



By bringing a soulful consciousness to gardening sacred space can be created outdoors.

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- Treasures Report
- Jobs to do
- Recipe

Brentwood Horticultural Society founded 1872



Allotments Newsletter

Committee Update

Since the last newsletter we have all been through the pandemic, lockdown and the pleasures of social distancing but luckily we have all had the opportunity for fresh air and exercise that many could not share. Hopefully for those who have been self isolating, soon you will be allowed back with us on your plots.

For those who have been able to cultivate in this year's mix of wet winter and dry spring, it has created an interesting mix of crops. Please provide pictures for the next newsletter of your successes

Much interest has taken place in having an allotment, probably assisted by many people being furloughed. This has resulted in a huge increase in the waiting list, which is managed by our membership secretary Pat Griffiths via the Society web site. I would ask that where current plot holders hear of people who want a plot, they MUST direct them to the web site as this is the recommended route to being added to the waiting list. Due to the huge waiting list and the social distancing requirements, we also suggest that plot holders do not

bring prospective new members onto sites as this potentially gives them expectations that our fully let sites cannot support and often results in many email exchanges that Pat does not find helpful. Despite the lockdown much has been done on many sites with even more site improvements discussions started.

The largest improvement was the installation of new main gates at Hartswood. The discussion with the Council about replacement gates started about 3 years ago. At long last, with some on site help and support there are now secure gates large enough to take our regular skip lorry deliveries of manure.

Discussions are ongoing with the Council regarding a new water supply and solutions to the yearly flooding at Hartswood. The dropped kerb stones at the entrance to Honey-pot Lane have now had approval to be reset by Essex Highways and additional roadway drains created to remove much of the rainwater that comes from the roadway onto the site. The previous plans for on site drainage got delayed by the pandemic and will now

take place at the end of the current growing season. Tree felling will happen at Crescent Road to remove a large self seeded ash that blights the allotment plots. Discussions are also ongoing about site security at Middle Road. Currently we have drug users and local residents using the current none secure site for their recreational use. This is of course unacceptable so the problem will be addressed.

In all we have had 3 skips of waste removed by Bowmers Waste Disposal from River Road and Hartswood sites. This arrangement with Bowmers means they can dispose of their horse manure waste on the various allotment sites that can deal with lorry access and in return, they remove quantities of our waste material that we generate as sites are recovered.

All the best for a bountiful harvest and stay safe.

Treasurers Report—Steve Griffiths

We have now reached the point in the allotment year when our income (rents, membership, key sales) is finalised – give or take the occasional re-letting of a plot and replacement of lost keys.

We have also reached the point where the cost of water for this year is known – the summer usage is billed in November after the allotment year-end and is included in next year's accounts.

The only thing I should be busy with is expense items on projects but, with Covid-19 and restrictions regarding physical distancing, working parties are problematic and much of the planned

expenditure on upgrading the allotment sites has had to be postponed. So not much for me to talk about.

However, I thought you might be interested in some statistics from the accounts:

The total area of plots let is 2603.50 rods

We have 355 members who have paid rent for plots.

That is an average of 7.33 rods per plot-holder.

We have 111 members without plots.

We have sold 48 keys.

We now have 20 plot-holders without access to email – including one new member this year.

Whilst we will always accommodate members who do not have access to email, and indeed accept new members without this facility,

I must emphasise just how important email is to the efficient operation of the Society. Just think about the rent bills that go out every October – if we had to post them all it would cost us £230. Add to that the cost of printing and recognise that the rent bills are not the only communication in the year, and you can see why I am keen on the use of emails.

Further, with Covid-19, I would also like to encourage payment on-line. I have never liked cash – it is messy, and, from my point of view, there is no robust audit trail. And cheques involve handling paper as well as extra trips to the bank. Covid-19 cannot transmit electronically so if you do not do it already when I send out the next round of rent demands in October do please consider paying on-line.

In the meantime, keep safe and do enjoy your allotments, they provide physical distancing without social isolation.

Membership Report—Pat Griffiths

Lockdown has given many of us much more free time to spend at our allotments. This is very noticeable at Hartswood, with many more very well-maintained and productive plots.

