



Editor: Mike McNamara - E14

Notices

Allotment Plot Waiting List

There are currently no Plots available and the waiting list continues to grow.

Association Annual Meeting (AGM)

The annual AGM was held at the Oakwood Centre in Woodley on 25th April 2018 and was well attended. If you did not make it, we will be sending out info about the Bee's & Pesticide discussions in a Special Bulletin soon.

We also asked attendees if they were interested in volunteering for Action Groups to support upcoming projects including 'Wild Meadow Creation' and Establishment of 'Bee Roads' to name two.

If you couldn't make it to the AGM, you can still volunteer by filling in the Action Group Special Bulletin which you will have received along with this Newsletter. Simply fill in the relevant boxes and email it back to our normal email address.

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Important Housekeeping Points

The Main Gate – The Allotment committee would like to remind all allotment holders that you must always close and lock the main gate after entering or leaving the site.

Speed Limit – The speed limit of 5MPH seems to have been ignored by a number of Tenants recently. All Plot holders will have received a copy of a letter sent out by the council a copy of which has also now been attached to the Front Gate entrance.

April – Some To Do's

With April here, spring should be well and truly underway, the soil should be warming up nicely and everything growing away. However; don't forget it's been known for a cold snap & even snow to strike at this time of year. Keep watchful. In the meantime, here are some jobs to be thinking about for April.

- Plant second-early and main crop potatoes during April
- Place cardboard collars around the stems of brassicas to deter cabbage root fly from laying their eggs
- Pinch out the tips of broad beans if they're covered in aphids, or spray shoots with soap-based solution
- Sow outdoor varieties of tomatoes, chillies and courgettes in pots, so they're ready to plant out in late May or June
- Sow Spring onions, peas, broad beans and turnips in rows in the open ground
- Sow small batches of rocket and other easy salad leaves
- April is the right time to establish an asparagus bed if you are starting from crowns
- Sow flowering companions in the veg plot, such as pot marigolds and borage
- Sow herbs such as parsley, coriander, dill and chamomile in a sunny bed or container
- Protect emerging seedlings from slugs and snails
- Sow fast-growing crops, such as radishes, to make the most of any temporary gaps

Items of interest

Launchpad Charity – NEWS

The Launch pad project continues to move ahead, with a new group on site during March with a visit from the *University College of Estate Management*.



Many thanks to all that have been assisting with this project.

We are always looking for volunteers to help with this. If you can come along for a few hours, please let us know via the usual email address at the end of this Newsletter.

Allotment Notice Board (by the front gate)

It should be pointed out that Commercial/ Trade posters are not to be placed on the notice board without contacting the Committee.

Items Left by the Notice board (Main Gate)

There are still many items being left by the noticeboard at the main gate. As a rule of thumb, we would ask people that left them to remove them if they have not been taken after one week.

Many thanks for your help with this.

Item Wanted

A plot holder is looking for a strimmer for his plot. If any plot holder has one for sale. Please send an email with details to readingrdallotments@hotmail.co.uk

Seed Swap News

RFGN seed swap at Beanpole Day – 13th April 2019 at Caversham Court



Compost Source

re3 Compost is still available both Recycling Centres at Longshot Lane in Bracknell and Smallmead in Reading.

re3
re3grow
COMPOST
Turning your garden waste into compost

DEAL
3 FOR £10

Buy re3grow
COMPOST
£3.50 per 40L

- peat-free
- PAS 100 & CQP certified
- made from 90% re3 recycled garden waste

Social Events for Summer 2019

We have now included this information in a Special Bulletin, which you will have received along with this Newsletter.

Let us know what you think.

Culvert Clearance

Woodley Town Council continues to clear the culvert that goes along the side of the site by the main gate.

The culvert is supposed to help with the drainage of a spring in that area, and the vegetation blockages have caused flooding.

Hopefully this work will reduce the flooding round the gate and on plots L1, L2 and the top end of K row.

More Seed Swap News/Locations

Click on the advert to go to the *Reading Food Growing Network* for more information about this organisation.

Could YOU help with our Seed Swaps?



