



Allotments Newsletter

Spring is Here! (Almost!)



Thank you all for your kind words about the new format Newsletter and more importantly for getting involved by contributing to it!

It is your Newsletter and it is pleasing to think that if things continue the way it has started it will grow into a useful way to share both our enjoyment of allotmenting, information about the allotments in general and general hints tips, and skills.

You will find in this edition an interesting and varied selection of contributions from plot holders encompassing many areas of allotmenting—(is that the correct word? I am sure someone can let me know!) —Read on!



*Spring is when you feel like
whistling even with a shoe full of
slush.*

Inside this issue:

Welcome	1
Keith's Ramblings	
Trading Shed	
Hardening Off	
Garden Open Weekend	2
Event Calendar	
Plant a Garden	3
Photographic Project	
Park Road Update	
Honeypot Lane Update	4
Jobs for April	
BHS Contact Info	5
Tips & Questions	
Recipes	6

Special points of interest:

- Photographic project opportunity
- Celebrity Recipe
- Special Garden Open Weekend
- Shows and Meetings
- Jobs For April
- Site Rep reports

Keith's Ramblings

You will notice that this month's Newsletter does not contain the usual "Keith's Ramblings" article.

Keith informed the Committee at their last meeting that he was going to 'rest his pen' and that he would no longer be providing his regular monthly article.

It will be missed, and I am sure that all the membership would like to thank Keith for all of his efforts over the past 6 years.

Vernon Thomas, Chairman

HHS Trading Shed

It seems that some plot holders not familiar with the location of the Trading Shed are having a problem finding it so here is a good route.

The Shed is just off the Birkbeck Rd. The way to go is take Fielding Way off the Rayleigh Rd, first right into Birkbeck Road then immediate first right into a small entrance roadway that looks as if it is leading to some garages, the Trading Hut is approx. 75 metres into the roadway on the left hand side.

The full address is:

Birkbeck Road,
Hutton,
Essex CM13 1JP

Please do remember that you will need to take your membership card with you in order to make a purchase. If you don't have one please contact your site representative who can issue you one.

Hardening Off

If you're starting off in pots and trays in a greenhouse, don't just take your plants from a nice sheltered environment and stick them straight in the ground. At best they'll be checked (growth halted) for a while and sometimes they'll die.

If you have a coldframe, put them in there for a week. Open the lids in the day and close up at night to keep the worst off but still get them used to the outside conditions.

If you don't have a coldframe available just take them outside in the day and take them back in at night.

It isn't just temperature that hardens the plants off, the wind helps do the same – as long as it isn't too much. Some commercial growers actually reduce their glasshouse temperatures and use fans to achieve the same effect.

Open Garden Event



Linda and Roger Hammond are plot holders who are also custodians of the National Collection of Epimediums and recognised by **Plant Heritage**. They have been interested in Epimediums for at least forty years, but only started collecting them seriously around the millennium, when new more interesting species were being imported from China.



They were granted National status at the end of August 2013 and currently have over **three hundred different varieties** some deciduous and some evergreen. They have a website for the collection, www.epimedium-collection.com and a general garden website, www.themagnolias.co.uk where they post images and blogs of wider interest.

Plant Heritage was formerly known as The National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG) and one of its responsibilities is the administration of the National Collections of plant genera. These may be held by institutions or by private enthusiasts. There are also local county groups where keen gardeners, whether they have National Collections or not, meet for various activities, such as talks or visiting gardens. The Essex Plant Heritage Group put on two Plant Fairs at Hyde Hall, RHS Garden, where numerous interesting nurseries bring their plants along for sale. There is a spring and autumn Plant Fair, this year's, being in April and September.

There are seven National Collections held by Essex members, the one for Viburnums (with RHS AGMs) being held at Hyde Hall.

Linda and Roger are kindly holding an **Open Garden Week-end** where you will see many examples of Epimediums and other plants, **for details of the Open Garden and other events mentioned See the events section of this Newsletter.**



Event Calendar

Plant Fair at Hyde Hall, RHS Garden

21st and 22nd April

Shenfield Garden Soc.

Meetings

17th April Weeds Bane or Bedfellows?

£2.00 for non-members

Held in the Parish Hall

Open Garden Week-end

28th & 29th April
10am—4pm

At The Magnolias Garden

18 St. John's Avenue
Brentwood, Essex
CM14 5DF

No Entry Charge but donations to Plant Heritage Welcomed!

Bee Talk

11th April

7.30 at St. Peter's Church hall, Cloughton Way, Hutton

Paul (Wiss) & Alec Wisbey are qualified local beekeepers.

Hutton Wine Circle

Commercial wine tasting by Liquorice

April 18th 8pm

St. Peter's Church Hall,
Cloughton Way, Hutton,
CM13 1JS

New members and visitors are always welcome; in fact **an invitation is extended to all Horticultural members.**

Come along and experience a Wine Circle evening - who knows, you may end up liking it so much you join!

