

HW&DAA NEWSLETTER

Editor: Heather Jenne hjenne@blueyonder.co.uk 0117 973 3451 Date: December 2011
Correspondence to : Registered Office, 2 Kennel Lodge Road, Bower Ashton, Bristol BS3 2JT

HWDA web site: www.hwdaa.co.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be held at the Store, Alderman Moores Site, on Thursday 19th January 2012, commencing 7.30 pm sharp, probably finishing by 8.45 pm

AGENDA

1. To approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 21st January 2011 [proposers and seconders from those attending that meeting]
2. Matters Arising
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ending 30th September 2011
5. To vote on the Audit of the September 2011 accounts
6. To approve the September 2011 accounts
7. Notice of Plot Rents with effect from the 1st October 2012, as notified in this Newsletter
8. Election of Officers
9. Any Other Business

Chairman's comments

Annual General meeting

All Members are most welcome. It is your opportunity to meet and question the Committee, discover how your money is being spent, and hear about plans for the future. We are hoping for reasonable weather. The Store is cosy and warm and you might just be able to spot some of the new seeds and other items to buy.

The gates will be open until the commencement of the meeting and there is parking space both within and just outside the allotment.

Do please make the effort to come. Your views are important to us.

Toilets

There are flush toilets next to Alderman Moores Stores and a newly-installed dry loo at White City.

There are no loos on the other 4 Sites but we believe there is a demand and space on KL1, KL2 and parts of Alderman Moores (Meadows and B A have no available space; car parking is already limited and we cannot justify taking a productive plot out of production). So compost toilets will be installed on KL1, KL2, AM in the early part of next year by British Trust for Conservation volunteers.

Water Systems

New water systems, funded by the Association, have now been installed in The Meadows and Bower Ashton, and nobody should now have to walk very far to obtain water for their plots. The covers for the dip tanks are now in position – many thanks to Harry Phipps of White City, who made and fitted the covers. Sorry we missed out on this Autumn's fall of leaves, but there should not be too much to clear from the tanks before the Spring when the water will be turned on again.

A few strategically placed tanks also have taps in the pipes at the side to allow for the filling of kettles.

Please **do not risk contamination** by using the dip tanks for anything except filling **clean** watering cans to water your plots – the tanks are far too big to clean out. **Wash your veg and tools in buckets, not the tanks.**

Next on the list to be upgraded are the two Kennel Lodge Sites, which might be started before the Spring to provide for the Summer of 2012. The large system for Alderman Moores will follow – the final upgrade.

Intruders and Damage

I regret to report that there have been a lot of break-ins recently.

Intruders entered Kennel Lodge 2 during the night of 29th November and broke into half of the sheds, stealing a number of items of value. At the time of going to press we are unsure of the total losses, but we know that Christopher Walsh, who you may recall won the prize for the best kept allotment in the whole of Bristol this year, suffered the destruction and removal of his copper piping archways and supports for his fruit trees which were such a special feature. The criminal idiots severely damaged his trees and vine, and even tore off the spigot from his shed roof water collection tank! It is possible that Chris' plot was targeted for the scrap value of the copper. But this would have meant some preplanning and the provision of transport. (How did the thieves know? Chris' plot is one of the furthest from the gate and cannot be seen from there!)

This was a very upsetting incident and we want the police to be well aware of the extent of the

break in. So the more people who were affected and report loss or damage, the better picture they will get.

There was also an equally drastic break in (or possibly a series of break-ins) on Alderman Moores about a week later and we think about 75 sheds were broken into.

Bower Ashton was likewise targeted on 9th Dec and strimmers were taken.

Please would anyone suffering loss or damage report it to the police (and obtain an "Incident Number" which can then be used for an insurance claim). Also, please give the same information to the Site Rep (with incident number when known).

Also - check your shed – you may need to mend the door or hasp.

Regrettably we must all take steps to 'police' our sites better. If you see a stranger, ask something like "Excuse me; are you new to the site? Which is your plot?" or words to that effect. Who knows, it may be a nice introduction to a new member; but, if you are not satisfied with the response, then report to the Site Rep. Do not satisfy the prurient interest of outsiders.

Two police came to visit us at a committee meeting – a police officer whose beat is in the Southville and Bedminster areas, and a community police support officer who's linked to the Ashton and Bedminster areas. They listened carefully to what we could tell them about the break-ins and are going to take practical actions to help us, which will hopefully be a deterrent. They will visibly patrol the lane by BA and WC, and around the other sites in the evenings, and will also provide us with posters to say that the police are patrolling the area. They will also be giving us posters to put up in the stores with their photos and their contact details; they ask that if anyone has any issues to raise they should get in touch. NB the new phone number for getting in touch with the police is 101 (non-emergencies only – emergency number is still 999)

The police re-iterated the advice we are always giving: don't leave anything of value in your shed. The trouble is that, if thieves find goodies, it makes it attractive for them to go through other sheds. If they don't find anything, they might think it not worth coming back again. So removing everything of value not only benefits you, but potentially benefits everyone else on site.

