

The Bushy Times

Newsletter of the Bushy Park Allotment Association

Issue 51

December 2019

NEW RE-CYCLING FACILITY

The new recycling facility at Bushy Park Allotments will be open for business on 1/1/2020. You will have seen the Chairman's hard work on its construction so know where it is located.

Please take note of the following basic rules for everyone's benefit and to ensure that this operates successfully.

- 1) **FIRST CHOICE** for any non-pernicious green waste is to compost this on your plot. You will then get the benefits of your own compost. See the Advice Notes for composting tips.
- 2) **ONLY THINGS THAT HAVE GROWN ON YOUR PLOT** can be placed in the open fenced recycling bays, next to the track. This includes woody branches, fruit cane and bush pruning, pernicious weeds (couch grass, bindweed, horsetail).
- 3) One bay will be open until it is full, and the Council clear it. Long lengths of material should be cut to 1 metre lengths. Stack the material neatly as far into the open bay as practical.
- 4) **NO PLASTIC, METAL, GLASS, FENCING, WOOD, PALLETS, OLD SHEDS ETC OR MATERIAL FROM YOUR HOME. Put simply, if it did not GROW on your plot it cannot go here!!!!**
- 5) Anyone breaking these simple rules will reported to the Council.
- 6) If these rules are not respected, the facility will be closed down. It looks very neat and tidy now, please keep it that way

Following up on (4) above, the Committee is investigating options for the disposal of metal, plastics and timber and hope to have something organised in the future.

THINK ABOUT JOINING THE COMMITTEE

The Committee would welcome new members to join them to help run the allotments.

If you have some spare time and can help, for instance with Open Days, please volunteer. The committee meets six times a year, generally at 11 AM on the last Sunday of the odd numbered months.

Please contact or speak to: -
Joe Ambaye - Chairman
Robin Hewitt - Secretary

Any help with practical maintenance around the site and clearing un-lettable plots is also welcome.

OPEN DAY– 7th SEPTEMBER

Our second Open Day this year was held on Saturday 7th September and was organised by a group of tenants in lieu of the Committee. It was well attended as usual. If you hadn't heard already a total of £662.30 was raised and donated to the Shooting Star Childrens Hospice.

Heartfelt thanks to the organisers, the helpers at the event, those donating food and produce and all those who attended and bought tea, food and produce. These events are a success due to the combined voluntary effort that tenants and friends deliver before and on the day.

If you have serviceable mugs or cutlery spare, please donate to the Committee so that we can use them at the Open Days and avoid using disposable items!

NOTES FOR NEWCOMERS

The committee prepared a series of notes for newcomers a few years ago. Copies used to be given to new tenants on the viewing days. For those who may not have had them I will send out a PDF of the document with this newsletter. I have taken the opportunity to do some updates .

HOUSEKEEPING

SOME FAMILIAR & NEW REMINDERS

When you lock the gate please close the padlock leaving the maximum amount of loose chain. If the chain is tightly padlocked it can be extremely difficult for the next person to unlock the padlock.

If the key does not operate the padlock, take it out and give the body of the padlock a sharp knock on the gate to reset the tumblers and try again. Also make sure that the key is fully inserted.

The water from the standpipes may not be of drinking water quality. The pipe network suffers from regular bursts and leakage and has not been flushed and chlorinated on a regular basis. That said, many tenants consume it and there have been no reported cases of illness.

If you are planting a fruit tree, the Council require *“that it is on a dwarfing rootstock and that it is planted near the centre of your allotment”*. Shade and root growth from an established fruit tree can be a serious issue for neighbours. On planting I recommend that you remove the identification label, there have been cases of new fruit trees being stolen; with the label it is a saleable item!

Please email if you know of a tenant who is not receiving the newsletter, with their email address, if they have one, to add to the mailing list.

SEASONAL NOTES

We have had 11 inches of rain in the last three months and some areas are now waterlogged. It will drain away slowly to build up the sub-soil reserves. It is an excuse to do no digging until we get some drier weather! Working the soil now will compact it. Light surface weeding is OK, the mild weather means that the weeds are still germinating and growing.

