

The Bushy Times

Newsletter of the Bushy Park Allotment Association

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OPEN DAY - AUTUMN FESTIVAL - 12th September

Our second Open Day this year is on **Saturday 12th September, as usual from 12 noon to 3 PM**. We look forward to seeing you and also hopefully having your support. Home-made cakes and savoury snacks are always welcome. Tenants and visitors really appreciate the quality of home produced goods.

We will have a selection of jams and preserves and some plants for sale. If you can donate spare plants or produce, please bring them on Saturday and label the plants if it is not obvious what they are.

INSPECTIONS

The inspections were carried out in July with the allotments Officer. As a result: -

- 5 Plots have been relinquished by tenants.
- 8 Tenancies have been terminated for non-cultivation including a probationer
- 9 Tenants were able to put enough effort into their plots to be given another chance to cultivate them to borough standards

The Borough standard is that no more than 25% of a plot should be uncultivated. We learnt from the RHS on their visit that the Fulham Palace Allotments have a 10% rule, only this area of a plot can remain uncultivated! The Council rules are lenient.

REMINDERS

There are a few of our rules and common sense which are worth repeating.

- Now the bonfire season has started, if you have a pile of waste material, please turn it over before setting fire to it! This will give the opportunity for wildlife to escape before it is burnt alive.
- The Council do not permit hoses to be left attached to taps and the taps to be left on and unattended. You may have a fitting at the end of the hose that shuts off flow. However the system is subject to significant pressure fluctuations, particularly rising to full mains pressure at night. The hose and fittings are not designed to withstand continuous mains pressure, they are likely to fail and flood plots. This has happened several times recently and warnings have been issued to tenants by the Council.
- Please cycle carefully around the site at a sensible speed. The path to the shop car park is particularly hazardous, small children often play on or near it and an accident would be a serious incident. So please cycle slowly.
- The plots adjacent to the community area are **not** part of the Community Area and you need the plot tenant's permission to go on them. If you are holding a social event in the Community Area please make your guests aware of the allotment rules. We have also banned ball games in the community area to prevent damage to the orchard trees and the adjacent plots. A notice was put up but was removed by someone!

A PEEK AT THE PAST

My neighbour had friends in to tend his plot whilst he was on holiday. His locum told me that her mother, Mrs Kathleen Legge, had a plot here from the 50's to the late 70's and she was a regular visitor to the family plot over that period. The plot had a Sops in Wine apple tree, a pleasant aromatic eating apple with crimson fruits with pink stained flesh.

She got to know an elderly tenant, Mr Stansfield who had fought in the Boer War, about the time the allotments were established. He kept an immaculate plot that was located in the extension area granted by our 1911 Royal Charter at the back of the existing area of plots. She remembers him bringing over a gift of raspberries neatly piled on a cabbage leaf for transportation. At that time there were no water taps, there were hand pumps over wells with tanks. You had to prime the pump with several swings of the handle before any water flowed.

RATS

We have an ongoing problem with rats. They ate all my sweetcorn and are partial to beetroot, peas and a several other crops. The Council have paid for traps and two volunteer tenants are setting them and dealing humanely with the rats that are trapped. We have dealt with 40 rats over the last two months.

Please help in this effort: -

- Do not disturb the traps that have been set, they are checked regularly and appropriate action taken.
- If you have a problem with rats please tell a committee member and pinpoint where the rats have been active. Traps will be set.
- Do not put meat or cooked food in your compost bin. Keep a secure lid on the bin to prevent rodents getting in. Open slatted compost bins are not only very poor at creating compost (it dries out too much and never develops any decomposition heat) but they are also feeding stations for rodents.

RHS VISIT

Members of the RHS Fruit and Vegetable Committee visited the site on 26th July. They met plot holders and answered their questions and had some useful advice: -

- Train courgette plants up a strong frame that leans back at 30 degrees to the vertical, tie the plant into the support, the fruit will be kept off the ground and less space is needed for each plant. Watering and feeding to the roots is also made easier if the plant is in a slight depression. Worth trying next year.
- Protect all new transplants with a mesh tunnel cloche, it keeps off pests, provides a micro-climate and lets the rain through. I have tried this with my winter brassicas and it does help.

They had visited Fulham Palace Allotments in the morning and found quite a contrast between the allotments there and ours.

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.