



Editor: Mike McNamara - E14

## Notices

### **Allotment Plot Waiting List**

There are currently no Plots available and the waiting list continues to grow with 13 people listed.

### **Association Annual Meeting (AGM)**

As mentioned previously, the associations AGM was held recently. If you were unable to attend, please review the AGM Minutes Special Bulletin we have sent out along with this Newsletter. Keep your eyes open for some additional Special Bulletins about the Bee Roadzz/Wild Meadows discussions and an upcoming meeting.

The Action Groups have started, focusing firstly on 'Bug Hotel' creation. Expect to see them popping up around the site in the coming months.

You can still volunteer for an Action Group. See the Special Bulletin which you will have received along with last month's Newsletter. Fill in the relevant boxes & 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.

## May – Some To Do's

With May already here, it's generally one of the busiest months on the vegetable plot. The soil is warm and the plants growing well. However, keep a weather watch and keep that fleece to hand to protect tender plants in case of any later frost. In the meantime, here are some jobs to be thinking about for May.

- Main crop potatoes should now be in the ground. If not, do it as soon as possible
- Continue to plant Brassica's of all sorts. Don't forget to place cardboard collars around the stems to deter cabbage root fly from laying their eggs
- Keep an eye out for the appearance of the first small Broad Bean pods at the base of the plants. Once they appear, pinch out the tips of the plants
- Keep an eye on indoor planted tomatoes, chillies and courgettes and be ready to plant out in late May or June
- Continue to sow spring onions, peas, French beans and turnips in rows in the open ground
- Sow small batches of rocket and other easy salad leaves
- Sow herbs such as parsley, coriander, dill and chamomile in a sunny bed or container
- Sow fast-growing crops, such as radishes, to make the most of any temporary gaps
- Sow Sweetcorn, Courgette, Marrow, Pumpkin & Squash under cover
- Sow flowering companions in the veg plot, such as pot marigolds and borage

## Items of interest

### *Launchpad Charity*



Many thanks to all that have been assisting with this project. More dates in the diary for 1<sup>st</sup> May, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 17<sup>th</sup> May and 21<sup>st</sup> May.

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

### *Skips On Site – 27<sup>th</sup> May 2019*

The committee has organised for Skips to be on site over the May Bank holiday – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> to Monday 27<sup>th</sup>.

As with previous years these are only for the disposal of non-organic waste such as Metal/Plastic/Glass/Old Carpet. They are **NOT** for Household Waste.

We will issue another special bulletin nearer the date with more details.

### *Poly Tunnels*

A suggestion has been made to establish a communal Poly Tunnel on site for use by plot holders that don't have one or have room for one on their own plot.

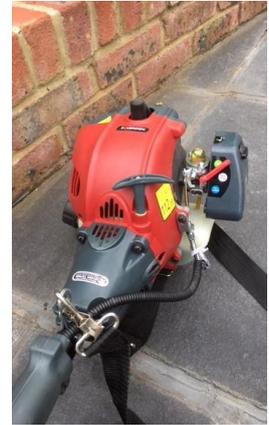
The idea would be for plot holders to 'rent' space for a small fee to raise seedlings ready for planting out on their own plots.

One question though; would it be better to have one large Poly Tunnel, or a number of smaller poly-tunnels dotted around the site?

The committee is interested to hear feedback on this suggestion, so please let us know via the normal email address.

### *Items for Sale*

Nearly new petrol strimmer £70.00 ONO  
(Proceeds to Association funds)



JCB Petrol strimmer (no picture) for spares/repair. Free

If you would like them, send an email to the normal email. [readingrdallotments@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:readingrdallotments@hotmail.co.uk)

### *Compost Source*



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

We would like to hear from any Plot Holders that are using this source and what they think of the quality, value for money etc. Let us know via the normal email address if you have any thoughts.

### *Plot Volunteers*

Do you have some spare time to help other plot holders? We are compiling a list of 'helpers' that can assist other plot holders when they are struggling with their plots due to ill-health etc. Let us know if you can help via the normal email address.

**Culvert Clearance & Site Improvements**

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.

The committee has also made a commitment to clean up Plots L1 & L2 (which are not let due to a potential flooding risk) to improve the entrance area. Along with plans for future Wild Flower Meadow area's this will improve the whole site for all plot holders.

**More Seed Swap News/Locations**

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



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](mailto:info@rfgn.org.uk)

[www.rfgn.org.uk](http://www.rfgn.org.uk)

**READING FOOD GROWING NETWORK**

**National Gardening Week – 29th April to 5th May**



The RHS is calling on gardeners up and down the country to share their love of home-grown produce with this year's RHS theme – *Edible Britain*. Click [here](#) for more info.

**Strawberries**



What plant is more synonymous with a British Summer?

Although not everyone is a fan, there is nothing that beats tucking into a plate/bowl /punnet of delicious Strawberries, especially if you have grown them yourself.

Here is some excellent information from the RHS with everything you might want to know about Strawberries from selecting the right variety, cultivation and moving onto propagation and dealing with problems.

Click [here](#) for the full article.

**Watering and the Allotment**

As we move towards the summer and begin planting out in earnest, our tasks will begin to include more watering. The onsite tanks are now turned on and although they will automatically refill, we should still be mindful of water usage/wastage.

Here are some suggestions to ensure that we all have fair access to this essential resource for all our allotment plots.

- Please don't wash anything (plants, plot covers, tools) in the water tanks, it will contaminate the water. Some tanks now have buckets attached to them for this purpose. More buckets will be appearing during the year.
- Please try and stagger your visits to the sight for watering.
- Try and make sure you only need to water when you need to. Many plants can manage with much less water than we all think.

- With that last point in mind, here is some additional information from the [National Allotment Society](#) about watering during a dry season.

### ***Gardening in a dry spell***

The word drought often conjures up images of faraway countries suffering from months of baking sun and no rainfall. It is not often a word which you'd instantly link with Britain, but unfortunately times seem to be changing and hosepipe bans are becoming more frequent.

Where possible every gardener should have water butts to harvest any rain that does fall. If you do decide to water your allotment, the best time of day is during the cool of the morning or evening. Water the roots of the plant and concentrate the watering to once or twice a week, as opposed to giving your plants frequent light showers, otherwise you'll encourage the roots of the plant to seek water near the surface of the soil, as opposed to deep down in the earth.

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

### ***Date for your Diaries.***

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, and colleagues and worthy causes, including food banks. For more information, click [here](#).

### ***Litter Picking – Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May***

We are looking for volunteers to carry out 'Litter Picking' across the whole site. If you can help, please send your names to the usual email address.

### ***Something for the future***

Planning ahead is always a good thing. So here's an interesting article from [GrowVeg.co.uk](#) about storing your harvested crop.

Storing your harvest is a great way to deal with gluts (a surplus of one vegetable) and months when little is growing. There are many ways to store your vegetables; these include drying, freezing and preserving.

Some fruits and vegetables store well for months if they are kept in the right conditions.

The key to success is choosing unblemished specimens and checking them regularly, removing any diseased items.

For example one rotten apple can ruin the whole batch. Storing the crop in a dry, well-ventilated place will prevent it from rotting. You can buy storage boxes but a wooden crate or shallow cardboard box will work just as well.

Some boxes and crates will be designed so you can stack them but if you do this make sure that air can circulate between the levels.

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

... Finally

*'There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments'. – Janet Kilburn Phillips.*

### ***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](mailto:readingrdallotments@hotmail.co.uk)