

Hempland Lane-Heworth Allotment Association



Spring 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

News from the Chairperson

It is 8 weeks since our son arrived (22nd January 2014) and I've managed to get into a routine and can now sit down and write our spring edition of the newsletter. Apart from one, no-one else contributed to this seasons' edition. However please do not let this stop you in the future. Your experiences and information, recipes or quizzes would be greatly received.

The recent sunny weather has been a godsend on the plot, as my husband and father-in-law have been able to get on with some much-needed **digging**. I too have started to sow seeds in the greenhouse and chit my potatoes (brought from the shop).

We've all felt the benefits of the good weather - spirits have been revived, enthusiasm has soared and the plot is looking rather good. A lot of clearing and **weeding** has taken place. **Garlic, broad bean** and onion set planting is only weeks away, so I thought I might as well do a bit of forward planning of my **crop rotations** and get the relevant beds prepared. Giving the soil a thorough and deep forking over, breaking up any '**capping**' on the surface caused by heavy rains. Mother Nature can take care of the rest of the work - winter frosts will kill **slugs** and break up large clods of earth, leaving a crumbly soil to work with. Apart from horse and chicken manures I tend to go without rather than risk the chance of introducing pesticides onto the plot. City of York council does prefer you to be organic.

Remember to turn your clocks forward one hour as British Summer Time starts at 2.00am on Sunday 30th March 2014 - Mothers Day.

Gayle Enion-Farrington, Chairperson

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

March

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.

Technology



Allotment 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.



Consideration with Fires

As the number of fires increases on the site, so do the calls from others about the nuisance that they can sometimes cause. We would like to remind all tenants of the basic guidelines in relation to fires:

If a fire is needed then it should be set alight after 6pm and only then if both weather conditions and those around you are happy with you doing so, (or early in the morning so that it is finished and no longer smoking by 8.30am).

All material should be clean and dry before attempting to burn it. Freshly dug up weeds or other damp material should not be placed on fires since they produce far too much smoke.

If your fire is producing smoke, or you are asked to put the fire out by a fellow tenant or resident then please respond in a manner which will not cause offence. Please bear in mind that you can always relight your fire again at another time, where-as a local resident is unable to move their house from the path of the smoke whilst your fire burns.



**ALLOTMENT SHOP - Is now open.
Sundays 10am - 12noon**



Skips will be delivered soon. Please fill them sensibly. To prevent non-allotment users filling up the skips, we will email you the dates, rather than advertising it on the notice board.

A foul discussion point! Dog fouling appears to be getting worse on the site, with owners not acting responsibly by clearing it up and using the poo bins provided.

One tenant has suggested that it might be an idea for all of us to have one or two poo bags in our pockets, then when we actually see a dog fouling the path, we could offer a bag to the owner and maybe say..... "have you run out of bags I have one here if you'd like it"!!!! Its not a complete solution but it is a good start and we are not accusing anyone of being negligent.

Many of us are dog owners or are fed up of having dog poo being left outside our plots. If you would like to help in our cause please can you put this into action and those who can, please bring some poo bags to the allotment shop so that we can create a station for poo

bags outside the shop. It was also agreed at the AGM to circle dog poo with 'high viz' spray paint to both highlight its presence to the unwary and hopefully to educate the offender who left it!

Dog fouling - If you see this occurring on site, please can you also inform the Dog Warden office on Tel: 01904 551513 or 551530.

Our next committee meeting is Tuesday 25th March 2014. If you have anything that you wish to be discussed, please speak to one of the committee members before this date. After this meeting we will confirm dates for the summer fete and strimming weekend.



Nature lends a helping hand

Primarily for food production, but our allotments also play an important role in providing wildlife habitats across the city.

