

# WOODLEY ALLOTMENTS TENANTS ASSOCIATION

at Reading Road

Gardening In Harmony with Nature

Newsletter - June 2023  
Issue 111

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### BONFIRES

Bonfires are now **NOT** permitted on site until 1/10/2023.

Woodley Town Council will be monitoring for any infringement of this Tenants' agreement.

**“Site Security is important for all of us.**

**Please lock the gate when you enter or leave the site.**

**Also don't leave high-value items in your plot shed”**

## Notices

### Committee Vacancies

There are currently 3 roles vacant on the Allotment committee. If you would be interested in taking one on you would be very welcome. Please contact the committee for more information.

- Chair – Sarah Lane (H28)
- *Vice-Chair - Vacant*
- Treasurer - Kerri Evans (C29a)
- *Secretary - Vacant*
- Teresa Buley - (E18)
- John Anderson - (H27)
- Fiona McAllister – (K36)
- Peter Wheat – (M25a)
- *Committee Member - Vacant*

Our Website can be found [here](#)

### Committee Contacts

If you have any questions about any issues on our allotment site, please feel free to contact any of the Committee on their plots or use the email address at the end of this newsletter.

## Rats

Bait boxes have now been placed around the site. Woodley Town Council have agreed a year's contract with an external contractor. We can monitor and see if this is good use of money as we shall never eradicate the problem as we are never too far away from a rat they say.

However, if you do see a rat on site, please would you let the committee know where on site you saw it, including the row, plot numbers etc., as we can then advise the contractor, who will be able to move the boxes around to problem areas.

# June – Some To Do's

We are never satisfied – after waiting for it to stop being so wet and cold – the warmer, sunny spell (fingers crossed it lasts!) has resulted in all of us needing to increase out time spent watering. It is a busy but exciting time for growers as seeds are now sprouting and young plants can be finally planted into their final positions outside as frosts are now extremely unlikely.

### Plant

- Aubergines & peppers – most varieties grow best under cover but some are suitable for outdoor growing – check your varieties
- Courgettes
- French beans – unless dwarf, may need some sort of twiggy or net support
- Runner beans – support with a frame or wigwam of poles
- New strawberry plants
- Brassicas – protect with netting from pigeons and butterflies. Cabbage collars will protect from cabbage root flies. Buy or make your own from thick card.
- Leeks
- Squash & pumpkins
- Sweetcorn – grow in blocks to aid pollination

### Harvest

Asparagus, globe artichokes, beetroot, broad beans, broccoli, carrots, cauliflowers, garlic, lettuce, onions, peas, potatoes, radish, rhubarb, salad leaves, spinach, spring onions, strawberries, Swiss chard.

### Cut flower patch

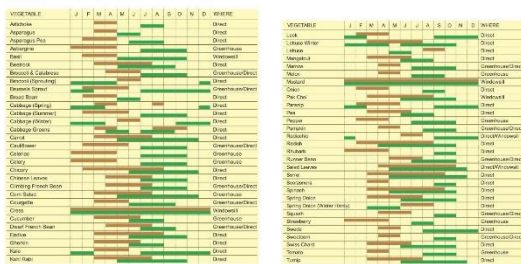
- Plant out dahlias
- Sow biennial and perennial seed

### Sow

Beetroot, cabbage, calabrese, carrots, chicory, courgettes, cucumbers, endive, Florence fennel, French beans, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuce, peas, radish, salad leaves, spinach, spring onion, sprouting broccoli, squash & pumpkin, swede, sweetcorn, Swiss chard, turnips

### A handy guide for Sowing & Harvesting

Sow and harvest chart



Click on these for larger version

### Crop protection

As fleecy layers of protection are being withdrawn in these warmer times, other forms of protection are now needed to guard against the abundant wildlife wishing to dine or lay eggs on our crops. When choosing to use netting please ensure it will not become a deathtrap for birds and hedgehogs – keep it taut and pegged down securely. Please check it every time you visit your plot.

### Pocket plum disease

There have been reported incidents of Pocket Plum disease on site. Pocket plum is the name given to abnormally developed fruit of plums, damsons and some ornamental species. You may see:

- **On fruit:** Developing fruit elongate and are hollow, without stones. Later, a white bloom of fungus appears, then the fruit shrivels and falls. The fruits do not swell or ripen and are worthless to eat
- **On stems:** Twigs bearing deformed fruit may thicken and grow deformed. The fungus may also cause witches' brooms (dense clusters of live and dead twigs).

