

The Bushy Times

Newsletter of the Bushy Park Allotment Association

www.bushyparkallotments.org.uk

Issue 57

MAY 2021

SATURDAY 22ND MAY 2021

SPARE PLANT DISTRIBUTION

We shall not be holding a plant sale this spring, but there will be a table next to the shop on Saturday 22nd May where you can: -

- **bring any spare plants you might have; or**
- **pick up some you might need.**

If you bring plants, please clearly label them.

The table will be manned from 12-2pm.

TOXOCARA STUDY

Several allotment sites in Richmond are assisting with a University of Surrey study on this subject.

Sara Healy from the University Veterinary Department, is interested in learning more about the potential transmission of a parasite that can be transferred to humans from foxes, dogs and cats. The round worm parasite, *Toxocara* is found in the faeces of these animals and can survive in soil but is killed when any leafy vegetables are cooked. The aim of the study is to assess the prevalence of *Toxocara* in leafy vegetables such as lettuce & spring onions etc., i.e. vegetables that are not cooked. This is not a new threat to our health and plot holders growing salad crops should just thoroughly wash these vegetables, as would have been done anyway, to remove soil.

Allotment holders will be asked to record whether they have seen foxes, dogs and cats on their plot and to help by providing leafy vegetables, straight from their plot into a ziplock bag which Sara Healy will provide. Donation points will be checked and emptied regularly. Data will be collected throughout the study, and detailed analysis should be complete by September 2021. At the end of the study period, all data will be shared with yourselves for your interest. No details regarding the site location or name will be published or shared with any third parties to ensure anonymity is maintained.

If you are willing to donate plant material, please contact Robin Hewitt (Secretary) or Phil Iddison by email, and you will be advised of the location of the collection box for your donation.

If you are able to help, please select either: -

1. a lettuce,
2. spring onions (6 no),
3. spinach or rocket.

These should not be washed but gathered as if they were being taken for consumption, soil attached and even roots if that is how you collect them. Then, the selected vegetable should be put in the collection box.



Please place one vegetable per bag with the requested details, including your observations of any foxes, cats and dogs in the box.

Sara is happy to be contacted via her e-mail: s.r.healy@surrey.ac.uk .



Photo of Robin Hewitt with Sara Healy at Bushy Allotments on 14th May.

For further information on *Toxocara* and how we can reduce the risk of human infection (toxocariasis) you may find the following resources helpful:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/toxocariasis/> and
<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/toxocariasis/biology.htm>

COMMITTEE NEWS

Liaison with the Council

- 1) The Woody Waste Area has been open for limited hours at the weekend and supervised as required by the Council in order for them to clear the accumulated dried material
- 2) The Council have been inspecting plots and issuing letters about poorly maintained plots.

The Committee welcomes your support and in particular is looking for new committee members. The duties are not onerous: -

- 6 meetings a year, on /Sundays at 11:00 AM and usually taking an hour.
- Help on Open Days when these can be held.
- Acting as a point of contact for your plot neighbours and the committee.
- Help with ad-hoc activities, volunteer days etc

Please contact Robin Hewitt if you wish to help.

SEASONAL NOTES

Some brief notes: -

- the weather has been unusual to say the least this year and it is affecting the plant seasons. The sunny days and cold nights in April combined with no rain has set back many plants, so don't worry if you are not seeing the usual progress.
- It is not too late to so seed, most plants have a capacity to hurry up if the conditions are good and catch-up with the season.

HOUSEKEEPING

Apologies for the long gap in the issue of newsletters. Thanks to the pandemic I did issue 5 newsletters in 2020 but the last one was in May 2020.

SOME FAMILIAR & NEW REMINDERS

If you have trouble with the gate padlocks not working, I suggest you try one of the following: -

- ❖ make sure the key is fully inserted, it will appear to turn when it is not fully in the lock but will not operate the padlock. Take it out and put it back in again and check that the triangular section of the key is hard against the base of the padlock and turn it, it should open.
- ❖ if this does not work and the key is turning but the padlock is not opening, then take out your key and tap the body of the padlock against the gate a couple of times, then try again. The tumblers inside the lock sometimes get out of alignment and the vibration from tapping the padlock against a hard surface resets the lock and it will work.

If neither of these work, report it to the Council via the website!

PLEASE ALWAYS CLOSE THE PADLOCK ON THE LAST LINK OF THE CHAIN. Particularly with the pedestrian gate this makes the gate easier to open from the outside.

If you lose your key a new one can be ordered and paid for via the Council website. They usually mail out the new key in a couple of working days.

SNAKES

Snakes were seen last year around the pedestrian gate plots. There has been one positive identification of a grass snake.

The Council Ecology Officer has provided the following information. “According to contacts at Bushy Park they don’t have any adders on site so it’s far more likely to be either a slow worm or grass snake, you would be very unlikely to be bitten by either a slow worm or grass snakes as they will try and get away if at all possible. Grass snakes will also play ‘dead’ or can release a foul smelling secretion from its anal gland. Grass snakes tend to be associated near to wetlands, ponds lakes and rivers and their associated hedges/vegetation, with its main prey being amphibians and sometimes small water fowl chicks. Slow worms tend to be more associated with allotments but they like damp sunny sites. All species of reptiles are protected by the law, and both the grass snake and slow worm are protected against intentional killing and injuring.”

Photos of snakes: -

Grass snake – *Natrix helvetica*



Adder – *Vipera berus*



Slow worm - *Anguis fragilis*



It should be quite easy to distinguish them but in the heat of the moment there could easily be confusion!

LIKE ALL OUR BENEFICIAL WILDLIFE AT THE ALLOTMENTS IT IS BEST TO LEAVE WELL ALONE. LET THEM GET ON WITH THEIR OWN LIVES.

ALSO TAKE CARE IF YOU’RE ARE STRIMMING, BRUSH THROUGHT THE GRASS BEFORE STARTING TO HOPEFULLY MOVE ON ANY TOADS, FROGS ETC THAT COULD BE INJURED BY THE STRIMMER WIRE

TARTIFLETTE

This is now a classic Savoyard dish but internet research reveals it's recent ancestry, Le Syndicat Interprofessionnel du Reblochon wanted to sell more reblochon and invented the recipe in the 1980's! Savoy was historically part of the Holy Roman Empire and were exposed to potato tubers earlier than the French.

This is a good recipe for your new potatoes.

500 gm of potatoes, waxy preferable
2 shallots/small onions
150 - 200 gm of bacon scraps / 200 gm gammon steak, all cut into thin strips
3 garlic cloves, chopped fine
Golden marjoram or the creeping thyme from the allotment
150 ml white wine
100 ml of single cream (if you have less, made up with milk)
½ a Reblochon – 250 - 275 gm

Potatoes boiled and sliced into a flat casserole. Shallots chopped and fried in minimum oil, plenty of other fats are available! As they start to colour add the chopped bacon, then the garlic. Allowed this to cook a little before adding the wine and reducing this down to a thin sauce. Pour over the potatoes and then add the cream. Top the dish with chunks of the Reblochon, spaced out over the potato and sauce. Seasoned with black pepper. Baked for 15-20 minutes at 180° C fan oven or 30 minutes @ 160° C from pre-prepared cold state.

The dish is quite moist, and any fresh herbs from the allotment can be used, sage and rosemary work well.

Phil Iddison On behalf of Bushy Park Allotments Association	Please contact the Council via their website https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/allotments for any matters relating to your tenancy or the T&Cs. Contact, Robin Hewitt (Secretary) for local issues and me about the newsletter
---	--

