

The Bushy Times

Newsletter of the Bushy Park Allotment Association

Issue 37

July 2014

SUMMER OPEN DAY

A reminder to come and support us and enjoy yourself at the same time:-:

Summer Open Day: 19th July

There will be some plants and produce for sale as well as a selection of jams, jellies, fruit cheeses and chutney. Home baking will be the star attraction if we have your culinary support as usual and we plan to make pizzas in the bread oven. On the day the shop car park will be closed.

BOROUGH WIDE COMPETITION

The following notice from the Council has gone up on the notice boards. Our tenants have had success in recent competitions so don't be shy about entering! You can contact the Council directly or through the Committee.

The judging for this year's allotment competition will take place the week beginning the 18th August.

You can enter the competition by contacting your committee or the allotments office.

Prizes will be awarded for 1st 2nd and 3rd overall winners and best novice.

Novices will be plot holders who joined their site after 1st June 2013.

Judging will be based on the following criteria:

- Quality of crops - 25 points
- Variety of crops - 25 points
- Cleanliness 20 - points
- Pest and disease control - 10 points
- Companion planting/originality - 10 points
- Compost - 10 points

Entries must be received by 4pm Thursday 7th August

Allotments Office allotments@richmond.gov.uk or leave a message on 020-8831-6110

SCARECROW & PHOTO COMPETITIONS

Scarecrow Competition

Entries are invited for registration from those aged 12 or under for the scarecrow competition to patsy.iddison@gmail.com by 31st August with your name, and plot number if you want to take part. Please also send a photo. The entries will then be judged and the winner will be announced at the September Open Day.

The height of each scarecrow should not exceed 1.8m (6ft) and should be made from reclaimed and recycled materials.

Photographic Competition

This is an opportunity to get a photo onto the website. Please send photos to patsy.iddison@gmail.com as follows before 15th August: -

- a) Maximum 2 photos for each entrant.
- b) Subject should be plants, produce, wildlife and scenery at Bushy Park Allotments not people.
- c) Give your name and plot number and also your age if you are under 12.

We will have an independent judge review the photos and prizes will be awarded, details to follow. Winning photos (and maybe others) will be added to the gallery on our website and may be used on the Borough website

HOUSEKEEPING

STABLE COMPOST BINS

PLEASE KEEP THE COMPOST BINS TIDY BY MOVING ANY NEW MATERIAL TO THE BACK OF THE BIN. IF EVERYONE WHO USES COMPOST PUTS A SMALL AMOUNT OF TIME AND EFFORT INTO THIS IT CAN SUCCEED IN KEEPING THE CAR PARKS TIDY AND THE COMPOST WELL MANAGED.

KEYS & LOCKS

A new lock has been fixed to the vehicle gate in response to your complaints to the Council. These locks have to be used with some care. ALWAYS MAKE SURE THAT YOUR KEY IS FULLY INSERTED IN THE LOCK, UP TO THE BASE OF THE TRIANGULAR TOP SECTION. REMOVE THE KEY SLOWLY SO THE TUMBLERS REALIGN THEMSELVES. IF YOU CANNOT INSERT THE KEY FULLY, 'JIGGLE' IT IN THE LOCK AND TRY AGAIN.

THEFTS

There have been a number of thefts of produce such as garlic and fruit. This is very distressing for those tenants who have been tending their crops all year to enjoy their harvest.

Please report any thefts to the Council Allotments Officer using the CONTACT THE ALLOTMENT OFFICER on the website and give Pete Lewis the details of the theft, produce stolen, plot number and date/time as closely as possible. Please also let a Committee member know what has happened. The Park Police have made some patrols but they are not frequent.

If you witness a theft, please report it to the Council or a Committee member, with as much detail as possible. If a tenant or a tenant's guest is found stealing, the Council will take action.

PATHS

All tenants are responsible for the maintenance of the paths alongside their **plots jointly with their neighbours**. Please help your neighbour to keep the grass cut and access safe.

COUNCIL LIAISON

The Council plot inspections took place on 12th June and Pete Lewis issued 22 letters to tenants inviting them to give up their plot or cultivate it to the Council T&C requirements. Seven plots have been relinquished to date.

The follow-up Plot Inspections take place on 15th July and follow-up action will be taken by Pete Lewis.

We are now keeping a photograph record of the plots that do not get the regular work that the Council requires and that a plot deserves. This is something that other allotment sites in the Borough do as a matter of course and will demonstrate to the Allotment Officer that there has been little or no activity on a plot over the year.

PESTS

ASPARAGUS BEETLE

Asparagus beetle is very active on the site. These small red, white and black beetles and their dark green grubs will destroy the young shoots of asparagus. The beetles are quite active and try and evade capture but for the health of your plants they have to be eradicated. Please check if you have asparagus and help everyone by aiming to eliminate this pest. 'Provado Ultimate Bug Killer' does the job. I just destroy the beetles and larvae by hand. Photo below of the beetle.

ALLIUM LEAF MINER

My garlic crop was badly infested with allium leaf miner. I managed to save the crop by peeling back the layers of leaf covering to expose the pupae and destroy them. Hopefully the drying process at home will destroy any that I missed. Next year I will have to grow them under enviromesh to protect them. We normally harvest enough garlic to last the whole year. This year may be the exception. A photo below shows the pupae embedded in my garlic.

This pest seems to be very variable in the localities around the site where it infests crops. People report no problems one year and then an infestation the next. It will attack all the alliums.

Asparagus beetle



Allium leaf miner pupae in a garlic bulb.

SOME MORE TECHNICAL STUFF

WEEDS

We all struggle with weeds, whether you are a new plot holder tackling a neglected plot or a seasoned veteran who is under the impression that you have the weeds under control.

One bit of folk lore states that ***one year's weed seed is seven years of weed growth***. Joy Larkcom's book, Just Vegetating, confirms that research supports this. Half the weed seed on or near the soil surface germinates each year. A bit of simple maths demonstrates that after seven years less than one percent of the seed will be left. However this is only if you have prevented the seed supply being augmented. Turning the soil over whilst digging may also bring more weed seed to the surface but will also bury the surface weed seed so could be a net balance.

So help yourself and other plot holders by removing weeds before they flower and produce seed. At this stage they can be added to your compost heap.

BEES

The site bee keepers have had an active summer so far with 3 or 4 swarms being reported. The bees have relished the good weather and also the supply of nectar and pollen. It is good policy to have some flowers on your plot to attract and nurture the bees and other pollinators. These can be: -

- the flowers that are producing fruit and vegetables, eg blackberry and beans that you need to be pollinated
- decorative flowers such as lavender, or
- plants selected to set seed for collection, I leave a few parsnip roots each year to flower and provide me with free seed the next year, the insects love them..

Phil Iddison - Chair

Bushy Park Allotments Association Committee

patsy.iddison@gmail.com

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.