For more information contact-
Frank Caves 01277 227516

Wildlife Walks

Thursday 10th April 10:00

Danbury Common

Contact Barbara Becket
01277 213758



Plant A Garden

If your purse no longer bulges
and you've lost your golden treasure

If times you think you're lonely
and have hungry grown for pleasure

Don't sit by your hearth and
grumble

don't let mind and spirit harden.
If it's thrills of joy you wish for
get to work and plant a garden!

If it's drama that you sigh for,
plant a garden and you'll get it

You will know the thrill of battle
fighting foes that will beset it
If you long for entertainment
and for pageantry most glowing

Plant a garden and this summer
spend your time with green
things growing."

- Edgar Guest, *Plant a Garden*



Photographic Project

Gary Atkinson is Park Road plot holder and a keen photographer. In his words 'I have found that the allotment is not only about getting the satisfaction of growing fruit and veg but also being part of a close community. Allotments keep you active and is a very rewarding hobby.'

Gary is interested in doing a private photographic project this

year focusing on positive portraits of allotment holders in the Brentwood area and generally promoting the Allotment Community

Gary is looking for a minimum of 20 volunteers to feature in his project. The volunteers should be from all ages and backgrounds. he would need them to

be happy to potentially have photographs of them exhibited.

His aim is to raise the profile of allotment holders and their character in a small exhibition, perhaps starting off at the local libraries. He will probably need to visit each volunteer at their plot at least 3 times throughout the year. Each participant will receive a complimentary print.

Contact Details

If you are interested in this worthwhile project please contact Gary on

01277 217720

or

1garyatkinson@gmail.com

Park Road Site Rep Report

Water Supply Replacement

Chris Smith and Ian Palmer have continued their good work and have installed the new tank in position and connected it to the pipe work and stop-cock on the allotment side. The next step is for the representatives of the water board to attend site to inspect the work to make sure it is to their standard as far as depth of the trench etc. Once the inspection is completed successfully the waterboard will connect it

all up to the mains supply—we will update you on the progress as this is a very important issue for us all on Park Road. .

Plots

Those of us lucky enough to have a relatively dry plot have been able to make a slow start on the outstanding jobs on the allotments however many of the plots are still sodden so those plot holders will have their work cut out when the rain finally slows

down enough to get to work!

We know from previous years that sometimes health or other issues can prevent the upkeep and cultivation of plots. If you find that a situation arises where you may be unable to attend to your plot for any length of time please let your site representative know and we can try to organise some people-power to at least keep things manageable—there is nothing worst than returning to what was your well managed plot to find a wilderness of weeds!



Honeypot Lane Site Reps Report

The **Honeypot Lane** site has been very wet recently, particularly in the area towards the south of the site, near the gate. In fact so wet on the allotments at that end of the site that the Allotment Manager was convinced that we had a leak! "Get it sorted out" was his decree.

But as we have discovered, there is no leak and the reason for the great amount of water at that end of the site is owing to the bad drainage on Honeypot Lane itself. After heavy rain, the water pours in through the gate and diagonally across the first few allotments, leading to marshiness towards the field. OK, we will never be able to cure that totally and plots on that part of the site have got to take some drainage

action and we thank the BHS for helping us with this.

But where do the stones come in? Well, there has been so much water come down the driveway over the winter that it has been partially washed away with several gullies. So now we need some stones, broken tiles, broken clay pipes, anything like that to help form a flatter driveway. With the vehicles going over them they will soon get pushed into the earth.

So, if you can help in any way, please let me know and we will happily take your unwanted stones and the like off your hands!

Probably a relatively small percentage of the readers of this

newsletter will ever have visited the Honeypot Lane Allotment Site; we have a beautiful open aspect onto fields looking across to South Weald. Well, **why not pay us a visit.** Your allotment key will fit our lock. You could also put your weight behind the fight of the local residents with the Council to stave off the building of 250 or so houses behind the site. Not only are we very wet towards that site, but it is a floodplain itself. And Honeypot Lane will become more of a race-track than it is today. But that's another story The site is just where the houses on Honeypot Lane finish and the lane narrows.

Jobs For April

The man who has
planted a garden feels
that he has done
something for the good
of the world.
— Vita Sackville-West

Continue with planting out the seed potatoes; aim to complete the job by the end of April. Be prepared to cover the emerging shoots of the earlies with soil if a frost is forecast.

Complete the planting of onion sets and carry on making successional sowings of beetroot, carrots, parsnips, lettuce, spinach, spring onions, kohlrabi, radish, turnips, early peas, Swiss chard.

Sow maincrop peas and make the last sowing of summer broad beans.

You could try an early sowing of dwarf and climbing French beans towards then of the month. Use the darker seeded varieties they are hardier and more suited to the early sowings. Protect them from frosts.

On a prepared seed bed sow the seed leeks and summer cabbage.

Plant out celeriac grown on earlier and keep the plants well watered all through the summer.

Sow under glass, in pots and trays filled with fresh seed compost,

the seeds of runner beans, sweet corn, courgettes, pumpkins, squashes, outdoor/ridge cucumbers.



It is now safe to transplant the cold greenhouse tomatoes in to their final positions keep some frost protection handy.