RFGN runs seed swaps at community events throughout the year, including

- Reading Farmers' Market
- Bean Pole Day
- Forbury Fiesta
- WaterFest
- East Reading Festival
- Whitley Fun Day
- Reading Town Meal



We need help at these events

- Running the seed swap (instructions provided)
- Chatting to visitors
- Transport and set up / pack down

Interested? Email info@rfgn.org.uk

www.rfgn.org.uk

READING FOOD GROWING NETWORK

How to get the best harvest from seed potatoes. – From the Guardian Newspaper



It is most likely too late to debate whether to chit or not. Across the land, egg boxes are full of sprouting potatoes willing on the first good days of spring. There is something so pleasing about those little fat shoots appearing at the end of a tuber....

For the full article, click [here](#).

National Allotments Week 2019- 12 to 18 August



National Allotments Week

A National Allotment Society initiative

This year's campaign week theme is "Shared Harvest" celebrating the fact that plot-holders share their crops with family, friends, colleagues and worthy causes, including food banks. Each plot in the UK can benefit up to 8 people! Launchpad is one such Project already running on our site

Want to know more, click [here](#) for further details.

The Composting Year

What, when and how? This interesting article is from *The National Allotment Society* and worth a read.

“The compost heap will be working at its best during the hotter summer months as the warmth and rain increase the activity of the composting micro-organisms.

A cold system will be at its maximum rate of decomposition, helped by the regular addition of feedstock and aeration.

As temperatures increase plastic bins and covered heaps may dry out so it is important to monitor the situation and water if necessary.

If hot composting requiring the addition of composting material in batches sufficient to fill the bin it helps to layer the materials” ... for the full article, [click here](#)

Dealing with Summer Allotment Pests

Here's a handy guide to dealing with Pests that can plague the Allotment Holder during the Summer months. As more of us recognise the need to cut back on the use of pesticide and herbicides and in light of continuing reports of the decline in insect populations, this is an interesting read. We will be writing more about this subject in future newsletters and Special Bulletins.

Dealing with pests

Trying to control pests organically is not an easy task, you have to try and work together with nature, it's about trial, error and good husbandry. There are a number of options out there but it's all about discovering what works best for you and your garden.

The healthier the plants the more able they will be in fighting off attack. Try to give them the right soil conditions, plant them in the right place, sow the seeds at the right time of the year. Try not to overcrowd your plants or let them get over run with weeds as all these things can attract unwanted attention.

Look after them well when they are young, avoid stressing them out and you will give them the best possible chance. Remove affected material at the first sign of attack. Bag it or burn it but never put it on your compost heap as spores will stay in the soil waiting for the chance to strike again.

USE THE GOOD BUGS TO CATCH THE BAD!

Most pests have their own predators, so by attracting these into your plot or garden they will start controlling the unwanted bugs for you.

Good Predators – the ones to encourage

Centipedes will eat slugs and snails

Beetles eat slugs, larvae and root aphids

Hoverflies, ladybirds and lacewings love to snack on aphids, mealy bugs, mites and small

caterpillars.

Earwigs will eat caterpillars, aphids and codling moth eggs.

Birds eat a wide range of pests including caterpillars, larvae and other soil-borne grubs

Frogs, Toads, Newts and Slow worms love to eat slugs

PROVIDE THE RIGHT HABITAT FOR YOUR PREDATORS

One of the best ways to attract most of the above predators would be to build a pond. It doesn't have to be huge, just a small amount of water is enough to attract an abundance of wildlife. As well as providing a perfect habitat the pond also provides a source of drinking water for many other creatures.

Any water tight container can be used to make a pond, this pond on the left was made using an old bath and the wildlife moved in about an hour after it was finished.

Always try and cover open water with some form of safety netting or wire mesh especially if children are around.

For the full article, [click here](#)

... Finally

'Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the earth has gladly received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of their love!' ... Chief Sitting Bull

Our Contact Details

If you have any suggestions for items that you would like to see covered in further editions of this newsletter, please do contact us at:

readingrdallotments@hotmail.co.uk