For some of the residents of Brentwood it has meant that they have had the time and the opportunity to walk in their local area. This may have brought the allotment sites to their attention as in the last four months I have received over one hundred

requests for allotment plots. The waiting list is becoming very long.

Vacant plots, in a suitable state, are continuing to be let to new plot holders. Recently these plots have ranged in size, many between 2 rods and 5 rods, which seem to meet the requirements and capabilities of new members. With this in mind is now a good time for current plot holders to re-assess their requirements with a possible view to down-sizing?

This would provide some smaller plots to offer people on the wait-

ing list.

Applications for allotment plots, at the current time should come, if at all possible, via the Brentwood Horticultural Society website or by email to me, membership secretary. All sites aim to display this information on their gates.

Please can members direct enquirers to this information and not allow strangers on site.

See contact page in this newsletter for details.

Site Rep Reports

Ongar Road *Ann Mathews & Jackie Fretten*

Like allotment owners all over England there was a huge sigh of relief when the news came that we could work on our allotments as our daily exercise.

This certainly shows with neatly tended plots and grass paths that look more like the green-sward of Wimbledon!

Many who are working from home have found more time to spend on site now while they are not doing the daily commute while others who live on their own or are a couple are finding that getting out of the house and having a chat, social distances of course, is helping them get through these changing times to reach what is being called the new normal.

During these trying times many of us have seen our allotment 'family' more than our actual families and the sense of community has really come to the fore with everyone checking on others health, offer guidance and of course seedlings. Is it me or has there been better germination this year?

The early heatwave led to the site being a hive of activity in April and May and it wasn't long before the first strawberries, peas, broad beans and salad

crops were being picked along with the almost daily watering of greenhouses and polly tunnels. Now as we move into

July the runner and French beans are in full flower and people are delighting in their first courgettes.

We all know that come August our friends and neighbours will be hiding from us lest we try and force another courgette on them, and they were so eager to take them from us a month ago?

All in all the Ongar Road Residents have had a good growing year so far and long may it continue!

Stay safe and well

Ann and Jackie



Site Rep Reports

Hartswood. Ian Palmer

Here are some pictures from Hartswood.

The first picture shows our sweet williams which have done well this year.

The next shows the new gate but with a slight problem. All sorted with a large stump grinder shown in the third picture.



Site Rep Reports

Park Road

Chris Smith & Steve Shepherd

Plots

More good news on this front with many more new plot holders with lots doing a great job recovering plots and getting crops underway, they are to be commended it shows that you don't have to be an expert allotmentee to get the best out of a plot!

We are now in a position where we need to create more plots from the 'long term' overgrown areas to allow more people to enjoy the allotments. We will schedule some working parties to recover these areas when we are able, however if you have some spare energy and time and can help to get them back under control please contact Chris or Steve.

The site representatives and we will point you to the areas that need attention. Contact details are on the 'contacts' page in this newsletter.

A gentle reminder that you are responsible for keeping the paths between plots in good order, that is weed free and mown regularly—lets keep the allotment looking good!

Water

You may have noticed that we have had new water troughs delivered to comply with our regulatory requirements set out by the water board. They are awaiting a time when we can get a working party together to install them, soon hopefully!

I will let you know when we need your help on this and with so many new plot holders I am sure we won't be short of volunteers!

We are still encouraging people to find ways to capture rain water and find other ways to conserve water. If you have any tips on this please share it with us by contacting us on stevenmshepherd@gmx.com and I will put it in the newsletter for all to benefit.

Security

Since the installation of the new gates at the Capon Close entrance the level of vandalism has maintained at a low level with very few incidents reported. Ian Palmer is working with the council to upgrade the Cleves

Avenue entrance as I am sure you read in his report.

Sadly we have had reports that produce has been stolen and a plot holder trespassing on other plots I remind you all that you should not access anyone else's plot unless invited to do so by the plot holder.

Dogs

I have had a couple of concerned plot holders who have been surprised and frightened by dogs running loose on the allotment. I am sure the dogs are friendly but for others it can be a bad experience which is why we have a regulation about keeping dogs on a lead and under control.

