

Cavendish House Allotments *newsletter*

Issue No. 15 Spring 2012

Highlights from the Cavendish Allotments Association AGM 2011

21 plot-holders attended our AGM on 20 November and we thanked Anne Neville (our secretary) and Peter Mahnke (web site & BBQ) both long-standing members of the committee for their contributions. A 2012 Committee was elected consisting of Rosemary Fulljames (Treasurer), Paul Leonard (Chair), Fran Fitch, Yolanda Bloor, Barney King, Peter Mahnke, Harald Molgaard and Ann Warrington.



Brian Creswell's Plot, August 2011

During 2011 a communal greenhouse had been erected, an incinerator purchased and many plot posts had been reinstated. A series of plot photos were taken during the summer and attendees voted for their favourite plot, with a bottle of wine being presented to the winner, Brian Cresswell for his work on Plot 13.

Rosemary gave the Treasurer's Report, which showed a credit of £1637 in November 2011, that was about £150 less than 2010,

mainly due to less income from the summer. BBQ and some capital expenditure.

The committee appreciated the help of many plot holders and this had meant some work parties had improved e.g. the compost bay facilities and car park. Plot Holders were encouraged to have public liability insurance and reminded of their obligations e.g. care and maintenance of plots, supervision and delegation.

The council is reducing its services, and self-management of allotments, so called Voluntary Management of Allotment Sites (VM) needs to be considered. None of the Richmond Council Allotment sites has introduced this but Kingston Council has several sites under self-management and it is hoped to have a presentation about this in 2012. The Council Allotments officer, Pete Lewis and the Waste Minimisation officer have been helpful with advice and actions, and through them the council has prepared various laminated notices and one large board notice for the site, free of charge.

The committee works very co-operatively and covers many tasks and activities, e.g: attendance at the council's allotments meetings; doing basic maintenance and construction; keeping the waiting list and showing plots to prospective holders; investigating site problems such as with trees and the riverbank; clearing the communal composting area and safeguarding the population of stag beetles; organising the use of the greenhouse, with a payment

of £10 requested for the growing season (two holders used it in 2011); preparing and running the social day, barbecue and plants sale plus bulk buying compost.

During 2012 we hope that more plot holders will get involved with committee related activities. If you would like to know more or know someone who wishes to benefit from these opportunities, please contact 07505 668268.

-Paul Leonard

On Site News

The Communal Greenhouse is now open - £10 for three seasons (Spring, Summer & Autumn). Each Bay includes an upper and lower staging space. All monies go to the Communal Allotment fund. To book a space just put your name down on the Greenhouse form which can be found on the communal notice boards or in the Greenhouse itself.

Delivered Compost

Bags of compost have arrived and are ready to be collected by those who ordered it. The compost will given out on a first come first serve basis. Just contact a committee member, to get your compost bags and arrange payment.

All monies go to the Communal Allotment fund.

Communal Composting area

The communal composting bays will be opened on specific days which will advertised on the allotment notice board (on these days you will also be able to take

compost from the bays (which is free)

Maintaining and Cultivating your Plot

If you are experiencing problems maintaining your plot, then please let the committee know as soon as possible as they may be able to help.

Answers to Questions received from plot holders:

Q: How wide should paths between allotments be?

A: "Paths between allotments must be at least 60cm wide"

Q: What is the maximum size allowance for Sheds / Greenhouses?

A: The maximum sizes are "Sheds: 6' x 4' (8m x 1.2m) and Greenhouses 8'x10' (2.4m x 3m)

Q: What types of trees can I plant?

A: Only fruit trees of a dwarf stock can be planted. Plant away from your boundary so they do not cast a shadow on your neighbour's plot.

All information is provided here can be found in the "General Conditions for the Cultivation of Allotments" which is issued to each plot holder by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

- Fran Fitch

Thames Water Hosepipe Ban

Started 4 April 2012

This Notice came into force at midnight on 4 April 2012 It will

remain in force until further notice.

Thames Water Utilities Limited has given notice to all of its customers, that the water it supplies throughout its entire area must not be used for the following purposes:

1. watering a 'garden' using a hosepipe;
2. cleaning a private motor-vehicle using a hosepipe;
3. watering plants on domestic or other non-commercial premises using a hosepipe;
4. cleaning a private leisure boat using a hosepipe;
5. filling or maintaining a domestic swimming or paddling pool;
6. drawing water, using a hosepipe, for domestic recreational use;
7. filling or maintaining a domestic pond using a hosepipe;
8. filling or maintaining an ornamental fountain;
9. cleaning walls, or windows, of domestic premises using a hosepipe;
10. cleaning paths or patios using a hosepipe;
11. cleaning other artificial outdoor surfaces using a hosepipe.