NB This is so obvious, but must be repeated! Please do not let anyone know the gate code. If you have arranged for someone to come

with e.g. a delivery of manure, or to help with some tough digging, or if you have casual visitors, you MUST be present to let them in and stay while they are there. Under no circumstances tell them the gate code, so they can get in when you are not there.

Fires

Whether an open bonfire, or one in an incinerator, all fires must be **completely extinguished** when the member leaves the plot. **You could face a fine or even the termination of your tenancy if the fire/smoke causes adverse effects on neighbours or the general public.**

Plot Cultivation by Groups

Largely for the benefit of new Tenants, I repeat that the Association does not allow a group to cultivate a plot. The Tenancy Agreement is between the Association and one person only - and **that person must cultivate the plot** - though can be assisted by family and friends.

If you cannot do this any longer, for any reason, the plot must be surrendered back to the Association, who will then be able to let it out to the next person on the waiting list.

If your friends take over the cultivation of your plot while you remain the Tenant, they are effectively unfairly queue-jumping the waiting list. In these circumstances your tenancy will be terminated, which will not be very kind to your friends. If friends want a plot of their own, they should put their names on the waiting list.

Two more points:

- a) The Site Rep must be told who the regular helpers are.
- b) the Tenant is responsible for the conduct of any person assisting or visiting the plot.

Despite all this, Happy Christmas everyone!

Bob Franks

From your Editor

Stores News

Roofing felt and clout nails are in stock - if winds have taken their toll of your shed roof.

New season's seeds are in stock

We still have some Broad Bean seeds in stock – a bargain at 65p for 100g (as opposed to over £2 from commercial suppliers)

Autumn planting garlic has all gone, but spring-planting garlic and onion sets will come in at the end of February.

Seed Potatoes

Seed potatoes will be coming into the stores from mid-February 2012. We will be stocking the following varieties :-

[dry matter content on scale of 1– 9 in brackets]

First Early

Rocket: [4] very quick maturing variety (so if you put it in early it's the first to be ready) – prone to tuber blight so unwise to leave in the ground, but otherwise good all-round disease resistance including golden eelworm – round, white-skinned and fleshed tubers. Use: new potato / boil

Casablanca [not known because it's a newly developed variety] produces good yields of tasty, cream fleshed oval tubers very early in the season. Good resistance to tuber and foliage blight and to blackleg. resistant to Ro 1 Eelworm. Uses: new, boil, steam, chips, saute and roast.

Pentland Javelin [4] showbench quality early with good flavour, tuber number and disease resistance. Needs a bit longer to mature than other earlies Use: new potato / boil

Red Duke of York: [3 – 6] vigorous plant with spectacular foliage and wonderful flavour. A first early which, if left, also develops into a quality general purpose potato Use: new potato / general purpose

Arran Pilot [5] most popular garden variety because of its good cooking characteristics. Needs time, a mild Spring and reasonable soil conditions to do really well.

Foremost [5] gardener's favourite for flavour and cooking qualities. Not grown commercially

Second Early

Nadine [2] good yield, double eelworm resistant medium blight resistance Use: waxy, boils well

Maris Peer [5] small uniform well-flavoured potato with reliable firmness. To obtain this, the plants must be grown close together and kept earthed up Beautiful strong scented purple flowers Use: salad/boil/general purpose

Early Maincrop

King Edward: [6] attractive red-blotched skin Creamy white flesh. Consistent demand over the last century is a testament to its eating and cooking qualities Use: roast (classic Sunday roast potato)/ general purpose

Desiree: [5] red potato with pale yellow, firm, waxy flesh with strong flavour. Good drought resistance. Use: bake/boil/general purpose

Maris Piper [7] the chip shop favourite! Dominates field production because of good yield and flavour. Eelworm resistant, but harvest as quickly as possible to minimize slug damage by (underground-living) keeled slugs which love it. Use: chips/ roast/ fry

Picasso: [2] Creamy skin with striking bright red eyes. Good cropper. Good all round disease and drought resistance, but prone to slug damage Use: bake/general purpose. Tubers store well.

Cara [3] 'the red-eyed tough guy for the allotment' – high yields, vigour and weed suppressing foliage + disease and damage resistance – but with a 'mild' flavour

Salad

Pink Fir Apple: [5] knobbly pink-skinned tubers with butter yellow, waxy flesh Use: salad potato + fry + chip (need to be cooked with skins as too knobbly to peel) [late maincrop maturity time]

Charlotte: [3] reliable high-yielding variety -yellow skinned waxy tubers with creamy yellow flesh excellent either hot or cold, pale purple flowers - superb tasting – a standard reference in taste trials. Use: salad potato/boil (second early maturity time)

Assuming you plant seed potatoes when the soil warms up in April, these are likely maturity times

First earlies	ready June to July
Second earlies	ready July to August
Early maincrops	ready August
Late maincrops	ready September onwards

In the Alderman Moores stores, there is a little booklet: **Alan Romans' Guide to Seed Potato Varieties**. This gives an exhaustive description of the qualities, disease/blight susceptibility and resistance of 150 varieties of potato, plus how to grow potatoes (and the reasons for what you do). When you come into the stores to make your purchases, have a cuppa and consult this pamphlet and the other books on the shelves – you won't regret it!

