

The Bushy Times

Newsletter of the Bushy Park Allotment Association

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

September 2017

Another season draws to a conclusion at Bushy Park Allotments with an abundant harvest being enjoyed by many of you who have been busy tending your plots during spring and summer months. We have some great news to report - the hedgehogs are back at our site, and if you would like them to stay, please read the article by **Maria Casey** on pages 2 & 3 to find out what we can all do to help the hedgehog population which has seen dramatic decline since the 1950s.

Thank you !

Thank you to all of you who came to volunteer at our Open Day in May. Despite intermittent showers, we have managed to raise a staggering £527 after expenses. There is one member of our community who has definitely saved the day after we ran out of food in the shop by 1pm. We would like to express our gratitude to **Julie Batten** who stayed out in the rain making the most delicious pizzas in the Borough. Made from scratch using our community pizza oven, built by **Henry Evans**, the pizzas have become one of the key attractions of the Open Day with members and visitors of all ages queueing to get a slice.

Huge thank you also to all of you who donated plants for the plants sale and to **Phil Iddison** for the delectable jams, jellies and even quince cheese. We hope that our next Open Day will be even more successful. Please do not forget to bake a cake!

“Welcome to the 46th edition of the BPAA Newsletter. In this issue we talk about our new prickly visitors and the ways we can encourage them, the Open Days, Best Plot competition and a few other issues we would like you to be aware of”




Dates for your diary

Open Day - 9th of September 12 noon till 3pm


AGM - 7th of October

HELPING HEDGEHOGS

It has been reported that several plot holders have seen hedgehogs on their plots recently. Sadly, I have never seen one here. For those unaware, there are now fewer than a million hedgehogs left in the UK, down from an estimated 2 million in the mid-1990s and 36 million in the 1950s. The rate of decline has wider implications for the state of the UK's ecosystems. Hedgehogs, like butterflies, are seen as an 'indicator' species for the health of the natural world, which appears to be in a very vulnerable condition at the moment.




Many of the reasons behind these alarming statistics is human activity, which means there is a lot we can do to help halt their decline and even help them to recover their numbers. Here on Bushy Park Allotments there are many things that threaten hedgehogs, with rat poison and slug pellets being the main hazards. Anything that eats a poisoned rodent or slug will die, including birds like thrushes, frogs, toads and foxes.



Shown on the next page is the only brand of slug pellets on the market currently that is the least harmful to other wildlife. They have also recently been scientifically proven to be the most effective.


Strimmers and Lawn Mowers

Please check the area with a stick before strimming. The Hedgehog Preservation Society has treated many seriously injured hedgehogs harmed by these tools



Bonfires

It is crucial to turn a pile for burning before you light it - all kinds of creatures including hedgehogs, voles, mice, frogs & toads are likely to be sheltering or even hibernating. Here's some good advice from Countryfile.



1. If collecting wood beforehand, make sure to keep it under tarpaulin or in a shed
2. Don't construct the bonfire until the actual day you plant to burn it, then move it to a different spot if kept there for a while
3. If you're having a large bonfire that needs to be built in advance, place chicken wire one metre high around the area, held in place with stakes and angled outwards, so that the hedgehogs cannot climb it
4. Before lighting, shine a torch into the stack and listen for a hissing sound - this is the noise hedgehogs make when disturbed

LINKS PROVIDING advice ABOUT HEDGEHOGS

'Hedgehogs are a national icon under threat'. read more at:

<https://www.environmenttrust.co.uk/hedgehogs>

<http://www.hedgehog-rescue.org.uk/endorsed.php>

http://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/14499661.Your_slug_pellets_are_poisoning_hedgehogs_wildlife_campaigner__39_s_plea/

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/wildlife/6094446/Hedgehogs-being-killed-by-rat-poison-warns-RSPCA.html>

<http://www.itv.com/news/channel/2017-05-20/gardeners-asked-to-check-for-hedgehogs-before-using-strimmers/>

<http://www.countryfile.com/hedgehog-guide-plus-how-to-help>

Netting & String

This can act as a snare as the twine gets caught around the hedgehog's spines. As it struggles to escape, the strands form ligatures around the hedgehog, and these ligatures can act as a tourniquet around limbs. Keep all netting and string arrangements 30cm above the ground and never leave it lying around. If you find an animal caught in netting, don't just cut the netting away and release it, as pressure necrosis (where the tissues die away from the restricted area) can take up to seven days to appear. Take it (or get someone else to) to the nearest animal rescue. ~~~~~➡

I've had to rescue a vole and a wren, both had their necks caught in the small holes and then while struggling to escape got properly entangled. Keep the netting taut and always store unused netting safely e.g. in a shed or greenhouse.

