

THE BUSHY TIMES

Newsletter of the Bushy Park Allotment Association

Issue 52

January 2020

Visit the website – www.bushyparkallotments.org.uk

NEW RE-CYCLING FACILITY

The new recycling facility at Bushy Park Allotments has opened for business and the first bay is practically full. Thanks for following our simple rules. Joe has opened the second bay and we await Council action to empty the first bay.

The Committee is investigating options for the disposal of metal, plastics and timber and hope to be able to organise something in the future.

SEED SWOP – SUNDAY 26TH JANUARY

After the January Committee Meeting, there will be a SEED SWAP at the shop car park around 12:00 to 12:30.

I will have the following seeds to give away or swap: -

- Various climbing French beans and butterbeans
- Parsnip – Tender & True
- Sweetcorn – Bantam and Inca (multicoloured cobs)
- Achocha & Crystal lemon cucumber.

If you have been saving seed and have some to spare do come along and join in and if you haven't yet started seed saving come anyway and learn who useful and easy it is.

VOLUNTEER DAY

Joe Ambaye is organising a day for voluntary effort on our communal facilities and has given me the following details: -

Volunteers needed to help with clearing work adjacent to plot 33.

Purpose: Due to increased demand we need to increase the size of the our existing communal recycling area.

I would appreciate if you can spare about 2-3hrs of your valuable time to help with clearing work expected to take 1 day.

Date will be a day between 7th - 23rd February (half term) when volunteers are available - 10am-4pm.

Please let Joe know directly on joeambye@gmail.com.

Please bring your shovels, forks and we provide teas, coffee biscuits and cake.

FLOODING

Following the recent heavy rain and resulting saturated ground there has been severe flooding in parts of the site and many plots are under water. We have been in touch with the Royal Parks and they advised the main cause is that the River Colne flows out of the Chilterns past Heathrow and feeds the Longford. There has been an enormous amount of rain, but they have now closed 2 of the 3 sluices that feed the water into the Longford which should help. They reassured us that the water is not contaminated with sewage being pure river water. The only contamination is from run off from the swimming pool car park and any loose vegetation. They do not consider there is any great risk from this but we will raise this with the Council when they return from their Christmas break. The flooding is widespread across the Park's Brewhouse fields and they are trying to discharge it as fast as possible, but there is nowhere to pump it to. We must simply wait for it to drain away into the Thames.

GARDEN ORGANIC TIPS FOR THE WINTER

Tips for winter work on the plot from Garden Organic.

- Most pests will be inactive in cold spells, but it's still worth checking for snails etc in sheltered places, such as empty pots in storage.
- Don't stop weeding. Hoe off/pull out any annual weeds and dig out perennial ones that are revealed. Compost green foliage, but not seedheads nor perennial weed roots.
- Collect fallen autumn leaves to make leafmould. Pile them in large bin bags or heaps, keeping them damp.
- Add enough dry waste to your compost bin to balance the wet waste coming out of the kitchen just now. Scrumped up paper or cardboard or the stable manure straw are very useful to provide the carbon element needed.
- Garlic can be planted until March.
- Start planning your crop rotation for next season's vegetable plot. If you already have a rotation plan, just make a note of where next year's crops will go. If this is your first year, make a list of all the vegetables you would like to grow, then read the crop rotation advice in the Notes for Newcomers on our website
- If your leeks, onions or other alliums were attacked by leek moth or allium leaf miner, dig over the plots so the birds can feed on any over-wintering pests in the soil.
- Remove and compost dead and yellowing leaves from winter brassicas. They can encourage fungal diseases and harbour pests.
- Check the condition of all stakes, supports, ties and guards for trees. Look for wind rocking or constriction. If this has happened, replace stakes and renew ties.
- Plant new fruit trees and bushes supplied as 'bare rootstock'. Always use a new, clean spot, not the where the same plants have just been growing, to avoid 'specific replant disease'. Do plant trees in the centre of your plot.
- Cut out dead, dying or infected disease branches from apple and pear trees. Do not be tempted to prune the stone fruits (apricots, cherries, plums etc) until May when risk of silver leaf infection is past.
- Clear competitive growth (weeds and grass) from around fruit trees, especially newly planted and young trees.

- Pick every last fruit off fruit trees. Fruit hanging on trees over winter is one of the main sources of brown rot infection in the spring. It is better not to put infected fruit on the compost heap, to prevent perpetuation of the disease.
- Check grease bands are still sticky and in place around fruit trees and stakes to give control against winter moth, plum fruit moth and March moth. Replace where necessary.
- Inspect apples trees for woolly aphids. Look for a whitish fluffy coating (pictured) where branches join the trunk and cracks in the bark.



