

# The Bushy Times

Newsletter of the Bushy Park Allotment Association

Issue 43

January 2016

## ***SEED SWAP 31<sup>st</sup> JANUARY***

At 12:30 next Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January, after a viewing for new tenants I will have the seed swap box open for anyone to come and collect some seeds or even bring some seeds along for others to try. A catalogue of the seeds that will be available accompanies this newsletter.

## ***OPEN DAY - 2016***

Please make a note in your diary of the date of our first Open Day this year:

- **Saturday 7<sup>TH</sup> May – Open Day & Plant Sale**

As usual it will run 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 and variety of home produced goods.

We will have a selection of plants, jams and preserves for sale. If you can donate spare plants or produce, please bring them on the Saturday morning and please label the plants.

## ***GATE LOCK***

There have been reports of problems with the main gate lock and these have been passed onto the Council who have now fitted a new lock.

This type of lock can be a bit temperamental, it gets a lot of use and the tumbler springs can get miss-aligned. If you have problems opening the lock or withdrawing the key, tap the body of the lock sharply a couple of times on the gate frame and try again. If it doesn't work the first time try again. This seemed to work when my key got stuck last week.

## ***RECORDS***

There are some records worth keeping about your allotment. The dates when you sowed seeds or planted out seedlings are worth recording, harvest dates and the names of vegetable varieties can all be useful to plan your activities next year. A sketch plan of each year's planting helps with crop rotation to combat disease.

I am obsessive about records and have just closed them for 2015.

I recorded 470 mm of rain in my primitive rain gauge. The max/min thermometer in the polytunnel ranged from -6° to +42° Centigrade.

I spent 673 hours at Bushy allotments spread over visits on 175 separate days. I have 10 rods of ground and harvested 314 Kg of vegetables, 104 Kg of spuds and 178 Kg of fruit. We had fresh

vegetables during every month to combine with the store veg like garlic, pumpkins and potatoes for our meals. We also gave away a lot of produce to family and friends. There are jams and chutneys in the store cupboard, packs of tomato sauce and a good supply of frozen soft fruit in the freezer. Eating blackcurrants with thick cream on a winter's evening is a reprise of the summer.

## ***DEER***

We had a visit from 4 stags earlier in the month. They left hoof prints on the soil and ate peoples veg for a couple of nights before a tenant contacted Pete Lewis at the Council.

Royal Park's staff attended to deal with the deer. They herded the deer out and have identified the broken section of fence where they were getting in for repair.

If you see any deer in the allotments the procedure is: -

- do not approach the deer, particularly during the winter, they are very large animals, fast and will attack without warning.
- contact the Council and report the incursion, use the website contact if you cannot get through on the phone.
- also report any weak or broken sections of fence along the park side of the site (north and west) so that Royal Parks can keep us secure.

## ***THEFTS***

There have been reports of more thefts, a compost bin, canes and plants dug up and stolen from plots. Even a whole shed has been removed!

Please: -

- Keep your shed locked if you value its contents, this should deter casual theft
- Mark your plot number on your shed and large items like wheel barrows, compost bins, etc.
- Do not keep power tools in your shed

If you have items stolen or see a theft please report it to the Council via the '*contact the allotments officer*' facility on the website.

## ***INSPECTIONS***

The inspections for 2016 will start in February with a photo record of plots that are not cultivated. The photos will be repeated at monthly intervals to record if any work is done.

The Borough standard is that no more than 25% of a plot should be uncultivated. In the case of new starters who have only had their plot for a few months we expect to see a serious effort to cultivate the plot. There is a 6 month probationary period for new tenants to make substantial progress with their plot.

Phil Iddison - Chair

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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.