Voles as a possible potato pest – correspondence on the subject

"I (sadly) experienced another new potato pest this year. 30% of my potato crop was gnawed whilst in the ground. And thus thrown away. Most likely culprit is a field vole, larger than the mice, not a rat...I've seen one scurrying around this week. I was really upset as everything looked good on top - no blight - all healthy. And it was an unusual potato, fabulous Golden Wonder. So boo hoo"

"Funnily enough I had the same experience about 4 years ago. I grew sarpo mira near the compost heap and left them in the soil - till quite late as they are blight resistant - and then found they were nibbled. I thought it was rats and my husband refused to eat them (though I did surreptitiously cut out the nibbled bits and used the rest when he wasn't looking - sarpo mira can grow really large).

But now you have mentioned voles, I wonder whether in fact voles were my culprits rather than rats... I regularly have vole families in the compost heap and see them quite often when I put stuff on - they're rather sweet, slow-moving, and look at

me with big startled eyes before disappearing. Is it illogical of me to not mind voles but hate rats with a vengeance?

What a shame about your Golden Wonder. The voles you saw must be living somewhere (possibly nearby - I haven't had nibbled potatoes except when I've grown them near the compost). If you can find their nest and disturb them (or kill the babies), that would probably shift them (onto someone else's plot?!). I am getting more rigorous about turning my compost more frequently, and I have a plunger tool that goes down as a stick and wings open up as it's lifted up - which helps to aerate and mix the compost and frighten anything inside."

Ground Beetles play an important role in reducing weeds

Researchers have found that ground beetles appear to eat a significant proportion of the weed seeds that would otherwise go into the soil. Grass weeds were reduced more than other weeds.

This research confirms a long-held belief by scientists that ground beetles play a role in weed control, and supports the need to conserve biodiversity. With the right management, ground beetles could be used as an alternative to herbicide applications and significantly reduce weed populations. 'Beetle banks', which involve leaving an area of a field as a wildlife habitat, are already supported under the Environmental Stewardship schemes available to farmers.

The study (by researchers funded by the UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and the French Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA)) used data from 257 conventionally managed fields throughout the UK to determine the effect that ground beetles have on the number of weed seeds in the soil of sugar beet, maize, and spring and winter oilseed rape fields. But it clearly has application to allotments. – Identify and nourish your beetles! <http://www.rothamsted.bbsrc.ac.uk/Research/Centres/PressReleases.php?PRID=160>

Council Decorative Veg Bed

If you are going through Castle Park alongside the river, take a look at the lovely bed, which is composed of vegetables for a decorative effect. The cabbages and lettuce look in tip top condition! It's just below the ruined church.

SEASONAL RECIPE

Beetroot and Ginger Chutney to use up the tail end of autumn gluts
8 oz / 225 g onion, chopped
1 ½ oz / 45g butter

3 tablespoons sugar
Salt and pepper
1 lb / 450g raw beetroot, peeled and grated
2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
25 ml / 1 fl oz sherry vinegar
120ml / 4 fl oz red wine

Sweat the onions slowly in the butter (they should be very soft) and add sugar and seasoning. Then add the rest of the ingredients and cook gently for 30 mins. Stir to prevent the mixture sticking and burning. It's ready when it has a spooning consistency – a little looser than ideal to allow for a bit of thickening as it cools. Pot the mixture in sterilised jars. Makes 4 jars. Leave at least 2 weeks to mellow the flavours and allow the acidity to soften.

Spinach, Coconut and Lentil Dal (for 4) – HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

About 10 minutes to assemble and prepare, 40 – 50 mins cooking time, 10 mins 'mellowing' time

250 g onions, peeled and finely chopped
50g butter
2 - 4 cloves garlic
1½ tsp cumin seeds (whole or ground)
1 tsp whole black mustard seeds
4 whole cloves
2 tsp ground turmeric
½ tsp chilli powder
200g split red lentils
400 ml can coconut milk
400 ml water (fill the empty coconut milk can)
3 – 4 thick slices of fresh ginger, peeled
450g fresh ripe tomatoes, roughly chopped
250g fresh leaf spinach, - spinach beet leaves at this time of year - washed trimmed and roughly chopped
ground black pepper + salt
juice of 1 large lime

1. Fry onions in butter until pale golden.
2. Add the garlic, thinly sliced or crushed as you prefer, and the whole spices and continue to cook gently for a further few minutes. Stir in the turmeric and chilli powder until well blended and cook a bit more.
3. Tip in the lentils and add the coconut milk, water, ginger, and tomatoes. Bring up to a simmer and cook very gently, covered, stirring occasionally, for about 30 – 40 mins or until the lentils are tender and have all but dissolved into the liquid. Add the spinach, salt and pepper at some point – about 5 mins from the end.
4. Add lime juice. Cover with a lid and leave to mellow for 10 mins. (Can also add chopped fresh coriander) When serving, it's kind to remove the slices of ginger and warn about encountering cloves. Serve with rice, naan bread etc.