- Remove fallen autumn leaves that are covering low-growing herbs such as thyme. This will prevent the plants being smothered and possibly killed by a blanket of wet foliage.
- Look for bay tree leaf edges thickened and curled over. The sucker nymphs live there under a white woolly wax. Remove all affected leaves and clear away any leaf litter at the base of trees where adults will over-winter. Don't throw leaves in the compost heap, put all material into the green recycle bin.
- Spider nests are everywhere at the moment, filled with eggs ready to hatch next May. The baby spiders appear just as their prey does, and hungry spiders will consume vast quantities of insects, so nurture these predators-to-be. The nests look like miniature balls of cotton wool.
- Entice hungry birds into your area with fat balls and other bird feeding stations. They will repay you by eating up a lot of insect pests that lurk out of our sight and reach, under buds and on stems. Birds are especially helpful in cleaning up over-wintering aphids in fruit trees and bushes.
- Remove dead/dying foliage regularly from over-wintering plants to prevent mildews and moulds taking hold.

2019 STATISTICS

RAINFALL

My spreadsheet record for last year is now closed and there are some statistics that may be of interest. In the last newsletter I noted our recent heavy rain. I have recorded the overall totals with my simple rain gauge since 2015. Comparisons indicate that this year has been the highest rainfall but due to a relatively dry spring and summer it has not been exceptional.

RAIN RECORDS	Inches	mm	% of mean rainfall
2019	23.6	599	113%
2018	22.6	575	108%
2017	21.3	540	102%
2016	20.4	519	98%
2015 - first full year of records	16.7	424	80%

This data is not statistically robust but it will be interesting to see if the overall increase continues.

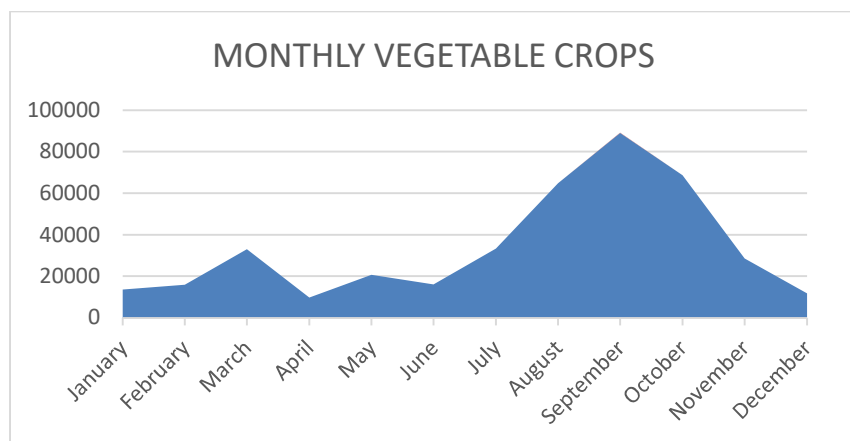
WINTER CROPS

Some plots seem quite bare during the winter. It is possible to select crops that will harvest through the winter so that there is food to be collected year round. These augment the stored and preserved crops such as winter squash, garlic, frozen beans and fruit and the jams and pickles that can be made.

Vegetables collected in the month	Kilogrammes	% of total crop
January	13.5	3.34%
February	15.9	3.93%
March	33.0	8.16%
April	9.7	2.39%
May	20.6	5.10%
June	16.0	3.95%
July	33.2	8.21%
August	64.8	16.02%
September	89.1	22.02%
October	68.5	16.94%
November	28.5	7.03%
December	11.7	2.90%

I have just completed my carrot harvest, the parsnips and swedes are just starting and there are winter cabbages, chard, chicory, leeks and komatsuna to harvest for greens. I would be harvesting Brussel sprouts had the rats not devastated the whole plants! It requires some planning and long-term propagation to achieve winter crops but it is worth the effort

My year's profile of veg harvesting is on the graph below. The September peak is due to the pumpkin harvest.



Phil Iddison

On behalf of
Bushy Park Allotments Association

Please contact the council via the website for any matters relating to your tenancy or the T&Cs.

Contact me, Joe Ambaye (Chairman) or Robin Hewitt (Secretary) for local issues.

Website – www.bushyparkallotments.org.uk