Compost Heaps

These are ideal nest sites for hedgehogs which are often injured when the compost is forked or turned. Break the heap down carefully and if you find a nest of hedgehogs (or any other animal), leave them alone. They will move of their own accord.

Ponds & Pools

Hedgehogs swim very well, but if they cannot escape from a pool they will become exhausted and drown. By laying a ramp or by gently sloping the banks of your pond you'll ensure the hedgehog's escape or a length of chicken wire hung over the edge makes a good escape ladder.

Believe it or not this list is not exhaustive. For further reading see here ~~~~~➡

Let's help these natural slug predators and gardeners' friend thrive here!

Maria Casey

Plot 57

Environment Trust for Richmond upon Thames has published a leaflet: <https://www.environmenttrust.co.uk/sites/default/files/Helping%20hedgehogs%20RBP%20logo%20v2%202017-05-03.pdf>

<http://animalrescueandcare.org.uk>

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/science-blogs/science/June-2017/slug-pellet-trial>



<http://www.sttiggywinkles.org.uk/hedgehog-fact-sheet.html>



Best Plot Competition

We volunteered to judge this year's Best Plot competition on behalf of the Committee. We were primed with the list of well-tended plots prepared by the area representatives of the committee.

We had an enjoyable walk around the site, it is good to have an excuse to take time to look in detail and see how others work their plot. We were looking at the variety and health of crops, lack of weeds, use of space, originality such as ingenious crop protection measures and composting installations. Marks were awarded in these categories and a total worked out.

We had a clear winner in both categories as follows:

Best Plot – No 48

Best Newcomer Plot - No 56, who incidentally would have been second equal for Best Plot!

We also asked the Committee to pass on commendations to the following plot holders who scored more than eighty points out of a hundred: Plot Nos - 281, 291 & 305

Do think about getting involved next year, either with your efforts on your plot or as a volunteer judge, let the Committee know! (signed by two volunteer judges)

Congratulations to the winners, Jayne Chapple (Plot 56) and Mrs Hogan-Araujo (Plot 48)! We hope you will attend the AGM to collect your awards. We also hope you will be able to share your story of success in our next Newsletter.



Britain's Best Cook

BBC One are in the process of preparing new food show, Britain's Best Cook, and have asked for our help in finding talented cooks who would like to participate in the programme.

One of the reasons they are reaching out to the allotment communities is due to the idea that 'people who grow their own food usually make good cooks'.

So if you know anyone who is a great cook with a passion for food, then call Olly Hume on 0207 4903580 to find out more information. A casting flyer is appended in the Newsletter.

News from the Secretary



Ticks and Lyme disease

Lyme disease has been recorded in Bushy Park and a plotholder has been reported as being bitten by ticks so they are present on the allotments too. It's thought only a small proportion of ticks carry the bacteria that cause Lyme disease, so being bitten doesn't mean you'll definitely be infected. However, it's important to be aware of the risk and seek medical advice if you develop a circular rash or you start to feel unwell.

Ticks can't jump or fly so they have to wait until an animal (or human) brushes past to attach to their skin, so it is recommended you wear closed shoes not sandals and long sleeved tops. For more information see:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Lyme-disease>

<http://www.bushyparkallotments.org.uk/>

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ARE YOU BRITAIN'S BEST COOK?

Mary Berry and Claudia Winkleman
are searching for the nation's best home cooks
for a new **BBC One** series.

Can you impress our judges with your culinary
creations? Will your delicious dishes have
them diving in for more?

If you're never happier than when you're at home cooking,
and have your friends and family banging down your door
for dinner then you are the cook we are looking for!

If you think you have what it takes
to be crowned Britain's Best Cook **APPLY NOW!**

For further details and to
request an application form, email:

cooking@keofilms.com

or text:

07474 578089

Applicants must be ages 18 years or over.

Please note that any calls made to this number, will be charged at
the rate which your service provider has applied to your account.