**Non-chemical control** - The disease can be controlled by thoroughly removing infected branches, witches' brooms and fruit before spores are produced. Since spores are airborne, this will not completely eliminate the risk of new infections but it will reduce the threat.

**Chemical control**- There are no fungicides available to amateur gardeners.

For more information please refer to - <https://www.rhs.org.uk/disease/pocket-plum>

# Companion Planting

Companion planting is all about creating plant communities which have mutual benefits to each other. It can be an organic way to protect your crops from pests or it could help improve pollination. Although there is limited scientific research surrounding companion gardening, many gardeners find it extremely beneficial to their plant's performance.

## Companion planting hints and tips

1. Avoid **monocultures**. This is where the same type of plant is grown en masse or in rows. Monoculture makes it much easier for pests and diseases to find their favourite plants and then spread quickly.
2. Use **tall plants** such as peas or sweet corn to create partially shaded conditions for crops prone to bolting, such as coriander, lettuce and spinach.
3. Plant **herbs** throughout the garden and vegetable plot, as most have strongly scented leaves which help repel insects.
4. Try **intercropping**. This is where fast-growing crops such as lettuce or radishes are sown between widely spaced rows of slower-growing crops such as Brussels Sprouts or parsnips. It utilises the space available and helps prevent weeds growing (weeds take nutrients, light and water, and spread disease).
5. Plant lots of **insect-friendly or bird-friendly plants**, either amongst your crops or nearby. They attract natural predators such as birds which eat slugs, hoverflies which eat aphids and bees which pollinate your crops.
6. **Take care with some companion plants such as mint** - these are fast-growing plants and will quickly smother your crop. Grow mint in containers to keep it under control.

| Companion plant 1          | Companion plant 2 | How does it work  |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Cabbage, kale, cauliflower | Nasturtium        | Plant Nasturtiums as a sacrificial crop. Cabbage white butterflies will lay their eggs on Nasturtium plants, keeping caterpillars away from your Brassicas. |
|                            | Mint              | Mint helps to deter flea beetles, which chew irregular holes in the leaves.   |
| Courgette                  | Calendula         | Calendula flowers are highly attractive to pollinating insects which will in turn pollinate your courgette flowers.   |
| Broad beans                | Summer savory     | Summer savory helps to repel blackfly, a common pest of broads beans.   |
| Carrot                     | Spring onions     | Sow spring onions amongst your carrots - the smell of onion deters carrot root fly. The smell of carrots also deters onion fly from onions.                 |
|                            | Leek              | The smell of leeks deters carrot root fly. The smell of carrots also helps deter leek moth from leeks.  |
|                            | Mint              | The aromatic leaves of mint help confuse carrot root fly, who find their host through scent.  |
| French/ runner beans       | Nasturtium        | Plant Nasturtiums as a sacrificial crop - aphids love them and this will lure them away from your runner beans/French beans.                                |
| Onion                      | Mint              | The aromatic leaves of mint help to confuse and deter onion fly.  |
| Radish                     | Mint              | Mint helps to deter flea beetles, which chew irregular holes in the leaves.   |
| Runner beans               | Sweet peas        | Sweet peas will attract pollinating insects which will in turn help to pollinate your bean flowers.   |
| Sunflower                  | Chives            | The onion scent will deter aphids.  |
| Tomatoes                   | Mint              | The smell of mint deters aphids and other pests.  |
|                            | French marigold   | The pungent smell of French marigolds deters whitefly.  |
|                            | Chives            | The onion scent will deter aphids.  |
|                            | Basil             | Basil reportedly improves tomato flavour and the strong scent of their leaves also deters aphids. A perfect partnership in the kitchen too!                 |

## Disposal of green waste

Dumping of green waste is NOT allowed anywhere on site and is also a breach of the Tenancy agreement. This has been a problem for many years – tenants dumping their waste green matter (weeds, grass etc.) in areas deemed to be 'wild' or unused. Waste needs to be collected in compost bins (made from wooden pallets or bought). Homemade compost is a valuable resource to be used as a free mulch or soil improver. Or green waste can be removed from site and taken to the tip, put into the Re3 brown bins or purchased bags from Woodley library or the Oakford centre. These can then be put out for roadside collection. Please help us to keep the site attractive for all.