Please be mindful of others and keep your dogs under control.

Site Rep Reports

Honeypot Lane

Neil Hornsby

A view from Honeypot Lane

The Honeypot Lane site is basking in the sunshine (23 June) with

most of its plots in excellent condition, as can be seen from the photograph below.

I suppose that its rather excellent state of cultivation is down to the fact that at the moment most plot-holders have got more time to spend down at the site, particularly being able to water more during this very weather.

We have three plots that are somewhat untended at the moment; two of these belong to critical care workers, who obviously have less time than most at the moment, and

the other to a mother who has to shield her young daughter, but I am confident that these will revert to the standard of the others by spring next year.

What has been very good to see this year is how the new plot-holders have taken to allotment cultivation!

the other, higher, side of the road!



Kew Gardens Visit Steve Shepherd

Sue and I had the opportunity to visit Kew for the first time in quite a while. We had to apply for a timed entry ticket but it was well worth it.

There were no queues and plenty of space to ramble and be socially distanced.

The Palm house and temperate house as well as the cactus house were closed but still plenty to see.

Park road is infested with Mares tail weed so imagine my surprise when I saw a bed of the stuff deliberately planted! The explanation they gave made sense though, who knew the ancestors of this plant would grow to 40m high giants (see below)

Once were giants

In Latin, the name *Equisetum* means 'horse bristles' (equus = horse and setta = bristle). This genus represents relatives (now extinct) of some of the earliest plants to live on dry land.

The genus *Equisetum* comprises 18 species distributed throughout the world (except Antarctica). Now extinct relatives grew as large trees (up to 40m) during the late Palaeozoic period. The tallest surviving species, known as 'giant horsetails' (*E. telmateia*, *E. giganteum*, *E. myriochaetum*), can reach up to 8m, but most species grow to about knee-high. Fossils of the extinct genus *Calamites* are abundant in coal deposits dating from the Carboniferous period (360 to 300 million years ago) when they dominated the canopy of forests around the world.

The key adaptation that helped equisetums dominate the understory of the Carboniferous period was a vascular system to move nutrients and water up and down their hollow stems. This kept them from drying out as they grew taller and taller and, because their stems were often photosynthetic, they could utilise all the light they were then able to reach.

Despite the overcast weather the wildlife was abundant with everything from Parakeets to bees. I was too slow to capture a picture of a parakeet but managed a Bee.



I had forgotten how gorgeous the Japanese garden was. And I managed to capture more wildlife!



Pests—Cinnabar Moth

Steve Griffiths

With the Covid-19 lockdown we have seen many more children on site and it is probably timely to remind everyone, grandparents, parents, and new members of the Cinnabar moth.

This is a day-flying moth that is quite colourful and is active at the present and this means that shortly we will be seeing the attractive caterpillars out in force consuming ragwort and groundsel.

I look upon the brightly coloured black and yellow banded caterpillars as friends. They only attack the groundsel weeds that are (but should not be!) on my plot.

Unfortunately, the little horrors can cause quite severe skin irritation and it is wise to treat them with caution.

Please be extra careful if you bring children on site.

Here is some additional information from the BUG WATCH web site

Life cycle

Females can lay up to 300 eggs, usually in batches of 30 or 60 on the underside of ragwort leaves.

When the caterpillars (larvae) hatch they feed on the around the area of the hatched eggs but as they get bigger and moult (instars) they mainly feed on the leaves and flowers of the plant, and can be seen out in the open during the day.

Caterpillar

Caterpillars are feeding from July – early September and are initially pale yellow but soon develop bright yellow and black stripes to deter predators.

The caterpillars feed on poisonous ragwort leaves. The poison from

the leaves is stored in the caterpillars body (and even remains when they are an adult moth).

Any birds or other predators that ignore the caterpillars bright warning sign will be repulsed by how foul they taste.

Numerous caterpillars on one ragwort plant can reduced it to a bare stem very quickly. They are also known to be cannibalistic.