Plant out globe artichokes, either by slicing slips off the sides of main plants or plant out bought in roots. Seed raised plants sown earlier are best planted out towards the end of the month.

Water well and feed regularly to build up the crowns removing

any buds that may form as soon as possible.

Plant out Jerusalem artichokes but don't allow them to overrun the allotment, if left un-lifted at the end of the summer they will quickly develop into an impenetrable jungle.

Plant up a new asparagus bed but it will take two more years to establish before producing succulent shoots.

Early sowings of Brussels sprouts will need thinning out this month and the soil for next month's transplanting of sweet corn, courgettes, marrows, pumpkins and outdoor/ridge cucumbers will need preparing.

Put up the runner bean poles and start to support the growing peas with brushwood or netting.

Prepare seed beds for outdoor sowing of main crop vegetables next month.

A BUSY TIME FOR ALL!



MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY CONTACT

Membership Secretary, PO Box 12582 Brentwood

CM14 9QR

Email: membershipsec.brentwoodhs@gmail.com

Get Digging!

/ www.brentwoodhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

If you are enjoying your allotment why not let others know about the benefits?

Brentwood Horticultural Society manages eight allotment sites within Brentwood on behalf of Brentwood Council.

The sites are Hartswood, Park Road, Ongar Road,

Bishops Hall, Honeypot Lane, River Road, Middle Road, and Crescent Road.

During the year a few allotments become available. So, if you know someone who would enjoy outdoor exercise, fresh produce and good company give them the details of our membership secretary.

Tips and Questions



This is a new part of the newsletter, if you have any questions or helpful tips please share them here!

From Sue Shepherd

My Daffodils came on well this spring but as soon as the flower buds and flowers came through they became ragged and eaten by something. I can't see any bugs on the plants at all?

I have put a picture here of the damage—Can you tell me what it is?

Can anyone help?

Top tip Growing members of the same 'family' close together increases competition for soil nutrients. Disperse onions, chives, leeks and garlic across your plot, instead of keeping them close together.

Common causes of Poor germination

Rich soil: Don't add a full dressing of any fertiliser until seedlings are growing strongly

Too Cold: Only sow temperature sensitive crops after the soil has warmed up naturally or with the aid of cloches

Uneven depth: Patchy germination can result from some seeds being too deep with others drying out near the surface.



Recipe No.1

Fat Free Blood Orange Upside down Cake

Our first recipe is from one of our plot holders who was a competitor in Great British bake off last year, he was known as the bald Baking Banker from Brentwood with a bad back.

Ongar Road Allotment was shown on the first episode of the series when they introduced **James Hillery**.

This time of year I go crazy for those sweet vibrant blood oranges, they bring a ray of sunshine into a season of dreary fruit.

So what better way to use the oranges than in a **fat free upside down cake**.

Perfect for a lazy Sunday afternoon with a cuppa after a morning at the allotment.

Oven temp 175C/325F/

Gas 3

Serves 12

Sponge

2 large oranges

6 free-range eggs

250g/9oz ground almonds

250g/9oz caster sugar

1 tbsp baking powder

Topping

2-3 blood oranges

1 cup caster sugar

1/2 cup water

Instructions

Rinse 2 oranges in hot water. Then add them to a large pan of simmering water and simmer gently for 2 hours.

Leave the oranges to cool, chop up and remove any pips. Then put in a food processor or blender and whizz to a pulp.

Slice 3 blood oranges thinly on a mandolin or with a sharp knife.

In a pan, add the water and caster sugar and bring to a simmer, stirring to dissolve the sugar.

Add the orange slices and simmer for about 15 minutes until the rinds become slightly translucent.

Once cooked, remove the slices with a slotted spoon and allow to cool so you can handle them.

Grease and line a 9 inch tin with baking parchment.

Place the slices slightly overlapping all over the bottom of the tin, working outwards and

slightly up the side to finish. Brush with a little of the syrup.

Preheat the oven to 175C/155c fan.

Beat the eggs and sugar together until they are light and fluffy and have reached the ribbon stage.

Mix in all the remaining ingredients, including the orange pulp.

Pour into the cake tin and cook for about an hour, until the cake is golden in colour and a skewer comes out clean when inserted in the middle.

Transfer to a wire cooling rack, keeping the cake in the tin. When the cake has cooled, carefully remove from the tin and gently peel off the baking parchment.

Brush the top with any remaining syrup to glaze.



Recipe No. 2 Blackcurrants & Rhubarb Jam



This is a simple but great recipe for excess Rhubarb and Blackcurrants from the freezer. Pat Griffiths, our Membership Secretary kindly sent this in.

Gently heat approximately equal weights of blackcurrants and rhubarb until the fruit is cooked and soft.

Add approximately the same weight of sugar as fruit to the pan and on a low heat allow the sugar to dissolve

completely, stirring occasionally.

Once the sugar has dissolved bring to the boil and continue to boil vigorously for 5 to 10 minutes.

Test for setting. Finally store in sterilised jars.

NB I do not add water to the fruit but you may need to add a small amount to

suit you.