The diverse communities of allotment holders create a unique, ever changing mosaic of diverse small habitat patches, providing shelter and food sources for insects, mammals, reptiles and birds. The popular Robin is a good example of a species that benefits from allotments. Whether nesting in sheds, following the keen digger or foraging in compost bins they provide a tuneful companion whilst eating numerous garden pests. Such biodiversity not only enriches the experience of working on an allotment but if actively encouraged can assist in successful food production through natural pest control and increased pollination. There are plenty of opportunities to encourage wildlife into even the smallest growing spaces. For more information check out this Natural England leaflet that will help you enhance the conservation value of your allotment, while continuing to cultivate it for fruit and vegetables.

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31035?category=30008>



RHUBARB and ginger crumble cake

Use any fruit from your plot - blackcurrant, blackberry and apple or plum work just as well!

110g/4oz plain flour

4 tbsp light muscovado sugar

85g/3oz unsalted butter

Fruit

Rhubarb cut into 1cm chunks

1 tbsp vanilla sugar or caster sugar, or to taste

INGREDIENTS

Crumble mixture

1 tsp ground ginger

Cake

170g/6oz unsalted butter, softened

170g/6oz caster sugar

3 Eggs, beaten

170g/6oz plain flour 2 tsp baking powder 1 tbsp milk

Preheat the oven to 190 Gas 5. Butter a 25cm/10in springform cake tin and line the base with baking parchment.

Make the crumble mixture first. Rub the butter into the flour to make the crumble mixture until it forms breadcrumbs then add the sugar. Set aside. Toss the chopped rhubarb in the sugar and ginger. Set aside.

Now make the cake mixture. Beat the sugar and butter together until they are pale and fluffy. Beat the eggs in a little at a time. Add a little flour to stop the eggs curdling. Add the rest of the eggs. Sift in the rest of the flour and the baking powder. Fold in the milk. Scrape the cake mixture into the tin followed by the rhubarb then sprinkle the crumble on top. Bake for about an hour. The crumble should go golden and crunchy and rhubarb cooked through by then. Place the cake on a rack to cool for 15 minutes. Delicious served warm with custard or cream! Serves 8.

RHUBARB with ginger-spiked meringue

from New Kitchen Garden by Adam Caplin with recipes by Celia Brooks Brown. Serves 4.

INGREDIENTS

1 kg rhubarb, cut into chunks

4 tbsp light brown sugar, or to taste

3 egg whites

180g caster sugar

2cm piece of fresh ginger, finely grated

Butter a large ovenproof dish. Put the rhubarb into the prepared dish and toss with the light brown sugar. Roast in a preheated oven at 220°C for about 20-30 minutes until the rhubarb is softened.

Reduce the oven temperature to 180°C. Put the egg whites into a spotlessly clean, grease-free bowl and, using an electric whisk or mixer, whisk until stiff. Whisk in the caster sugar, a spoonful at a time, then whisk in the ginger. Spread the meringue over the cooked rhubarb and bake in the preheated oven for 20 minutes until barely crisp and golden on top. Serve immediately.

Note: Doing just the first step produces a lovely compôte, which can be served with plain yogurt or vanilla ice cream.

Just for fun on a raining day – Allotment word search

H D H T S O P M O C R E S S Z
R M R E S J C B A I S S X H Q
L A N O I T I R T U N H G W B
Z N T S D J R I O O A O V A N
H M H Q E O Z R T N E O P R M
G A G J T L Y R A Q B T O M G
P D I S C S B U M L N S T T R
E E L I P B T A O G E A A H O
P L N Q Y R L O T O E X T X W
M I U D B E M Z O E R E O R I
G E S U O H N E E R G M A E N
Z Y L P H E A L T H Y E B Y G
C G T K V Q I X F V J B V Q S
T N E M T O L L A O N I O N S
S D E E S E I L L I H C K A W

ALLOTMENT
GREENBEANS
MANMADE
SEEDS
VEGETABLES

CARROTS
GREENHOUSE
NUTRITION
SHOOTS
WARMTH

CHILLIES
GROWING
ONIONS
SOIL

COMPOST
HEALTHY
POTATO
SUNLIGHT

CRESS
HERBS
ROOTS
TOMATO