## Other Items

**Plot inspections** – These will resume this month.

**Away from your plot for an extended period?** – Please do let us know directly if you will be away from your plot for an extended time for any circumstance including illness & extended holidays, so we can keep an eye on it for you and exempt it from any plot inspections.

**Plot numbers** - It is a requirement of the Tenants Agreement that all plots be numbered correctly, and it is the responsibility of the tenant to do this. *'Every allotment plot shall bear a number and every tenant shall be responsible for providing and displaying this number, in a prominent position on the plot.'* A little tip which is quick and cheap is to use a slab and paint your plot number on it. **re3 Compost** - The Woodley Allotment Tenants Association (WATA) have been successful in our application for 20 bags of compost.

**Covid-19 Update** - Covid continues to affect our lives in one way or another. The Committee would still ask all plot holders to continue to act responsibly when on the allotment site. The latest updates are those listed below. We still advise all plot holders to protect their hands when touching the gate/padlock when entering/ leaving the site. Plot holders must NOT wash their hands (or any of their tools) in the water tanks around the site. Please use your own container/bucket for this.

The latest updated (16<sup>th</sup> June 2022) advice can be found at...

[UK.GOV – Coronavirus update latest details](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)   [National Allotment Society - Covid 19 Precautions](https://www.nationalallotmentsociety.org.uk/)

### Huntley & Palmer Allotment Association

H&P sell a vast array of products from compost through to seeds, onion sets and many other items.

You need to be a member of their Association to buy in the 'Shed'. Membership is open to everyone, and costs just £1.50 per year.

Just roll up and join. Payment is by bank card only.

For more information and location details see their [website](https://hapaa.org.uk/):

<https://hapaa.org.uk/>

## Vehicles on site

Please remember that the maximum speed for all vehicles is 5 m.p.h. This might seem slow but needs to be adhered to, to keep plot holders of all ages safe and prevent further damage to the loose nature of some roads. Committee members have now started to identify serial offenders and have notified the council accordingly.

Vehicles must not be left on site overnight. If you breakdown, arrange recovery and report to the committee immediately please. Tenants who do leave vehicles on-site are in breach of their TA, 4.1) *'the Tenant shall not store any vehicles or vehicle parts on the allotment site.'*

Please do not use the on-site water provision to wash your vehicle!

## LAUNCHPAD

Launchpad is Reading's leading homelessness prevention charity. It was first founded as a soup kitchen in 1979 by students of Reading University. Its aims today are to help vulnerable people with their housing related problems. Launchpad pay for their plots L25 and J10 where food is grown to provide fresh fruit and vegetables for READIFOOD Bank, for those in need. Our volunteer team headed by Barry, John and Theresa keep it running and the charity provides corporate volunteers to assist.

**Launchpad Watering** – Last year tenants volunteered to help with watering the plots on Launchpad and we were so grateful to all of them. **Can you help this year?** If interested, please email [Teresa.Buley@woodley-allotments.org.uk](mailto:Teresa.Buley@woodley-allotments.org.uk) who is arranging the rota. We are only looking for 4/5 volunteers and it's just once per week (same day) during the growing months June – Sept. **Launchpad** - if anyone has surplus plants that they have grown e.g., beans, tomatoes, squashes etc. Launchpad would welcome them. All food grown on Launchpad is donated to Readifood Bank

*editions of this newsletter,*

### Honey Sales

There is still some honey left from last year's harvest.

If you are interested in obtaining a jar, cost is £7.00; please contact either Paul Moffit 0781 307 8199 or Steve Cook on 0741 207565 and they will arrange all the details.

### 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:*

[readingroadplots@woodley-allotments.org.uk](mailto:readingroadplots@woodley-allotments.org.uk)

## Children and dogs

**Children** – it is lovely to see so many different generations on site from the very young to the rather more mature! Having an allotment is a great way to introduce children to growing and hopefully encouraging them to eat their veggies! Please ensure that your children remain on your plots with you the tenants. We have had several reports that children are going onto other tenant's plots and disturbing areas and trampling on young plants. Evidence is left with little shoe prints! There are also some safety concerns regarding children running and cycling along the roads. It is a very busy site, with lots of traffic and areas of road with limited visibility. Please help us to avoid a serious accident by always keeping your children in sight.

**Dogs** - we welcome your pet dogs onsite but please keep them on your plots and on leads. Clear up any mess responsibly – bag it and take it home to bin please.