Drought Busting Tips

Prepare the soil. Make your soil more water retentive by adding well rotted organic matter such as leaf mould, garden compost or well rotted manure.

Digging in 2 bucketfuls of compost per square metre will aid water retention and add nutrient.

Research by the RHS has shown that adequate nutrition status enables plants to make the most efficient use of available water.

Mulch when the soil is damp. A depth of 5-7.5cm (2-3") has a huge effect on reducing the amount of water that evaporates from the soil surface. It reduces the amount of watering needed and will also suppress weed growth.

There are many different materials that are suitable for mulching from newspaper and cardboard, hay and straw to grass cuttings and leaf mould.

Seeds. When sowing seeds make a furrow and fill it with water, allow it to drain away, then sow the seeds.

Transplant established plants into a depression in the soil. This directs the water towards the base of the plant.

Funnel the water towards the roots of water hungry plants such as tomatoes and squashes by pushing an empty plant pot down beside the plant to channel the water down to the roots.

Hoe the ground gently around established plants to enable the water to penetrate if it is dry with a "crust" on the surface.

Thorough watering helps the water penetrate deep into the soil whereas light watering may encourage shallow rooting. Little and often does NOT apply to watering.

When and what to water.

Onions and leeks only need water when they are getting established.

Peas and beans benefit most when the flowers open and the pods are swelling.

Sweetcorn needs water most when they flower.

Tomatoes need watering twice a week from flowering.

Timing. Water in the cool of the evening or early morning when less will evaporate.

Peat free compost

Peat has been popular with gardeners as a base for compost for decades. Its fine texture and water retentive properties make it ideal for both seed sowing and potting on.

However the lowland peat bogs from which it has been taken are now recognised as rare and valuable habitats for plants, birds, butterflies and dragonflies.

As peat renews at approx. 1mm per year they are classed as a non-renewable resource, and one which stores much carbon which is released into the atmosphere as the bogs are destroyed.

Alternatives to peat, such as coir, wood fibre, wool and even composted bracken, have been around for over a decade now and early versions were often not as good as peat.

Much has been done to improve them in recent years and the best of them are now worthy competitors for peat based compost.

One organic gardener compared various commercial brands plus his own home-grown compost to see which gave the best results for seed sowing and potting on.

Lettuces, sweetcorn, radishes and tomatoes seeds were used to

test germination rates and early potatoes were also used to test the production of strong healthy plants.

The commercial products found to be most reliable were:

New Horizon Organic and Peat-free Multipurpose. Good for seeds and potting on. Widely available.

Vital Earth Multi Purpose. Good for seeds and potting on. Widely available.

Wool Compost – a mixture of composted bracken and sheep's wool – fine enough to be suitable for seeds sowing. More expensive than most so could be used solely as a seed compost before transplanting into a home made mixture of 50:50 compost and leaf mould.

The most economical of all, is home-grown compost mixed 50:50 with (sieved) composted leaves. This makes an excellent compost for both seeds and potting on.

If the inevitable weed seedlings are a problem cover with a 1cm layer of bought in compost and sow into that.

--Rosemary Fulljames

Recipes:

Warm Broad Bean and Halloumi Salad

- 500g broad beans
- 500g frozen peas
- 2tbs olive oil
- 3tbs chopped fresh mint
- 350-500g halloumi cheese, sliced into bite sized pieces

Cook the broad beans in boiling water until softened. Dip the

beans into ice water and then squeeze out of their skins.

Place the beans, peas, olive oil and mint in a large frying pan and warm through over a medium heat. Add salt and pepper to taste and set to one side.

Fry the halloumi pieces in a pan until golden brown.

Mix together the bean mixture, the tomatoes and the fried cheese. Squeeze over the lemon juice and toss to combine.

Serve with warm crusty bread.

-Yolanda Bloor

Contact us

-Fran Fitch (15)

-Rosemary Fulljames (4a) *Treasurer*

-Barney King (20)

-Paul Leonard (2) *Chair*

-Peter Mahnke (15a) *Website*

-Harald Molgaard (24)

-Christine Poppelwell (22) *Newsletter*

-Yolanda Riley (21)

-Ann Warrington (28a)

Or visit our website on:

www.cavendish-allotments.org.uk

Mobile, accepting essential texts and messages, 07505 668268

