



Allotments Newsletter

STOP PRESS

As part of their review of the allotment management, Brentwood Council is inspecting all the eight sites the Society manages on their behalf. Inspections have already taken place at Hartwood and Bishops Hall. River Road and Park Road are planned for next week. Visits to the other four sites have yet to be arranged.

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Special points of interest:

- Chairman's message about Allotment Etiquette
- Plot holder Recipes
- Shows and Meetings
- Jobs For June
- Site Rep reports

Volunteering

The committee, supported by the site representatives have been working hard for you. They have overcome operational issues such as water problems, built a good working relationship with the council and generally improved the working practices to make the allotments and its management fit for the future. Please remember that this effort is voluntary and time consuming, please give them any support you can and discuss any issues with your site representatives.

It takes a lot of effort to manage the Allotments and its always useful to have volunteers to help with the various jobs that need to be done to maintain the allotment infrastructure to enable you to enjoy your plots.

Please contact your site representative if you have any special skills that might be useful and keep an eye out for requests for people to spend even a small amount of time on working parties—usually posted on your site notice board..

Site Etiquette

Following some incidents on a couple of allotment sites managed by the Society it is becoming apparent that there is a genuine need to remind some of our plot holders that rules of etiquette are in place with regard to their behavior on site.

Areas of concern include:
Trespass on plots belonging to others
Removal of equipment / plants from seemingly abandoned plots
Dumping of waste on other plots, including those currently un-let
Accusations of theft of equipment

In fundamental terms the following actions must be observed at all times: -
The only plot(s) the individual has access to is their own.

The plot holder has to re-move from site all weeds and rubbish and not simply dump it on another plot (whether in use or yet to be allocated) or behind any boundary fence.

Incidents have been reported that equipment found on another person's plot has been removed and used by a third party. This is strictly prohibited and could easily be classified as theft. In situations such as this the matter should be raised initially with the Site Representative and if theft has been committed it should be reported to the Police. Site Representatives and Committee members are not in a position or indeed empowered to take action against such illegal activity. There have been occasions where some personal grievances have been observed



*"There are only 2 seasons in Scotland—June and Winter."
- Billy Connolly .*

amongst plot holders. Any such grievances must be resolved off-site and not disturb the peaceful environment of the allotment sites.

It should be noted that actions as identified above will not be tolerated by the Society and failure to comply with these simple regulations will result in the offender having their plot agreement terminated.

If plot holders have any concerns or matters requiring resolution they should in the first instance be reported to their Site Representative. Site Representatives are elected members of the BHS Committee and as such act on behalf of, and with the full authority of the Committee.
Vernon Thomas
Chairman

Thunder—Louis MacNeice

In summer, when day has
fled, the plain covered with
flowers Pours out far away.

The Junes were free and full,
driving through tiny Roads,
the mudguards brushing the
cowparsley, Through fields of
mustard and under boldly
embattled Mays and chestnuts

Or between beeches verdur-
ous and voluptuous
Or where broom and gorse
beflagged the chalkland--
All the flare and gusto of the
unenduring Joys of a season
Now returned but I note as
more appropriate To the ma-
turer mood impending thun-
der

With an indigo sky and the
garden hushed except for The
treetops moving.

Then the curtains in my room
blow suddenly inward, The
shrubby rustles, birds fly
heavily homeward, The white

flowers fade to nothing on the
trees and rain comes
Down like a dropscene.

Now there comes catharsis,
the cleansing downpour
Breaking the blossoms of our
overdated fancies Our old
sentimentality and whimsicali-
ty Loves of the morning.

Blackness at half-past eight,
the night's precursor, Clouds
like falling masonry and light-
ning's lavish Annunciation,
the sword of the mad archan-
gel Flashed from the scab-
bard.

If only you would come and
dare the crystal
Rampart of the rain and the
bottomless moat of thunder, If
only now you would come I
should be happy

Now if now only.



Water Bill—Steve Griffiths Treasurer

We have now received the final water bill for the year and when I present the accounts at the next AGM the cost of water will stand out as the largest single expense. For comparison the cost in 2016/17 was **£ 2,527**. This year it will be **£ 4,163**. The prime cause of this was a major leak at the Park Road site.

In total so far, we have had to spend over **£2,600** on repair and remedial work. To contain the cost of all this necessary work within the Society's finances a major portion has been undertaken by volunteers and I would like to thank Ian Palmer in particular, who has lead the project, as well as those site reps and volunteers who have ably assisted.



Park Road Water Update

After a significant amount of work the new main water supply to the Park Road site has been installed, inspected and commissioned.

It did however identify other issues with the water storage tanks namely damage from the extremely harsh winter and pipework leaks that were of longstanding. However after more hard work and further expense the majority of these issues have now been resolved.