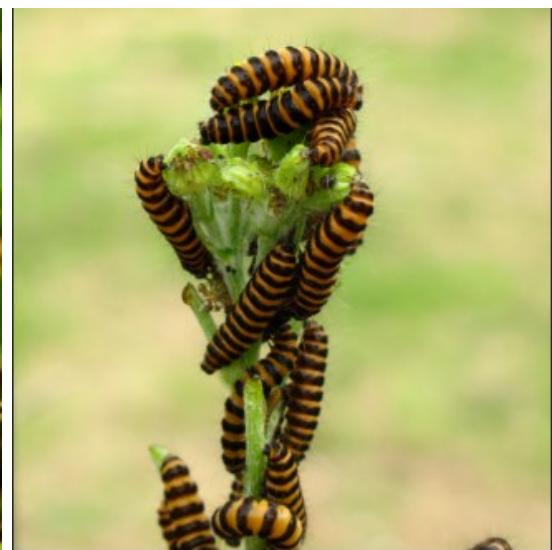
The caterpillars overwinter as pupa in a cocoon under the ground.

The adult moths emerge around mid May and are on the wing up until early August, during which time males and females will mate and eggs are laid.

Cinnabar Moth



Caterpillars - Steer Clear!



Do Not Quit—Edgar A. Guest

When things go wrong, as
they sometimes will,

When the road you're trudging
seems all uphill,

When the funds are low but
the debts are high,

And you want to smile but you
have to sigh,

When care is pressing you
down a bit...

Rest if you must, but don't
you quit!

Life is queer with its twists and
turns,

As every one of us sometimes
learns,

And many failures turn about
When we might have won had
we stuck it out.

Don't give up though the pace
seems slow...

You may succeed with another
blow.

Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured
the victor's cup;

And he learned too late when
the night came down,

How close he was to the
golden crown.

Success is failure turned
inside out...

And you can never tell how
close you are

It may be near when it
seems so far.

So stick to the fight when
you're hardest hit

It's when things seem worst
that **you must not quit.**



July Tips

Squash and Pumpkins

Bury vines at the nodes, this helps to anchor them and to encourage additional root systems to give you bigger and more plentiful fruiting.

Feed plants with nettle & comfrey liquid feed once per week (diluted into a watering can). Water at the base and rinse the plant base with plain water afterwards (to reduce any fertiliser burn).

Give a foliar feed (Spray the leaves) with liquid seaweed in between two nettle & comfrey feeds. Don't choose a hot day – you don't want leaf scorch.

Manually pollinate any female flowers each morning to guarantee the seed line. Cover flowers before and afterwards to keep out pollinators bring contaminating pollen (a paper bag and peg do the job).

Courgettes

Stay on top of courgette harvesting, courgettes taste best at around 4-5 inches in length. The more your harvest the more you'll receive.

Again feed plants with nettle & comfrey liquid feed once per week (diluted into a watering can).

Tomatoes

Keep tomatoes well-watered in the greenhouse,

do not water the leaves, only the base (damp tomatoes are more susceptible to blight)

If possible, stand potted tomatoes in a tray of water. Feed with Tomorite once a week (helps to reduce blossom end rot and encourages fruit growth). You know you can feed dahlias with Tomorite too? do it at the same time as the tomatoes

Pinch out the top of tall plants if they have lots of flower trusses on, get the energy going into fruiting now.

Garlic

Autumn planted garlic should have been lifted in June and should be cured in a dark dry place by now, clean it up and hang it in the kitchen.

Runner Beans

Water once a week if it doesn't rain and water well. Otherwise leave beans alone to do their thing.

Pick any early runner beans before the seed pods begin to bulge (or the skins toughen and get stringy).

Like courgettes, pick them regularly to keep the beans coming.

Sweetcorn

Keep watered on dry soil and add more mulch. Give soil the occasional press with your foot around the

roots to keep the soil firm. You have the option to bulk up soil around the stem base with some compost to protect any exposed roots from hot sun (and for feeding benefits).

Potatoes

Lift some potato plants, if the results are positive start enjoying the fruits of your labour! Keep maincrop plants well-watered, dry conditions reduce yield and potato size. Sow potatoes now for Christmas crops!

