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Notices

Allotment Plot Waiting List

Plot inspections are ongoing & more unworked plots are being gradually released to new Tenants, the waiting list currently has 12 people on it.

Road Repairs/Free BBQ

As mentioned last month, it's nearly that time to carry out the annual Site road upkeep work. We will do this work on Saturday 24th August, exact times to be confirmed. Also as per last year, a FREE BBQ will be on offer to all volunteers following their hard work in repairing road damage caused by usage, weather and speeding car drivers. If you can help, please send your name to the usual email address.

Thefts from the Site

The Committee and Woodley Town Council are investigating a number of reported thefts from around the site. If you have been affected, please contact us on the 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.

August – Some To Do's

With August a holiday month, it's worth asking a neighbouring plot holder to keep an eye on your patch, as everything will come into season all at once & need picking. Watering is still an important job if the current weather trends continue. In the meantime, here are some jobs to be thinking about for August.

- Keep up with the picking of runner beans to maintain cropping well into the autumn
- Lots of other crops can also be harvested in August, including carrots, beetroot, globe artichokes, cucumbers, courgettes, and second early potatoes; main crop may be ready from the end of the month.
- Prepare to lift onions towards the end of the month. Wait until the tops begin to fall over as this indicates that the bulb has stopped swelling. Dry them before 'stringing' and putting into store. These bulbs should keep well into next year
- Start to thin apples & pears down to one or two fruits per cluster. Plums and damsons will be in full flow so harvest regularly
- The late fruiting raspberries will be cropping well by now
- Some fruit trees can be pruned in summer, including plums, to avoid the development of silver-leaf disease. Trained apples and pears can be pruned in summer, as can spur-fruited, established apple trees
- Watering & keeping on top of weeds are two of the other important jobs for this month. Although we have had some rain, the current trend is for high temperatures to continue.

Items of interest

Launchpad Charity



As you may be aware the project has 'shipped' it's first 'harvest' to the food bank today. First picture is 'the team' testing out the cleaning and prepping system on site, the second is the delivery to ReadiFood. Many thanks to Andy Sherwood for the boxes, perfect for the job.

While we were there three customers went off with bags of courgettes, onions, borlotto and French beans and kale. From plot to the 'customer' in less than 2 hours!!

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

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.

More corporate volunteer dates in the diary to be announced soon.

Front Gate – Plots L1/L2

The Council continue to address the potential for flooding at the Front Gates and with that in mind as part of the rejuvenation of Plots L1/L2 (the ones just inside the gate on the left) we are planning that L1 will be given over to a large pond that will 'collect' any excess water that arrives through future flooding in that area. This pond will be planted with water-loving plants etc. so that it can act as a 'partner' to Plot L2 which the committee is in the process of reviewing reconfiguration plans.

Bug Hotels

This project, having got off to a bit of a shaky start should resume soon so that we can have some of them in situ ready for occupant this coming Autumn.

Site Bonfires

This subject seems to be causing a number of issues recently.

The tenancy agreement states that Bonfires are allowed, but only after 6pm in the Summer months and only after 4pm in the Winter months.

Plot holders are fully responsible to the safety of any bonfires that they light and should not leave any lit fires unattended – one such unattended bonfire led to a plot holders shed burning down a few years ago.

Plot holders also need to be considerate to our site neighbours and should look at strength & direction of prevailing winds before lighting their bonfires.

The committee has received a number of recent complaints from our site neighbours about bonfires and Woodley Town Council will be looking to these complaints.

As a site we do not want to lose our ability to have Bonfires, so all Plot holders need to be more careful and considerate about their bonfires and when they are lit.

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.

Watering and the Allotment

As the prevailing temperatures continue to exceed normal records, one of our 'daily' tasks includes more watering.

The onsite tanks automatically refill as water is taken. However, 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 - 12th to 18th 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](#).

Wild Meadow News

This is a very topical subject at the moment, so this item from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([RSPB](#)) will be of interest to many of our monthly readers.

"Grow a wildflower meadow, and create a lively feeding and nesting ground for insects, birds and small animals.

The majestic flowers and grasses, bursting with colour, will be an attractive feature in your garden.

Our countryside was once full of meadows bursting with a gorgeous variety of flowering plants, supporting butterflies, insects, farmland birds and other wildlife.

But since the 1930s, we have lost over 99% of what are called 'unimproved grasslands', and those that are left are fragmented.



However, you can create something of the same feel in your own garden.

Preparing the ground and removing the weeds may take several weeks, and you can do this at any time of year. But autumn is the best month for sowing your seeds.

This is one of our most important activities, but it is also quite challenging and usually requires stripping your lawn and topsoil.”

You can find more information about creating your own small Wild Meadow in your own garden or on your own allotment plot on the RSPB site [here](#).

Something for the future



As the season for harvesting approaches, we thought that we would repeat this interesting item.

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 & months when little is growing. There are many ways to store your vegetables; including drying, freezing & 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. For the full article, click [here](#)

... and Finally

'A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows.' – Doug Larson

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