Members should be aware that our water supplier also decided that it was time to despatch an Inspector to re-

view two of our other sites, these being **Ongar Road** and **Bishops Hall**.

This inspection resulted in both sites storage tanks being condemned for not being compliant with the new Water Board Regulations and as a result we are in the process of modifying their tanks and supply pipework in order to meet compliance.

As a result of this exercise it is very apparent that ALL sites supply pipework will require modification or new tanks installed to meet the new regulations. The most significant change to the Regulations is

that taps to which hose pipes can currently be connected are banned and that all taps currently on site will be changed to ensure that hose pipes cannot be attached and cannot be left running.

All of these changes will be very costly to the Society but failure to comply with the new Regulations is not an option as the water supply

will be discontinued if we do not comply. Our water suppliers are currently very happy to work with us to correct the situation providing that we have a documented plan to meet compliance on all of our sites, their principle concern of course being protection of the mains water supply.



June Jobs *(With thanks to the National Allotment Society)*

Harvest

Beetroot, broad beans, cabbage, cauliflower, early peas, lettuce, rhubarb, spring onions, radish, spinach can all start to be harvested now.

Lift the earliest potatoes towards the end of the month and continue earthing up the rows of your other varieties. June is the end of the asparagus season, so stop cutting and give the plants a top dressing of general fertiliser to help build up the crowns for next year. Start to harvest the first of your soft fruits.

Sowing and Planting

Successional sowings of beetroot, kohlrabi, lettuce and winter cabbage seeds can all be done now – follow the instructions on the back of your seed packets, but it is worth starting them off in trays indoors and then transferring them outside after a couple of weeks. Sow every 2 - 4 weeks for a continual supply of produce.

Brussels sprouts, cabbages, cauliflowers, celeriac, courgettes, outdoor cucumbers, French and runner beans, leeks, pumpkins, squashes, sweet corn, outdoor tomatoes can all be planted out into their final position now. As

with all young plants water in carefully and protect from birds with netting.



General

Hoe at every opportunity to remove weeds and break-up the soil. This allows water to soak down into the earth.

Train in climbing beans and continue to put in supports for your peas. Water along the rows of peas to swell the developing pods.

Carry on with the thinning out of seedlings of earlier sown crops.

Don't allow plants growing under glass to dry out or over-heat.

Pests and Diseases

Watch out for **aphids** (black fly on broad beans and greenfly on various crops) and thrips on brassicas – spray the plant with soapy water (diluted washing up liquid) or

squash the flies with your thumb and finger. You can buy insecticides if you prefer, including a fatty acid soap to spray on the plants.

Carrot fly

is a particular problem between May and September – when female flies lay their eggs. There are varieties of carrots on the market that have been bred to be more resistant to carrot fly (e.g. Fly Away and ResistaFly) but none are 100% proof. To deter low-flying female flies, cover plants with horticultural fleece or place two foot high barriers around the plants (plastic bottle cloches work well). A biological control (pathogenic nematodes) can be bought from mail-order companies (known as Nemasys Grow Your Own), to help control the young larvae or you can opt for chemical control in the guise of Westland Plant Rescue Fruit & Vegetable Bug Killer (Lambda cyhalothrin).

Cabbage root fly

attacks the roots of brassicas. Female flies lay the eggs on the surface of the soil next to the stem of the plant. When transplanting out young plants, place a piece of carpet (or cardboard or fleece) around the base of the plant to create a collar, this will stop the flies from laying their eggs on the soil. Again the biological control (pathogenic nematodes) can be used to deal with any larvae.

Please pass your tips on to:

stevenmshepherd@gmx.com



Ongoing Council Discussions Ian Palmer

Various meetings have taken place between the Society and the Council with the Societies aim to persuading the Council to declare all sites to have legal statutory status as outlined in Section 8 of the 1925 Allotments Act.

This is considered to be the best way to provide long term protection for the allotments as more pressures come on the Council to provide land for housing.

The next stage in this process is for the Council to create a

paper that will go to the Policy, Planning and Projects Committee.

To support that paper, all sites will be visited by a representative of the Council. Initially this is to correct the various erroneous pieces of information that the Council has regarding the numbers of plots on each site.

This process will start on 30th of May at the Hartswood site. Once it is clear exactly what information is required and in what format it is to be presented in then all sites will be

visited.

There is expected to also be a check on how the Society is managing the Council's assets regarding cultivation and use of the land. To that end, a number of plot holders on all sites are being reminded of the obligations they signed up to when they took on their plots. It is no longer acceptable for plots to be left uncultivated especially when there is a considerable waiting list for plots.