Onions

Some onions are reaching a decent size, onions are definitely ready to harvest when the leaf tops fall over. Water onions sparingly (but daily in hot spells to reduce bolting).

Cucumbers

Keep well-watered and pollinate flowers by hand if cucumbers are in the greenhouse (just to guarantee yourself something to harvest).

The Shed

Throw out those old broken plastic pots you left lying around pick up the twine offcuts, tidy that tent peg away so you can find it when you need it. Why is there still an empty box of chicken manure pellets sitting in the corner and six plastic bottles? Paint the shed – a hot day in July is

the perfect day to break out the green Cuprinol.

Weeds and paths

The weeds are back! Time to trim those attempting plot invasions from the perimeter before they go to seed and infect beds. A single dock can produce 60,000 seeds! Use a hoe in planting beds to keep seeds down taking care to avoid vulnerable crop roots (don't get to close, use your hands for those).

Reapply wood-chip to paths to help keep weeds from spreading and to keep the plot looking clean.

Manure

The summer is a good time to start building up a new manure pile, in six months time it will be Spring and you'll be wanting lots of the lovely black stuff for your 2021 allotment endeavours. Fresh manure shouldn't be put onto beds, you need it to rot down so now's the time to collect as much as you can.

Brentwood Horticultural Society

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY CONTACT

*Membership Secretary, PO Box 12582 Brentwood CM14 9QR
Email: membershipsec.brentwoodhs@gmail.com*

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.

/ www.brentwoodhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

NEWSLETTER CONTACT

If you have any information you would like published or any gardening tips you would like to share or would like to ask any questions about allotments or gardening please contact me by email or mobile phone on:

Mobile: 07990 593906

Email: stevenmshepherd@gmx.com

Don't be shy! I look forward to hearing from you.

Get Digging!

Email Addresses

The majority of allotment communications is carried out by email, it is important that if you change your email that you let the Pat Griffiths, membership secretary know about the change. Her details are:

membershipsec.brentwoodhs@gmail.com

This will ensure that you still continue receiving allotment news and information

4th July Shortcake

- **YIELD** 6 servings
- **TIME** 45 minutes,
- plus 30 minutes' chilling



INGREDIENTS
FOR THE SHORTCAKE:
 2/3 cup/151 grams unsalted butter, softened, plus more for greasing pan
 1 1/4 cup/156 grams all-purpose flour
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon/4 grams baking powder
 3/4 cup/45 grams wheat bran
 3 ounces/85 grams cream cheese
 1/2 cup/100 grams sugar
 1 teaspoon/3 grams lemon zest
 1 large egg, lightly beaten
 1 tablespoon/15 millilitre's lemon juice
 1/4 cup/84 grams apricot preserves
FOR THE FILLING:
 1 pint/270 grams

strawberries
 1 1/2 cups/236 grams blueberries
 2 tablespoons/8 grams sugar
FOR THE TOPPING:
 1 cup/248 grams ricotta
 1/4 cup/50 millilitre's whole milk
 2 tablespoons/8 grams sugar, more to taste
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

PREPARATION
 Heat oven to 375 degrees. Butter an 11-by-7-by-1 1/2-inch baking dish. Line pan with parchment paper, allowing paper to extend 1 inch above pan.

Stir together flour, salt and baking powder; stir in bran.

Beat cream cheese and butter; add sugar and beat until fluffy. Beat in

lemon zest, egg and lemon juice. Stir in dry ingredients.

Spread dough in a very thin layer over bottom of pan and up sides to form a shell. Press a piece of parchment paper down into the shell. Fit close to dough at all points and let extend an inch above the pan. Fill with pie weights or dried beans or rice.

Bake 20 minutes or until dough is set. Remove top parchment paper and weights. Reduce oven to 350 degrees and bake 15 minutes longer or until golden brown.

Set pan on wire rack and let cool. Lift out shell. Spread interior of shell with apricot preserves.

Make the filling: Slice

strawberries, and sprinkle them and blueberries with sugar to taste. Arrange fruit in pastry shell in four segments, alternating berries.

Make the topping: Beat ricotta with milk until smooth. Blend in sugar and vanilla. To serve, drizzle topping on each piece of shortcake.