

# Hw&DAA Newsletter

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Dear Readers,

Welcome to the June edition of the HwDAA Newsletter. As a site rep I often get asked various questions that are, in fact covered in the Tenancy Agreement, so in this issue, Bob Franks in his "Chairman's Comments" has reiterated some of the rules and procedures that affect us all in our tenancies. Also, in this edition are some notes made by Tess Green at the lectures given by Tim Foster at Alderman Moore's. These lectures have proven a great success and we are asking Tim back in the autumn to transplant some more of his extensive gardening knowledge.

Bob Corfield  
Guest Editor

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## CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

### Rules and procedures

Some tenants may have "lost" or forgotten what was in the HwDAA Tenancy Agreement. So for the benefit of all, and particularly our newer members, here's a summary of the more important items in the Agreement:

### Trespassing on other plots

Under no circumstances may a tenant or their family/guests encroach on another's plot except when specifically invited. The Committee takes a serious view of trespass. It could lead to the termination of the offender's tenancy.

### Children

Must remain on the tenant's plot at all times and may not play, on bicycles or otherwise, on hauling ways or with water supplies.

### Dogs

To be kept on a lead throughout.

### Speeding

All vehicles must conform to the speed limit of 5 mph.

### Water Hoses

Are specifically banned except with the prior **written** authority of the Committee which will only be granted on extreme medical grounds, and then only to refill water butts. Under no circumstances may hose water be applied directly to the plot. Hoses found on plots will otherwise be confiscated.

### Carpeting

Is explicitly banned from all Sites. Use black plastic or ground cover [obtainable from the Association stores]

### Inappropriate Equipment /Items

Such as Cookers, Soft furnishings, Microwave ovens, bedding or other household fittings are banned (You've got to believe it! (Ed)). Where these or other items are dumped on a Site, the culprits are likely to have their tenancy terminated.

### Loud Radios or Music

Expressly forbidden

### Bonfires and Incinerators

Are only permitted if producing little smoke, and that not affecting neighbouring ploholders or adjacent public. Remember that winds are capricious and what is acceptable one minute can become forbidden the next! Under no circumstances may fires be left unattended; they must be entirely extinguished before departing the Site. Remember that many people suffer from asthma so be exceptionally careful and consult before you ignite.

### Tenancy Terminations

Due to failure to cultivate, non-payment of rents, theft or violence or intimidation, may result in a ban from all allotments in the region.

### Lock your cars

even in our car parks.

### Thefts

Of produce or property has recently been noted on KL1, Bower Ashton and White City Sites. It is possible that this could be attributed to outside agencies and therefore any sightings of suspicious people must be

immediately reported to the Site Rep or any Committee member. If photographs can be covertly taken so much the better. A list of telephone numbers are on notice boards and gates. However, if it is determined that a member is involved directly or through their visitor, instant dismissal is likely in addition to any legal action.

### **Wheelbarrows**

Often too large to keep in a shed they are vulnerable to theft. Mark yours in a discreet way so that it can be identified and recovered.

### **Valuable Equipment**

Such as strimmers and rotovators should not be left in sheds overnight. Your insurance is unlikely to cover their loss.

### **Cultivation**

You are expected to cultivate [that is to actively grow crops] in at **least** two thirds of your plot by the end of your first calendar year. This takes into account **all** the area including the path for which you are responsible [that is to the **RIGHT** as viewed from the hauling way] and any other internal paths, verges or areas devoted to parking on your plot. Plastic-covered areas do not count as cultivated! So, if you get a letter as a result of a Site Inspection, you will understand why.

### **Trees**

Only Fruit trees on Dwarf Rooting Stock may be grown on the plot in modest numbers [you may not turn it into an orchard].

### **Debris & Rubbish**

Must not be allowed to accumulate on the plot. It must be removed at your own expense unless recovered on a newly acquired plot when it should be placed on the verge by the hauling way so that it may be collected and removed. Please contact your Site Rep if you do need to have rubbish removed. Only metal, glass, plastic or carpeting apply.

### **Sheds**

Other than as agreed at the start of your tenancy, the maintenance of the shed is your responsibility. The shed is the property of the Association and will need the application of wood preservative about every 2 years and the roof to be re-felted every three years or so [unless damaged by storms in which case it should be repaired as soon as possible]. The necessary materials are inexpensive and available in the Association Stores. If you

require assistance, contact your Site Rep. Storms often damage shed roofs because trees or bushes have been allowed to grow in the area close to the shed so that they lacerate the felt when the wind blows. Keep them clear. Damage can also occur to sheds where doors have been left open. Whilst you may not wish to lock the door, it should always be left secured. Damage due to that cause will be your responsibility. Remember that a replacement shed could cost in excess of £130.

### **Paths**

Should be straight, at right angles to the hauling way and no more than about 2 ft wide. Where grassed, trim to no more than 6 inches.

