

Henley Allotments Association Newsletter

www.henleyallotments.org.uk **June/July 2009**

Chairman's tips: Runner Beans

On June 5th I planted my runner bean seeds directly into the soil, eyes down. Is this too late? I should be picking beans by the end of August and through the whole of September.

To grow runner beans I fill a trench with compost during the winter, which gives both fertility and water holding powers to the soil. You can get traditional hazel bean poles from Mark Cottrell (local coppice craftsman) or even cut your own. We may even manage to grow some in time on our allotment sites.

Runner beans are a Central American plant and grow best when there is around 12 hours of daylight, in this country in September. Hence, my reason for not planting them until now.

Good gardening. Andrew Hawkins.

General Update

Contract Changes : Given the waiting lists that both allotment sites now have, the Council has decided that the current catchment area for the 2 Henley allotment sites is too large (it is currently 15 miles, which includes most of Reading and Maidenhead!). Therefore the catchment area has been reduced to **5 kilometres (c.3.1 miles)**. This will apply to **NEW** tenants only, and will ensure that the allotments are available to local residents only. The Council have also confirmed that a) existing tenants that move house to outside of the 5 kilometre area will be asked to relinquish their allotment b) that any partner of a deceased plot holder who has jointly worked the allotment plot may keep their plot, but that wider family members (e.g. son/daughter) who have not been involved in maintaining the plot are not entitled to inherit the plot.

Please note that new contracts will **not** be issued to existing tenants, as the boundary reduction only applies to new tenants.

Unkempt plots : there are a very small number of unkempt plots on both sites and the tenants of these plots have not contacted the Site Managers to explain the reason why. Please note that these plots will most likely be re-let in October, when the new year starts. Please contact your Site Manager to discuss your situation if you have been unable to cultivate your plot this season and if you wish to keep your plot for next year.

Manure now available : the manure has finally arrived: sorry it is a little late! As the manure has been at both sites for a few weeks now, and most people have taken a few barrow loads, please take whatever you want on a first come first-served basis. Please note that at Watermans you may also use the chippings from the piles at the top left hand corner of the site. **Use of chemicals on the allotments** : please note that chemicals that are readily available over the counter can be used on the allotments, but that commercial chemicals used for agricultural purposes must not be used. Please respect this Council rule.

Britain in Bloom : judging is taking place on July 14th, and one of the allotment sites (still to be confirmed) will be judged as part of this. Please can you try to make your plot as tidy as possible on this date to help Henley do well!!

Allotment Association AGM : please note that the date for the Allotment Association AGM has been set for **Monday 10th October 2009 at the Council Chambers in the Town Hall, 7pm start.** All tenants are invited: this is an excellent way to make your voice heard, and to contribute towards the Association and its priorities.

Children on the allotments : three key points

- 1) It is lovely to see so many new, young families taking plots on the allotments. Many families have young children, who love to come to the allotments, but often get bored after a few minutes. Parents often bring toys for the children to play with, but sometimes children amuse themselves by wandering around. Please feel free to shout at any children you see around the allotment site if they are wrecking another allotment plot! We have had a couple of minor incidents recently, where children have picked/jumped on other people's crops, and have caused upset. Parents take note!
- 2) Water tanks. These are often quite low (old baths etc) and are often uncovered. We have recently had an incident when a young child was playing with the water in a low, uncovered water tank and very nearly fell in. **Please ensure that your water butt is covered in some way and safe.** We want to avoid a serious incident taking place.
- 3) We are looking for a covered sandpit for Watermans, so that children can use this when there. If anyone can donate an old sandpit they no longer need, please contact Doug Richards on 01491-573046.

Watermans update : Site Manager Doug Richards 01491-573046

Site Exit : the Council has finally cut down some of the growth that has been blocking the sight lines at the site exit for the past few weeks. But you should still be careful on leaving the site, particularly around dusk when the mirror has the sun's glare on and it is impossible to see some vehicles approaching, such as bicycles and motor cycles. The Council is aware that the bank needs regular cutting, and has committed to keeping it regularly strimmed.

Water taps : please note that the water taps at Watermans **are metered!** The Council pays for the water, and has an annual 'water' budget that it hopes will pay for the water used. Please water as you need to, but remember that water conservation is important, and that excessive consumption may lead to higher rents for the following year.

Bird Sanctuary Boundary : the hundreds of hedge plants recently planted are growing well, and Doug is looking for donations of trees and plants to further enhance the site. Please can you contact Doug if you can donate any of the following to help create a bird sanctuary: holly, ash, honeysuckle, blackberries, poppies, teasle, etc. Please leave any plant you can donate by the communal shed, or contact Doug to discuss where it can be planted.

Greencroft update : Site Manager Liz Cope 01491- 576115

Cricket pavilion ; planning permission has been granted for the new Cricket Pavilion to be built. More news on this to follow shortly.