Unidentified Visitors

A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust.— Gertrude Jekyll

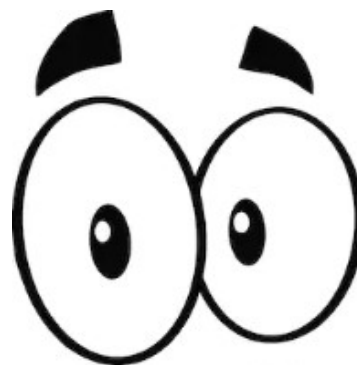


Recently Hartswood had a visit by some people assumed to be from the Council. This has since been denied by Council officers so we are still faced with a level of uncertainty over these people. It has now transpired that the visitors tail gated a legitimate plot holder despite the gates being locked.

Concerns are expressed about the potential risk for developers who may have unwarrant-

ed interest in the sites as having potential for housing.

If you feel it is safe to do so, It is advised that any visitor taking unreasonable interest in the plots or asking unusual questions should be asked who they are and why they are on site. If in doubt, or you are uncomfortable approaching them please advise your site representative.



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.

Ongar Road Site Rep Report Ann Matthews

We too have had unannounced visitors to the Ongar Road site.

These three trespassers spent the day sunning themselves and eating the grass!



Recipe No. 7

Onion Soup



This is a French style soup and described as a restorative! Ideal for using up those onions just finishing.

Serves 4

Ingredients

350g (12oz) Butter
8 Onions
1.8l (3 Pints) stock of your choice (don't think fish will work!)
4 large slices of Baguette
60g (2oz) Gruyere or Emmental Cheese

1 measure of dry sherry (optional)

Method

Melt the butter in a large pan, slice and add onions. Cover the pan and cook stirring occasionally.

When the onions are translucent and starting to caramelize, add the stock and cook covered for a further 15 minutes.

Toast the bread, cover with the cheese and grill until the cheese melts and bubbles.

Ladle the soup into the bowls and add the sherry if using. Float the toasted bread on each bowl of soup and serve.



Recipe No. 8 Dandelion Beer

Time to get your own back on the weeds!

Ingredients:

8oz Dandelion plants
8 pints of Water
1/2 to 1 oz Root ginger (Bruised)
Finely peeled rind and juice of 1 lemon
1lb Demarara Sugar
1oz Cream of Tartar

1/4oz {10g} brewers yeast

Method

Dig up complete dandelion plants wash them well and remove any fibrous roots leaving the main tap root.

Place in a large saucepan with the Lemon peel and bruised Ginger., bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes.

Strain and pour over the

sugar and cream of tartar in a fermentation bucket. Stir until the sugar is dissolved.

When lukewarm add the Yeast and lemon juice and cover. Leave in a warm place for 5 days. After 5 days strain into strong screw top bottles. This can then be drunk after 3-4 days or when cleared.

Recipe No.9

Broadbean, Lime & Coriander Dip



A great use of broad beans, this dip has a Mediterranean zing to it.

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

500g (1lb 2oz) Broad beans podded

Grated Zest and Juice of 2 limes

Ground Black Pepper to taste

2tsp Sea Salt

100ml (3fl oz) Olive Oil

Handful of finely chopped parsley

Handful of finely chopped Basil

2 Salad Onions Chopped

Extra Virgin Olive Oil to drizzle

2 tsp Black Onion Seeds

Method

Cook the beans in boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain and reserve the cooking liquid.

Place the beans and the remaining ingredients except for the onion and Onion seeds into a food processor and whizz until smooth.

Add enough of the reserved liquid until it is a dipping consistency. Taste and season to your liking

Place in a serving bowl and sprinkle with onion seeds and chopped onion—

Serve with pitta or fingers of Carrot, Cucumber or other veg.

Recipe No. 10 Gooseberry Gin



Gooseberry Gin Julip

Ingredients

450g of gooseberries

225g of sugar, (use half this amount if using red dessert gooseberries)

1l gin

Method

Top and tail the gooseberries and open freeze. To open freeze any berries, simply put the fruit on a baking tray lined with baking parchment, making sure there is space between each berry, and put the tray in the freezer for about 1 hour. Once all the fruit is cold and

firm, you can transfer the fruit to a Tupperware box or freezer bag until ready to use (open freezing ensures you can take out as much or as little fruit as you want, without the need for a chisel)

Place the frozen gooseberries (freezing them means you won't have to prick each berry individually with a sterilised needle) in a large sterilised preserving jar. Leave to defrost

Once the gooseberries have defrosted, add the sugar and top up with gin. Seal the jar and give it a vigorous shake

Shake the gin once a day until all the sugar has dissolved and then once a week for at least 8 weeks

Strain out the gooseberries and save them to make gooseberry gin jam or a drunken gooseberry crumble