

Cavendish House Allotments *newsletter*

Issue No. 17 Spring 2013



On Site News

Dates for diaries:

21st April 2013 seed swap

19th May 2013 seedling swap and general advice on cultivation

Uncultivated plots

We would like to remind plot holders that they signed a tenancy agreement with Richmond Borough Council which requires them to keep their plot in a good state of cultivation.

This means keeping at least 70% of the plot weed free, planted with annual and/or perennial crops and harvesting the produce.

To be able to meet this requirement plot holders need to attend to their plot frequently.

At the beginning of March 2013 already many plot holders had dug over the soil to the delight of the robins, weeded and pruned their fruit bushes, and had a general tidy.

If, over the last year you have found your allotment is a burden

rather than a joy, please consider moving to a smaller plot or handing it on to one of the 100 eager gardeners on our waiting list.

Your allotment committee is required by LBRUT to monitor the state of plots.

Termination of tenancy is a possibility for any that do not meet their standards.

If you have particular problems do please let us know by leaving a message on 07505 668268 or emailing enquiries@cavendish-allotments.org.uk

We will be carrying out the first survey towards the end of April.

For more information on what to do at this time of year, refer to: <http://www.allotment.org.uk/grow-your-own/spring>

Delivered Compost

Bags of 100% organic composted horse manure.

£2.75 per bag.

Place your order now for delivery on site mid March. All monies go to the Communal Allotment fund.

Communal Composting area

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

Wood Chip

Help yourselves to wood chip for your paths. Can also be used for mulching around fruit trees and bushes.

Communal Greenhouse

Use of the greenhouse has been reduced to £5 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

What can I do about rats in my compost heap?

A common assumption is that compost heaps attract rats. But rats in the area will take advantage of what is there. Although a heap provides shelter, rats need to be undisturbed. Using your compost heap frequently will cause too much disruption for a rat colony to develop. However never add protein rich food, leftovers, cooked or processed food.

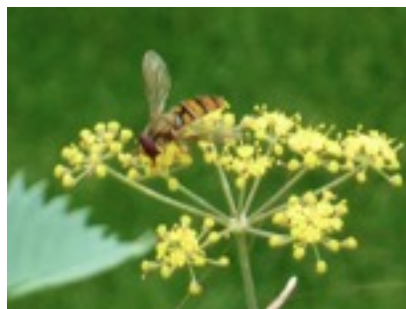
Rats can transmit Weil's Disease which is transmitted in urine. As they move around they urinate constantly, so wherever rats are, surfaces can be contaminated. Moisture is needed for

transmission of the disease, however rat urine dries quickly, especially in sunlight. As long as good gardening hygiene standards are maintained, infection is most unlikely. Cover wounds and sores and wash hands thoroughly after working. Wash vegetable thoroughly before eating.

Compost in which rats have nested or burrowed will not contaminate plants or soil. If compost is spread on soil and exposed to sunlight, any bacteria will be killed.

To discourage rats from burrowing into compost containers, line the bottom sides and top with metal mesh with a mesh size of less than 1.5cm.

Periodically the Local Authority Pest Control department are asked to deal with infestation. Care is taken to place the poison safely so that other animals and children cannot reach it.



Bees - Neonicotinoid pesticides taken off the shelves...

Bee numbers have been in serious decline for some time and neonicotinoid pesticides are thought to have contributed to the worldwide fall in numbers. Many garden centres and DIY retailers have agreed to stop selling products containing neonicotinoids. The full list of products can be viewed at www.pan-uk.org. Following extensive research into the effect of neonicotinoids on bee populations, the EU has proposed a 2-year ban

on the use of the pesticides on flowering crops across the continent. However, the UK government is openly opposed to the ban, claiming that there isn't enough evidence to prove that the chemicals are to blame.

You can help bees, by:

- adopting organic methods
- growing bee-friendly flowers on your plot that will give them a year-round supply of food. Most herbs are attractive and native wildflower species such as comfrey, common poppy, cornflower, foxglove, golden rod, teasel and whorled clary all provide vital sources of food.
- Don't be in a hurry to cut down onions and leeks which have run to flower as bees are keen on all alliums. as also flowers on fruit trees and vegetables especially runner beans and broad beans
- You can also build a simple bee house out of old flower pots and bamboo canes.

More information can be found at <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk>

Recipes:

Rhubarb and Ginger Crumble

For the rhubarb

700g rhubarb cut into chunks
2 pieces stem ginger preserved in syrup finely chopped
2 tbsp ginger syrup

For the crumble

75g wholewheat flour
75g jumbo porridge oats
75g unsalted butter at room temperature
75g chopped nuts (almonds, hazels or walnuts)
75g dark brown sugar

Cook the rhubarb chunks and stem ginger pieces over a gentle heat stirring occasionally. Add dark brown sugar if required. Try not to overcook (10-15 mins). Drain off excess liquid. Place flour and porridge oats in a bowl and rub in the butter with your fingertips to

make a crumbly texture. Add the chopped nuts and sugar and mix in well. Place the cooked rhubarb and ginger in an 8-inch deep pie dish. Add the ginger syrup. Top with the crumble mixture. Bake for 30-40 mins at 180C/350F/Gas 4.

Rosemary Fulljames



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Or visit our website on:

www.cavendish-allotments.org.uk

Essential texts and messages, 07505 668268