SQUASH BUGS

There have been a lot of brown bugs on my raspberry plants this year, particularly around the ripe fruit. I have noticed them in previous years but there seems to have been a population explosion this year. An internet search has helped to identify them as Dock Bugs, *Coreus marginatus*, of the squash bug group. This group is related to the shield bugs, the southern green shield bug is an invasive pest and was highlighted in Newsletter Issue 38.



Coreus marginatus – Dock Bug

A large and mottled reddish-brown squash bug with a broad, oval abdomen. The darker diamond shaped area on the abdomen is an identifying characteristic.

The dock bug is herbivorous. The common name in English refers to its preferred diet of docks and sorrels but they also readily feed on other species. Adults are known to feed on raspberry, gooseberry and sometimes blackcurrant

There are 10 squash bugs species in the UK; they are generally brownish in colour and longer and more elongated than shield bugs. The abdomen is often broad and laterally expanded. They possess stink glands. All overwinter as adults. There is one generation per year, adults mating and laying eggs in spring. The nymphs feed on dock and other related plants and develop through a number of *instar* phases, changing colour and shape with each *instar*; new adults may be found from August onwards. Common and widespread in southern Britain.

They are adept fliers but usually move around on their 6 legs. If disturbed they drop off their perch and land lower down on the plant foliage. Related species are serious pests of the squash family in North America and hazel and pistachio orchards in the Mediterranean, sucking sap and being vectors for bacterial and fungal attack.

They do not appear to cause serious damage to the raspberries. However it will be worth keeping an eye out for them and any deleterious impacts.

RADICCHIO & BLUE CHEESE PASTA

I have had some success with chicory varieties over recent years. They are a good crop to follow on when you have cleared other crops into the autumn. They are cold tolerant. The heavy rain this year has caused some foliage rot and in future I will cloche them if there is significant rain.

This recipe was Giuseppe's suggestion for using red chicory such as Treviso or radicchio in a pasta dish with gorgonzola as the prime flavour to balance for the bitter chicory and with walnuts to add texture. Giuseppe conceded that St Augustin French blue cheese was of the right creamy consistency, I have tried both with success. The radicchio plants that I had sown in June and bedded out at the end of July were beginning to come good in December. I had already harvested some loose leafed specimens for use in salads but despite the outer leaves rotting away, the hearts had formed up tightly and with good colour. There were a few small earthworms in residence!

Thinly slice two small or a medium shallot and caramelize in olive oil, the sauce is prepared in the frying pan. Meanwhile get the pasta water on the boil. Slice the radicchio head into thin wedges, trim down any centre core but keep enough to connect the leaves and drop into cold water with some vinegar to evict any inhabitants. About 150 – 180 gm is good for three meal portions, 2 for supper and one for a lunch! Add 90 gm of crushed walnuts to the onion and keep on a low heat, turning the mix to ensure it is warm. Drain and arrange the radicchio slices on top of the shallot and walnuts and keep on a low heat and cover with a lid.

Set 200 gm of dried pasta such as fusilli to boil. Once it is under way, use 1 to 1 ½ ladles of the pasta water to slacken the mix in the pan and start the radicchio steaming. Add 90 – 100 gm of sliced blue cheese to the top of the radicchio and cover the frying pan and let the cheese melt in on a low heat. Top the drained pasta with the sauce. No need for parmesan!

Subsequently tried with a green French *chicoree scarole*, *Ronde verte a coeur plein*, that I grew in 2017. This had firm green leaves which I shredded coarsely after a good wash to get rid of the slugs. The dish will take a substantial pile of green material to soak up and spread out the rich flavours. This year I used Treviso and Castelfranco *ciccoria*.

Kings Seeds are a good source for chicory and other slightly unusual seeds.

<https://www.kingsseeds.com>

Phil Iddison	Please contact the council via the website for any matters relating to your tenancy or the T&Cs.
On behalf of Bushy Park Allotments Association	Contact me, Joe Ambaye (Chairman) or Robin Hewitt (Secretary) for local issues.