

The Bushy Times

Newsletter of the Bushy Park Allotment Association

Issue 40

February 2015

VOLUNTEER DAY

Our first Volunteer Day will be held on 28th February and the focus will be on clearing the car parks and paths of rubbish and disposing of it to the tip, plus making a start on the valve covers. The day will run from 10-4 and Giuseppe will provide snacks from the pizza oven and drinks. Robin Hewitt will be the organiser on the day.

We look forward to your support in committing an hour or two of communal effort for everyone's benefit. Volunteers to take bags of rubbish to the Council tip will also be needed.

OPEN DAYS & COMPETITIONS

We are planning to hold two Open Days this year, the dates for your diary are: -

Open Day & Plant Sale on 9th May

Autumn Festival on 12th September

At the autumn Festival we will award prizes for the following competitions: -

Best plot (Traditional & Modern styles) and best newcomer plot:

Best photograph (adult):

Best children's photograph

Best sunflower:

More details will be in notices on the gate and the next newsletter. **Remember to buy the sunflower seed and take some photos.**

TREES ALONG THE WALL

The Royal Parks tree work along the wall has been delayed. Thanks to those tenants who have cooperated in clearing space around the trees that are to be cut down.

NEW TENANTS

We had a viewing morning on 18th January and ten new tenants signed up to cultivate a plot. They are on plots 19A, 23A, 28A, 31, 65A, 106A, 114A, 272, 274, 277A. Do make them welcome if you see these new faces.

We are having another viewing on 22nd February for another 11 plots that are vacant so there will be yet more new recruits to the allotment cause this month.

NIGHT PARTIES

You may have seen the notice that the Council have posted on the gates. It states: -

“Due to a rise in night time thefts and anti-social behaviour all tenants and guests must vacate the site within half an hour of dusk unless prior written permission has been granted by the council.

Tenants are responsible for their guest at all times and will be held accountable for their actions.”

The allotments are not intended to be a venue for late night parties. Produce thefts have been reported to the Council after these events. The Council has imposed this rule to try and eliminate these activities.

SEED VIABILITY

Vegetable seeds in a sealed packet or jar will keep for a number of years provided they are kept in a cool and dry place. Seed packets that I purchase in France have a use by date on them which confirms this viability. Estimates for the life of seed in storage are: -

Broad, French & runner beans, peas	3 to 5 years +
Brassicas, broccoli, cabbage, kales, turnips, mustards etc	3 to years
Carrots	Up to 3 years
Courgettes and squashes (you often get more seed in a packet than you need)	2 to 4 years
Lettuces	2 to 5 years
Onions and leeks	3 years max.
Parsnips	1 year
Tomatoes	Up to 8 years

Don't throw out last year's seed packets just keep them cool and dry!

A NEW CROP

The Real Seed Co has been a source of unusual crop seed over the last few years. This year I have purchased **huauzontle**, *Chenopodium nuttalliae*, which is a Mexican vegetable related to *Chenopodium quinoa* from the Andes, known as quinoa in your local supermarket. It vaguely resembles broccoli as the immature flower head or inflorescence is eaten.

Like quinoa, it is a pseudograin, the mature seeds are harvested for food in parts of Mexico and ground into flour to make tortillas. Prior to the development of corn by Native Americans in Central and North America, this plant was one of the major "grain" crops.

The Real Seed Co is at <http://www.realseeds.co.uk>, they sell on-line or you can download an order form and order by post as I had to do this year. Sadly, but understandably, they have discontinued their paper catalogue. It was exciting to receive this each winter to browse and see what they had on offer. Do have a look at their website, it has advice on cultivation, using your produce and also seed saving. I will be aiming to collect my own huauzontle seed this year and will include it in the seed swap if it is any good.

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Please email if you want to go on the newsletter mailing list or wish to contact the Committee or have suggestions/contributions for the newsletter.