

HW&DAA NEWSLETTER

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CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Plot Rents

The annual plot rents for the coming allotment year commencing 1st October 2013 and ending 30th September 2014 will be:

Large plots, £50;
Medium plots, £40;
Small plots, £30;
Very small plots, £16.

You should be aware that despite the increase in costs occasioned by inflation, the Committee will have kept the same rates for the past five years! We have also recently undertaken substantial improvements to site security, overseen the provision of new water systems for five of the six sites, together with improved hauling ways and gate locks.

This is in no small measure due to the profit from the Stores, even though its prices are virtually unbeatable (particularly the seeds) and the fact that it is staffed by volunteers.

It is at this point in the allotment year that we give notice of the annual plot rents for the allotment year commencing 1st October 2014 and ending 30th September 2015. Rents will be not more than:

Large plots, £60;
Medium plots, £47;
Small plots, £35;
Very small plots, £19.

You may notice that these figures are precisely those we used a year ago but were not applied for this coming year as we considered we were likely to meet all our liabilities at the old rent rates. These liabilities include the provision of a new water system for the Alderman Moores site.

As an interesting comparison, the Bristol City Council Allotment rents for 2014/2015 are set to be:

Large plots, £70;
Medium plots, £60;
Small plots, £40;
Very small plots, £20.

I would like to think that your Committee ensures that you get good value for your money. As food prices rise you will be able to sustain your family (and friends) for a rental of less than £1 per week with fresh vegetables, to say nothing of the exercise, fresh air and friends of a similar persuasion! A note or email of thanks will make it seem all worthwhile.

Awards

Bristol City Council makes awards each year to individual allotment holders under several categories. Using outside judges, these are determined on a city-wide basis. So if you are recognised you will be one of some 12,000 tenants!

This year we are proud to announce the following Bristol City Council award recipients:

Best Kept Allotment, First Prize: **John Holland**, (White City 53)

Best First Year Plot, Second Prize, **Graham Rowden** (White City 27B)

The awards for the Best Kept Allotments will be presented at The Annual Allotments Review Meeting to be held in The City Hall, College Green on the evening of the 6th November 2013 at 8.30 pm. It would be great if members could support our winners that evening so please make a note in your diaries. The meeting will also be of general interest to all allotment holders.

Best Kept Allotment, Highly Commended:

Kathy McGregor (White City 46)

Kean Lamb (White City 51B)

Chris Walsh (Kennel Lodge 2)

Heather Jenne (The Meadows 5)

Julia Heckford (The Meadows 6A)

Mrs Thorn (The Meadows 27)

Joe Bell (Alderman Moores 263/264).

NB. I have been informed that Kathy McGregor's husband John has been diagnosed with a serious illness. We wish him an early recovery.

HW&DAA Awards

Best Kept Allotment (The Harry Green Shield):
John Holland (White City 53).

The Shield will be presented at the AGM in February '14

Best First Year Plot (The Eric Grimes Cup):
Graham Rowden (White City 27B)

The cup will be presented at the AGM (probably by Eric's sons).

First Year Plots, Highly Commended:

Janet Naylor (Kennel Lodge 2)
Lee Kwan Leung (Alderman Moores 42A)
Anne Yerbury (Alderman Moores 274B)

First Year Plots, Commended:

Margaret Gorely (White City 24A)
Wendy Miller (White City 38A)
Lesley Bruce (White City 59)
Hannah West (Alderman Moores 201A)
Ray Blake (Alderman Moores 204)
Christine Bartlett (Alderman Moores 217A)
Susie Morris (Alderman Moores 274A)
Anna Verganno (The Meadows)
Jude Mountford (Bower Ashton)

Best Scarecrow: **John Smith** (Alderman Moores 224)

Projects

As mentioned above, it is intended that the water system for Alderman Moores will be refurbished in October 2013. More dip tanks with automatic valves will be installed. It will no longer be necessary to refill the tanks by leaving the taps running (and possibly forgetting when the pressure drops and you thought you had turned it off). There will be taps on a number of tanks so that you can fill a kettle for a brew-up. There will be a separate main to serve the flush toilet and the Stores, which can be left on when all the others are closed down for a cold winter.

There will of course be some unavoidable disruption for a couple of weeks or so, and the installation will be weather-dependent. The hauling ways will be refurbished as part of the project; but they need improving anyway. We will advise everyone nearer the time and ask for your patience while this project is underway.