Toilet facilities at current pavilion : please note that the toilet facilities at the current pavilion can be used by allotment holders. Access is round the back of the pavilion and up the ramp. No key is needed.

Headway : Headway have been working a plot at Greencroft every Wednesday morning, and have transformed a weed ridden area into a wonderful vegetable patch. They have really worked hard to achieve this transformation, and the AA would like to thank them for their efforts and stamina!

Anderson's Almanac – further tips from Pete Anderson

June Keep plot weed-free by hoeing or hand-weeding. Harvest crops when ready. Finish planting out from the seed bed. Plant out all the greenhouse-grown plants as frosts have now finished. Water as required, avoiding watering over plants in bright sunlight. Do not water over the leaves of courgettes/marrows as this will encourage mildew. Early potatoes are ready as soon as they are in bloom – but not all varieties bloom! Spray against potato blight and repeat at two week intervals.

July Keep hoeing and keep harvesting crops as they mature. Shallots and garlic should be lifted and stored. If growing cordon tomatoes, remove side shoots that emerge between the stem and leaf stem. Cut down to ground level summer-fruiting raspberries that have finished fruiting. Runner beans should flower this month, water when beans have set. Onions should be starting to die down this month: allow the stems to bend over at the neck and let them die off. Then you can lift the onions, but make sure they dry off before storing them. Sow spring cabbage and turnips, according to vendor's instructions, for winter use. Finish pulling rhubarb.

August Harvest crops as they are ready, and water in dry weather. A good weekly soak is much better than little and often, except for tomatoes and cucumbers which need to be kept moist at all times. Cucumber is the one crop that benefits from the leaves being watered over. Finish cutting back summer-fruiting raspberries. Cut back blackcurrants after fruiting. Strawberry runners can be planted in pots in situ: once they have rooted they can be cut from the main plant and planted out to form new plants. Strawberry plants need to be renewed every three years to ensure fruit is maximised. Watch out for caterpillars on brassicas from now on.

Social Calendar update

Hobbs Boat Trip – May 27th. This was attended by over 70 people and was a great success. The trip was one month later than last year, and the lighter evening, combined with the warmer weather, made the event better than ever. Thanks again to Hobbs for letting us use the boat. The food was absolutely fantastic, and the quiz produced much discussion amongst the experts! Thanks must especially go to Alison Engleby, who organised the food, helpers, and cooked the bulk of the food herself! Roll on next May!

Trip to Wisley – June 11th : 14 people went to Wisley, and a great day was had by all. Entrance to the RHS garden was free, (due to the AA membership), and a 90 minute tour with a volunteer guide cost just £1 per person. The weather was lovely, and the highlights of the day included the small gardens (full of many wonderful ideas), the large/deep borders, the trial area (where new varieties are vigorously tested for certification) and the new hothouse. We will definitely be repeating this trip next year (probably in July). Hopefully we will be able to accommodate and inspire more people to visit this great garden.

The group pose for a picture in the allotment gardens at Wisley – not a patch on the allotments at Henley!



Forthcoming Social Events :

Next Social Event is the AA Barbeque at Greencroft on Sunday 16th August 2009! All tenants are invited!! See over for details and form.

Other social events being planned :

New tenants workshop – October 2009. This will be on a Sunday in October, when all new tenants from the previous year will be invited to their allotment site to discuss their issues and to ask any questions they may have. We will have a master composter available to talk about composting, as well as committee members on hand to answer questions/talk about the Association etc. Date TBC.

AA Gardeners Question Time – Thursday 19th November 2009 at 7pm at Henley Town Hall.

Following the success of last year's event, we will be running this in conjunction with Henley-in-Bloom again. There will be speakers and a panel to answer all your questions. More details to follow soon, meanwhile please put this date in your diary.

Christmas Dinner at Christchurch – December 2009. This event was held last year for the first time and was a great evening, with excellent food and company. Date TBC.

Re: Barbeque on the Greencroft Site from 3.30pm - 7.30 pm on Sunday, 16th August 2009 ALL WELCOME!!

We would be delighted if you and your family could join us for our Allotment barbeque. All you have to bring is your own meat or vegetarian food which we will cook on our barbeques, plus a salad OR a pudding to share.

Plates, cutlery, wine, beer, apple and orange juice, plus glasses, will be available. We would appreciate your contribution a small donation towards the costs.

You are welcome to bring your own picnic rugs, tables and seats and we will provide activities for the children.

Could you kindly fill in the slip below and return to the following address as soon as possible please:-

Liz Cope
Paddock Cottage,
Upper Culham,
Wargrave,
Berkshire, RG10 8NR.

Look forward to seeing you there!

NAMES and number of adults:.....

Plot No: Greencroft/Waterman Tel. No:.....

I will bring a salad/ I will bring a pudding

Names of children and ages:

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