

HW&DAA NEWSLETTER

Editor: Heather Jenne hjenne@blueyonder.co.uk 0117 973 3451 Date: March 2012
Correspondence to : Registered Office, 2 Kennel Lodge Road, Bower Ashton, Bristol BS3 2JT

HWDAAs web site: www.hwdaa.co.uk

Site inspections will be starting after Easter

The teams will be checking that sheds are properly maintained and that plots are being cultivated in accordance with allotment standards.

Also that paths, verges, boundary walls/hedges and ponds are being properly maintained, that plot numbers are displayed, and that there is no litter.

A guide to cultivation was sent out in a previous newsletter and is on the website. For those on ordinary mail, a copy is enclosed.

NO BONFIRES AFTER THE END OF MARCH UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER

Security

Following the break-ins before Christmas, and the report on the situation in the December newsletter, there was a lot of discussion about security at the January AGM. Thankfully there have been no more break-ins since then.

The committee have selected a contractor to beef up the fencing along part of the BA and AM boundaries, and do work to the AM gates. We have applied for a charity grant to help pay for the work and hope to start the work shortly after hearing the result of our bid for funds. We are also considering getting more robust and possibly double-sided gate locks (ie you have to tap in a code to get out as well as get in)

Stores News

Come and visit the Alderman Moores stores (open **Sat, Sun and Weds 10.30-12.00**) or the Bower Ashton Stores (now open **Weds 12.30 – 14.00 and Sun 10.30 – 12.00**) for:-

- roofing felt and clout nails, wood preservative and brushes - everything you need to get your shed up to scratch for the site inspections.
- new season's seeds
- onions sets, just in. (sorry, spring-planting garlic just about sold out)
- some seed potatoes
- 6 foot + 8 foot canes
- fleece, netting,
- enviromesh (expensive but effective barrier against carrot fly and leek moth)
- bags of humix compost, pelleted chicken manure, vitax seaweed extract and other soil improvers and fertilisers
- and lots of other gardening perquisites!

As always, you can get hot drinks and consult gardening books and magazines in the Alderman Moores Stores when open for business. The current RHS magazine has interesting articles on Edulis, the mail order supplier of strange fruits and exotic vegetables (your editor has several of them on her plot), slug and snail control, broad bean varieties trial and growing advice.

Volunteers needed to ...

1. help in Bower Ashton stores – a couple of hours on a Wednesday or Sunday morning
2. organise talks / workshops
3. take over newsletter editorship – time for a fresh input - discuss with newsletter editor

Offers via the website, or to your site rep

President and Committee elected at AGM

Stan Morgan	President, stores manager
Bob Franks	Chairman
Bob Corfield,	Treasurer, KL1 site rep, webmaster
Peter Tucker	Plots Secretary
Angie Tonge	Secretary, AM stores rota
Phil Cass	AM Site Rep, Maintenance
Roy Davis	BA Site Rep
Heather Jenne	Newsletter Editor
Lyndsay Newman	Mds site rep, BA stores rota
Carolyn Robinson	Environmental concerns
John Holland	WC Site Rep
Terry Hoskins	KL2 Site Rep
Ron Pedley	Seeds Manager
Malcolm Clark	AM Assistant Site Rep
John Tully	AM Assistant Site Rep
Graeme Dowling	WC Assistant Site Rep

Membership

As reported at the AGM in January, we now have 484 members on 510 plots About 100 tenants left during the last year. The waiting list is about 200 strong, and is expected to rise to about 250. People have to wait about 7 – 9 months for a plot on Alderman Moores and up to 2 years for the other sites.

Water Etiquette

KEEP WATER IN THE TANKS CLEAN to avoid spread of plant diseases. Only use a clean watering can to dip into the tank.

IN PARTICULAR DO NOT PUT DIRTY TOOLS, VEG, HANDS etc, into the tanks to clean them. Fill another container, eg a bucket, then clean the items away from the water tank.

Possible drought

In case we have a drought year, think about things you can do to save water.

Water storage and irrigation strategies

Collect rainwater from shed + greenhouse roofs + polytunnel plastic in waterbutts

Water directly onto the soil above the roots, not the leaves.