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### **Open Day**

It is intended to repeat the successful Association Open Day at the Alderman Moore's Site - open to all members from all the Sites and their guests as well as members of the public. There will be marquees and competitions and outside judges. The date for your diaries is **Sunday the 6th September 09**. More details to follow.

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### **Talks**

Following on the superb practical events with Tim Foster on "Grafting", "Soil Management", "Seeds and Sowing" and "Plant Care"; he has agreed to provide another on "Pruning" on Saturday, the **5th December '09**. Details to be advised. Meanwhile a summary for those who missed the previous events appear later in this News Letter and will also be on the Association Web Site. [Thanks to Tess Green].

### **Store Prices**

Even Dave Brice could not contain the ridiculously low prices we have enjoyed for so long. Suppliers have raised their charges and we must of necessity respond. Therefore, as soon as current stocks are expended, it is likely that overall there will be an increase of some 10% with selected items still more. **So if you want to purchase items, now is the time to buy them!**

### **In Memorium**

**Billy Fuller: long-time member of Bower Ashton died on 17<sup>th</sup> May**

### **Bob Franks**

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your eyes deceiving you and they're not from the deer park but are wild in the area.

**Bob Corfield**

## From your Editor.

I've received the following by email from Alison Larkman:

### Edible Allotments

*Alison (plot 277a AM) is planning to put together a cook book containing recipes inspired by the huge amounts of vegetables which can be produced from the allotments. Most of you will have great experience with managing fruit and vegetable gluts and it is hoped that you will share some of your successful recipes.*

*All recipes supplied will be accredited in print and it is hoped that the final book could raise money for the allotment itself or a local gardening charity.*

*If you have any recipes you would like to share please let her know. To contact Alison email: [al.larkman@googlemail.com](mailto:al.larkman@googlemail.com) tel: 07956 920 579 or leave any messages at the Alderman Moore's shop.*

### **Email**

We now have 162 plot holders on email. This means we can save an average of nearly £49.00 per newsletter issue on postage since those on email are alerted when the next newsletter is published and they can view it on our website at <http://www.hwdaa.co.uk>

So, if you are on email and haven't let me know your address, please email me at [hwdaa@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:hwdaa@blueyonder.co.uk) and I'll put you on our mailing list. You can, of course, decide to keep receiving the newsletter in hard copy if you want to. Having your email address also allows us to contact you in a hurry as a back up to the phone should there be any problems or alerts.

### **Deer.**

As those of you on KL1 know, this site backs onto the Ashton Court Deer Park - they are fascinating to watch (the deer not the plot holders) throughout the year and are another good reason why people like to have a KL1 plot. However, on KL1 we have recently had what appears to be some deer trespassing on our site. I've contacted the Deer Park people in Ashton Court and we've checked the deer fence all the way round - there are no breaches. However, I'm told there are a small number of wild Roe Deer in the area. Two were seen recently in Greville Smyth park of all places. So, if you see a loose deer, it's not

## Notes from the Tim Foster lectures by Tess Green.

### **Seed Sowing**

This was a great "hands - on" experience so that we all carried out the sowing procedures and are likely to remember them.

#### First considerations

- Seeds need moisture, warmth and air to germinate. Some also need light, or lack of light.
- Compost or soil? Bought compost should be for seeds and not multi-purpose and preferably NOT peat based if we are concerned about the environment. Home made compost from sieved soil, perlite and green wood waste is fine but its best to kill infections and slug eggs etc. by pasteurizing the soil in the oven at 80 degrees C for half an hour.
- Depth of soil should suit the size of seed - roughly 2 or 3 times the diameter of the seed and usually slightly deeper than this.(Average seed depth is 1 cm.)
- Most veg seeds are light neutral.

#### Seed tray procedure.

- Choose a tray with drainage
- Crumble the compost and remove lumps
- Overfill the tray and mound it up
- Level off from the centre with the edge of a ruler using a sawing motion and reverse the tray to complete
- Firm the compost by pressing down with a flat piece of wood
- Sow the seeds thinly from the edges towards the middle
- Cover seeds with a thin layer of compost or vermiculite
- Water with rose turned upwards for a gentle flow.

#### Module procedure.

- Modules may be preferred as less seed is used and there will be little disturbance of roots on planting out.
- Overfill modules with compost
- Strike off excess compost

- Push large seeds in one at a time (cucurbits should be sown with the long edge down)
- Smaller seeds can be sown in clumps of 3 or 4 per module when it is suitable to plant out in clumps for easier weeding as for onions or beetroot
- For small seeds make a 'paper aeroplane' by folding a piece of paper in half and then folding back the edges of the folded sides. Guide the seeds from the middle channel into the modules with a pencil.
- Cover seeds with compost and gently massage it down to the level of the top of the module
- For cabbages sow 2 per module and remove the weaker seedling later. Expensive seed like tomato should be sown singly.

