

Hotwells and District Allotments Association (HwDAA)

NEWSLETTER

HwDAA website www.hwdaa.co.uk

Issue 9 Winter 2016-17



Welcome to your Newsletter!

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Another allotment year has ended with glorious late summer sun which helped to prolong the harvest. In spite of the cold weather in spring and delay this caused to germination, the summer proved to be a good'un in the end and I hope you benefited from good crops – especially if you are new to allotment gardening and deserve a bit of encouragement.

An important winter task...

As well as all those other little jobs on your list of things to do, please will you ensure that the area around your shed is clear of clutter and rubbish (all those things that 'might come in handy one day...!') as well as long grass and overhanging branches etc. Our sheds are an important asset and need to be looked after and we will be taking a good look at the state of sheds when the first inspection takes place in early March. Also, please prune any trees or shrubs which are growing close to the hauling way and may impede access.

Absentee tenants' responsibilities

If you are unable to look after your plot for a long period of time – perhaps due to illness or a long holiday – please be sure to let your Site Rep know. Last year we encountered a few problems where tenants who were working away from home for many weeks assumed that a family member or friend would manage the plot in their absence, and then wondered why they received a letter informing them that the plot was sub-standard. Ultimately, each plot is the responsibility of the tenant, who must take full responsibility for its upkeep in line with the tenancy agreement.

Up to date addresses

If you change your home or email address, **please will you let us know** - via the contact form on our website, or give the details to your Site Rep.

Inspections 2017

When the schedule of plot inspections gets underway, tenants whose plots require improving in some way will now be notified by email rather than letter. As well as being a speedier way of doing things, it will save us a considerable sum in postage.

Reduced water usage over summer

Good news! Our water bills last year were significantly lower than the previous year. I have no doubt that this is the result of people relying less on mains water and more on stored rainwater. Thank you for playing your part. Our hope is that the bills this year are even lower.

Centenary photo competition

We have received disappointingly few photos so far and really need more – taken recently as well as in past years. Full details of what photos we would like and how to submit them are on our website.

New helpers

I am very pleased to report that Jenny Hendy has joined us as Secretary and Paul Finch has become assistant Site Rep on Kennel Lodge 1. Our thanks to both of them for volunteering to take on these important roles.

In memoriam

Ken Ellis who was secretary and later, President of our allotment association during the 1990s and early 2000s died last November age 94. Although I never knew Ken, I gather from those who did that he was a lovely man, a keen gardener (his plot was on The Meadows) and did a great job running the association, bringing about a number of much needed improvements at a time when allotment gardening was certainly not as fashionable as it is today.

Committee meetings

These continue to take place on the second Thursday of each month. Matters considered by your committee over the past few months included the following: *end of year accounts; our capital spending programme for 2016/17; the Allotment Shop; health and safety matters; monthly financial reports; applications for “structures” on plots; changes to tenancy conditions.*

Best wishes to you all for 2017

John Holland, Chair – plot 53 White City email:chair.hwdaa@outlook.com

PLOT NUMBER COMPETITION

Last year we reminded all tenants that each plot must have its number clearly displayed (has yours?). Take a look at these great signs: some strikingly simple – others, requiring great skill to make – all eye-catching!





FROM YOUR TREASURER/WEBMASTER

Our Finances

Another financial year gone – my 9th as Treasurer. The finances have been audited (many thanks again to Iggy Fung of White City), accepted and signed off by your committee. I presented a full report on our accounts at the AGM but for those of you who didn't attend, here are some of the key income figures:

Profit from Shop: £6405 – well done Steve Fay, Lesley Woodward and all the Shop team. And thanks to everyone who uses the Shop. As you can see it forms a major part of our income.

Plot Rent Income: £20985

On the other hand, here's some key expenses figures:

Site Maintenance: £15799 – this includes all the work we do around our 6 sites from strimming overgrown plots to repairs to various walls and fences and improving our security.

Depreciation: £4726 – This is the depreciation of our capital items such as sheds and water supply.

As you may know, we are a Mutual Society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. Because of this we have to plough back any "profit" into the Association. To that end we always have a programme of works planned for the following years.

A full report of our approved accounts for FY2015/16 can be found on the website:
www.hwdaa.co.uk/finances.htm

Rent payments

Generating and sending out 545 yearly invoices, collecting the payments and updating the payment database, chasing up late payers and dealing with queries takes a lot of my time during October and November each year. One of the ways of lessening this workload is to send out invoices by email. It also saves on postage as well.

Many of you have already opted to have your invoices sent by email and unlike previous years once you have opted for this method it will remain in place permanently. On the website I've put lists of plot numbers from each site of those of you who have opted for invoices by email. There's a link button to these lists on the home page entitled "**Check my Plot**". If your plot is not listed, then please consider completing the simple form linked to the plot lists which will automatically update my database with your details and then allow me to send your invoices by email.

Finally, do give the website a browse if you haven't done this recently. There's a lot of useful information on the various pages which I try to keep regularly updated. We also have a Facebook page which is also useful for the latest shop news etc.