In dry spells, **water thoroughly** every 7 – 10 days rather than little and often. Light watering can be counter-productive as it may not reach the depth at which most roots are found, and encourages surface roots which are most at risk of drying out.

Water in the cool of the evening or early morning. Evaporation rates are much reduced.

Root Watering: sink 5 – 8 cm pipes, or plastic drink bottle with the bottoms cut off, in the soil alongside plants that might need watering eg strawberries grown in raised beds, climbing French beans, in greenhouses and polytunnels

Water planting holes while planting plantlets, **and seed trenches** before sowing seeds

Soil Management

Dig in organic matter: It acts as a sponge, retaining moisture - this can increase moisture-holding capacity by the equivalent of up to 50 mm of rainfall in the first year after application – enough to supply plants for around 20 days.

Mulching onto moist soil will help lock in the water. A thick layer of organic mulch (eg green waste, compost) reduces evaporation - and discourages weeds.

Remove weeds promptly as they appear, as they suck water out of the soil

Stop digging or cultivating soil by late March if possible, and hoe only to remove weeds, as both increase soil evaporation. This obviously means advance preparation and clearly doesn't apply to preparing the ground for follow on crops.

Don't walk on wet, heavy soils in winter: it can cause compaction, damaging the structure and lowering the moisture-holding capacity

Growing Strategies

Choose more drought-tolerant varieties if available. Carrots, parsnips and cabbages can get by on less water than salad leaves, tomatoes, courgettes, cauliflowers and peas.

Delay planting perennials, eg fruit bushes, until autumn when water is more available: planted now they will need irrigation all summer

Crops need less water than you might think, especially if you have trained the roots to go down into the soil to seek out water and the ground is in good condition. The times when they need moisture most are at planting time and when flowers that produce the crops (eg beans, courgettes) are open for pollination.

Composting Toilets

These have been installed on KL1 and AM and should be nearly operational by the time you read this. You may wonder how to use them... there will be instructions in the loos and also on the website.

Beekeeping policy

This can be viewed and printed from the website. If you want a hard copy, ask Bob Corfield to send you one. There are a few pots of honey for sale in AM stores - from hives kept partly on the allotments.

SEASONAL RECIPES

Sorrel (along with ransomes aka wild garlic) is one of those excellent early leaves, looking fresh and young in March - apparently high in vitamins and calcium. The taste is fresh and slightly lemony. Contact me (editor) if you want some divisions from my plants later in the year. Chives in my polytunnel are producing fresh leaves now as well

Sorrel Soup (serves 4)

4 handfuls sorrel leaves

1 medium onion

500g potatoes

50g butter

3 tbsp cream

1 litre stock (chicken or veg)

salt and pepper

1. Peel and chop onion + potatoes, wash sorrel
2. Melt butter, add onions and cook till transparent but not brown. Add potatoes and half sorrel leaves, stir, put lid on pan and sweat for 5 mins.
3. Add stock, bring to boil, then simmer till potatoes cooked. Season to taste.
4. Blend rest of sorrel leaves, add to pan, then blend the contents. Add cream
5. Heat through to serve – don't boil, otherwise the soup will lose its colour – serve with an extra swirl of cream and some snipped chives on top.

Chives Bubble and Squeak (serves 2 – 4)

450g (1lb) cooked mashed potato

225g (8 oz) cooked cabbage, kale etc, cut into fine slices

1 egg, beaten

115 (4 oz) cheddar cheese, grated

2 tablespoons finely chopped chive leaves

freshly grated nutmeg + seasoning to taste

plain flour for coating

oil for frying

1. Mix potatoes, cabbage, cheese, egg, chives, nutmeg + seasoning. Divide and shape into 8 patties, Chill if possible for an hour in fridge (this helps stop the mixture falling apart when you fry).
2. Once the patties are cold, toss each in flour. Heat a large frying pan with oil until it is quite hot. Carefully add the patties to the pan, frying for about 3 mins on each side. Serve with homemade tomato sauce – that's another recipe!