinks. The autumn-sown broad beans are no further ahead than the spring-sown ones beside them.

One of the attractive things about plot 57 is the flower bed at the path end, where roses, nigella, foxgloves, feverfew and violas flourish. African marigolds and summer savory appear among the vegetables, all helping to attract beneficial insects. Savory is good cooked with beans, say the Lochers, who call it 'bean herb'.

Seasonal advice to new gardeners? Keep sowing seed in succession, and keep pulling out the weeds before they seed, and sow themselves. Wally firmly believes in the saying 'One year's seeds, seven years' weeds'.

Wally and Annemarie use organic fertilisers from choice, and here are two of their recipes. To make a **liquid comfrey** fertiliser high in potash, fill a non-metal container with freshly-cut comfrey, top up with water and cover. After about four weeks draw off the liquid, and use it diluted in about 20 parts of water. Or, using a plastic drum with a hole near the bottom, fill the drum with freshly cut comfrey, and pack it well down, putting something heavy on top. In about three weeks a black liquid will drip from the hole. Catch it in a container and store, loosely covered. Use this diluted in about 40 parts of water.

**Nettle liquid**, also made in a covered plastic container, takes a kilo of nettles to ten litres of water (proportions are not critical). Stir every two days, sieve after two weeks, and use the liquid diluted in ten parts of water. Leaf residue from both methods can be used as compost.

---

*WE NEED A PHOTOCOPIER* Is there a reader who owns or has access to a photocopier which we could use at cost to duplicate *The Plotholder*? We produce between 180 and 200 A3 sheets each issue, which at present costs about 10.5p/sheet.

---

To contribute to *The Plotholder* contact Susan Saunders, 8977 4675. Letters and comments welcome.

*Albany medium 9B*

*Final 121*

*Wally's  
28  
onion sets  
from Fred Adams  
Chard*