Bob Corfield

EDITORS PICKS

Winter is the time to check that those tools that were put away in haste in the Autumn, are up to the job for the coming year. I've been reading "Tales From the Tool Shed – the History and Use of Fifty Garden Tools" by Bill Laws, which was one of my Christmas presents (sad I know) but it's a fascinating read with lovely photos and illustrations. Also, it explains how each tool should be used to best effect. I think my best tool has to be my pen knife, made in France by Opinel – the blade is easily sharpened and it has a really comfortable wooden handle.

Do you have any tools that you no longer need or that you are replacing? It doesn't matter what condition they are in - please, please drop them into the Shop at Alderman Moore – they are always in high demand so it's a great way to recycle them!

What is your favourite tool? Do you have a story you can tell about it? Email me at newsletter.hwdaa@outlook.com

Stephanie Beaven, Newsletter Editor, plot 65 (WC)

FOCUS ON OUR ALLOTMENT HOLDERS

Unusual fruit and vegetables



I thought I would tell you about an unusual squash I grew on my plot this year.

I've always enjoyed the colourful sight of strangely shaped squash appearing on peoples' plots. A few years back whilst holidaying in Southern Spain, I spotted this large green warty squash in a restaurant window and wondered whether I could grow it here. I googled "green warty squash" and discovered it was a Marina di Choggia, a squash from the coast of Italy. I tried to grow it a few years ago, and the plant grew well but produced no fruits.

This year I spotted they were selling seeds at Alderman Moores store so I thought I would give it another go. I did the same as the first time. I sowed the seed at home on a windowsill in May, and when big enough planted it out in a hole filled with a couple of shovels of manure, watering often and this year I got two large fruits weighing at just over a stone each!

Apparently they are deliciously sweet and rich in Vit A. I say apparently because they're such magnificent looking fruit that I can't bring myself to eat them. But the good news is they store for months, so I've got plenty of time to enjoy them. Squash goes well in a curry, or mashed like swede and delicious roasted sprinkled with chilli flakes.

Jon Sage, plot 28A (AM)

(see seasonal recipe idea below)

Cucamelon

When I went to shut the other back shutter of the shop on Sunday morning, I briefly looked into the greenhouse behind the shop. I saw tomatoes, covered in what I thought was bindweed. On return I looked more closely and saw cucamelon, covered in minute little gherkin like fruits.

Will be interesting to watch further development.

Barbara Fowler, allotment shop volunteer

LATEST NEWS FROM THE SHOP

Cucamelon, also called mouse melon (*Melothria scabra*) is a member of the cucurbitaceae family. Cucamelon seeds are on sale in the Shop, priced at a mere £1.00 a packet. (Suttons/Wong sell the same number of seeds for £2.49). The fruits are grape size cucumbers and are said to be easy to grow.

James Wong has a good article (with photos) on how to grow them:

<http://homegrown-revolution.co.uk/savoury-fruit/growing-cucamelons/>

Also, thanks to Jon Sage for his article on Marina di Chioggia. The Shop sells these seeds for 90p a packet so have a go and see what happens!

You could also try the squash 'Tromboncino' whose fruits can grow to 1 metre long and costs a mere 90p a pack from the Shop. (Sarah Raven sell for £1.95).

Come along to the Shop and browse the seed racks, to see our extensive range and low prices.

Lesley Woodward, Seeds Manager

SEASONAL RECIPE IDEA

As Jon Sage says (see above) squashes go well in many dishes; casseroles, curries, baked on their own and they absorb flavours so adding spices and herbs adds a new dimension to squash. They can be used as a main dish or as a side dish.

Try this:

Heat a drizzle of oil in a large pan.

Gently saute garlic and rosemary with cumin, chilli and paprika to release the flavours - use the amounts to suit your taste.

Add some onion and celery and fry off.

Add previously cooked squash and coat with the herbs and spices

Cook for about 5 minutes.

Sit down after a good few hours work on your allotment and enjoy!

Looking round our allotment sites, most people grow some variety of squash so do share your favourite recipes with us. **You can send your recipes to the newsletter editor at newsletter.hwdaa@outlook.com**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS – WHO WE ARE

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| President | David Thornley | 0117 330 0246 |
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| Secretary | Jenny Hendy | |
| Treasurer and Webmaster | Bob Corfield | 0117 907 8420 |
| Plots Secretary | Peter Tucker | 07712 848 431 |
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| Shop Manager | Steve Fay | 0117 921 4280 |
| Seeds Manager | Lesley Woodward | - |
| Site Rep – Alderman Moore's | Phil Cass | 07811 623 136 |
| Site Rep – Bower Ashton | Roy Davis | 0117 963 2102 |
| Site Rep – Kennel Lodge 1 | Craig Dunsford | 0117 902 0145 |
| Site Rep – Kennel Lodge 2 | Terry Hoskins | 0117 923 1309 |
| Site Rep - Meadows | Lyndsay Newman | 0117 966 8745 |
| Site Rep – White City | John Lansdall | 07481 474 722 |
| Events Co-ordinator | Jenny Jones | 0117 925 3574 |
| Maintenance Manager | Phil Cass | As above |