#### Pot sowing.

Overfill pots with compost, tap down and firm the compost with the base of another pot. Sow one seed per pot and cover to required depth.

Watering of modules and pots is best done by standing them in a container of water. They should then be covered with plastic.

#### Light

Seeds which need light to germinate are usually the smallest seeds and should be only lightly covered. Lettuce won't germinate if too warm so start them off on a north facing windowsill.

#### Seedbed Procedure.

- Lightly dig the soil and break up dry lumps by watering
- Put in row markers
- Send the string line from the back of the row markers so the line is in place for the drill. (It's best to wind a string line with figure of eight windings to help it stay on the stick)
- Use the corner of a rake or wiggle the back of the rake under the string line to draw the drill
- Water the drill
- Sow the seeds thinly and cover with soil or compost. Do not water on top of the soil.
- For bigger seeds make a bigger drill which can be filled with compost before sowing and watering then cover with compost and tamp down with the back of the rake.

- Seeds may be soaked to pre-germinate before sowing or could be rolled in chilli powder to deter pests.

After germination expose the seeds to as much light as possible to prevent etiolation. Also use thigmomorphogenesis to keep seedlings shorter and stronger. To do this, draw a sheet of paper gently over the tops of the seedlings, with the paper just in contact with the plants. Do this several times each day.

All participants left the workshop with a tray and modules correctly sown!

#### **Plant Care**

Another brilliant and well attended event at the allotment stores. I loved the way that Tim encouraged us to do the thinking ourselves rather than just give us the answers. Here is a summary of what I learned.

#### Avoiding problems.

- ✓ "The answer lies in the soil" so keep soil healthy so that it can hold moisture without becoming waterlogged and make sure it has sufficient fertility.
- ✓ Create a beneficial environment for the plants by growing a diversity of different plants within the rotation. Use flowers for companions - nettles are one of the best - to draw in pest predators.
- ✓ If considering use of chemicals ensure these do not conflict with these first two principles. It may be better to allow a few pests than reduce soil fertility or poison pest predators.

#### Control of pests.

Know your enemy! What is their life cycle, where do they come from, how do they behave and what conditions do they like? What stops them?

For example, pest aphids use woody plants such as Spindle and Guelder Rose to overwinter, so keep these trimmed.

Either exclude the pests from your plants by using a barrier or help the predators that control them.

For instance, the carrot fly is a tiny fly with a good nose for carrots, especially if they are damaged. It is a weak flyer and flies near the ground. It lays its eggs on the foliage of the plant and the hatched grub has to burrow down to eat the carrot.

Knowing this we could; -

Use fleece to exclude it  
 Plant onions to confuse the scent  
 Plant a resistant variety lacking certain substances needed by the fly maggot  
 Plant carrot seeds at the peak population of the fly in early June so that their will be few flies on germination  
 Plant thinly to avoid damage by thinning (but if thinning is necessary do it in the evening and water afterwards to damp the smell)  
 Make a barrier on the windward side of the carrots  
 Raise the crop too high for the fly  
 Earth up the crop like potatoes so the maggot can't get to the carrot.  
 Using a combination of several methods is likely to reduce pest damage to acceptable levels.

### Diagnosis of Problems.

Yellow leaves are common and have a variety of causes, so

- Examine the plant for pests (you may need to dig it up)
- See if other plants are similarly affected
- Consider the history of the plant - has it been too dry, or waterlogged?
- Are aphids present? Look for stickiness and perhaps sooty mould on the aphid nectar
- Is the yellow colour uniform? Or speckled? (may be spider mite) or mottled? (may be a virus)
- The plant may lack magnesium, iron or nitrogen, so feed it. If the oldest leaves are yellow it is likely to be nitrogen that is lacking.

Get the plant healthy - use seaweed or comfrey liquid or bokashi/kitchen waste compost as balanced feed.

### Tips for other problems.

- ❖ Frost - use newspaper or fleece to protect if frost is forecast.
- ❖ Leek moth - cut the top off the leek below the maggot hole. The leek will re-grow.
- ❖ Slugs - encourage slow worms, hedgehogs, beetles, frogs and birds which all attack slugs. Metaldehyde pellets will harm these predators as well as being poisonous to humans. Coffee grounds, eggshells, grit, soot etc. all discourage slugs. Copper bands may help. Keep paths tidy to reduce slug hidey-holes. Water in the

mornings to reduce slug damage (although this is not so good for efficient watering as doing it in the evening). Use 'nemaslug' - nematodes which attack slugs - only after other methods, as it is expensive but effective.

### Allotment tour.

We ended with a quick walk to find plant problems in allotments and to suggest remedies for what we had learned - quite a lot!

A great course, thank you Tim and the committee and when is the next one?

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### **Visit to Alderman Moore's by children from Luckwell Junior School.**



Some young (potential) allotmenters.