Work will shortly commence on enhancing the security at Bower Ashton. This should mainly concern the area at the car-park end as affected by the public right of way. Hopefully this work will prevent a recurrence of the recent break-in. Plot holders involved will be given due warning.

Harry Green

All but new tenants will have heard of Harry Green (that's right, the one that presented the Shield). Harry has been on the same Bower Ashton plot for 67 years. At the end of September he will be 100 years old! Apart from the fact that he is a lovely chap, he has never been sparing in his advice to others. I always say that he has forgotten more than I will ever know about gardening. Somewhat frail now, he has to have a little assistance. We intend to present him with a memento of his centenary. If you would like to join in by sending an appropriate email or letter via Bob Corfield, it would make Harry's day.

Bonfires

From the first of November it is permitted to burn rubbish. BUT, be very careful! Whether an open fire or an incinerator, be sure that the items are DRY otherwise you will generate much smoke, to the annoyance of your neighbours. Remember that winds are fickle. This is particularly important if you are near housing or a public highway as substantial fines could ensue. Remember there are many asthmatic people about!

You may NOT burn carpets, plastics or other carcinogenic materials, and you must never leave the site without first completely extinguishing the fire. On balance, it is best to compost most materials. Not only does it avoid problems, but it is good for the soil. Why waste it?!

Stores

A new consignment of seeds and onions will be available next month. You will be alerted on the web and elsewhere. See the article below.

Changing of the Guard

This will be my last contribution to the Newsletter. I am resigning as Chairman and giving up the last half of my plot at the end of September.

My arthritis has become debilitating and at 85 I feel someone younger should drive things forward. I shall leave with much sadness as I have made many friends on Alderman Moores and elsewhere. I shall particularly miss the support of the Committee and the Store's personnel, all of whom

have been simply wonderful. Hopefully I can become an Associate member so that I can use the Stores occasionally.

It seems not so many years ago that I was ploughing areas on Alderman Moores that were virtual jungle, when we were unable to let plots and there was some talk of giving up the administration altogether. With the support of Steve Fay, Mike Stephens, Dave Brice, Eric Grimes, Iggy Fung, Angie Tonge, Phil and Kathy Keen, Stan Morgan, Brian Gorrigan, Phil Cass, Roy Davies, Ron Pedley, Heather Jenne and many others, we turned it all around. With unwavering support from Steve Clampin the Council Allotment's manager, we built the Stores and the flush toilet on Alderman Moores and never looked back.

I am leaving the Chair in very good hands. John Holland will be taking over from the 1st October. As John's plot won the 'Best Kept in Bristol' this year he will certainly be speaking with authority. More than that, John has acted as my deputy for the last year or so and has been responsible for the capital-expenditure forecasts and the Site inspections. I am sure the Association will thrive under his tenure. I wish him and you all the best of luck for the future.

Bob Franks, Chairman

Stores News

The days are shortening and our thoughts turn to what we can plant in the autumn. This year we will have several different types of onion and garlic available in the shop, including 'Japanese Onion' (recommended by Charles Dowding) and 'Elephant Garlic'. In broad beans we will have an organic 'Super Aquadulce', a new improved variety. When potato time comes we will have 'Sarpo', developed in Hungary for its blight-resistant qualities. Many thanks to Lesley, our seeds manager for all her hard work in researching the different varieties we can offer.

The growbags are on special offer at £7 for five bags, and are useful for conditioning the soil.

There are many items in stock that would make very nice presents for your favourite gardener, or even those budding gardeners of tender years. We have a beautiful galvanised watering can. One of our members was given one on her 10th birthday — what a great idea! We also have a miniature gardening set for the wee ones, to ignite their interest. The Stores are shortly hoping to stock an

innovative range of products made from recycled plastic pots, some of which would make lovely presents such as sundials and clocks for the garden. We will keep you posted.

Don't forget the benefits of sowing green manure on those bare patches, some of which will fix nitrogen in the soil.

The library in the shop has been reorganised and we will be lending books to members shortly. The galvanised hoops have proved quite a discussion point, with endless conversations about 'how to' and 'how not to' construct that perfect cloche.

Some plots are now heading towards the next 'Turner Prize'. We now have 8 metre-wide black netting available for those of you wishing to construct the ultimate fruit cage.

The recent Plant Swop/Sale proved to be a lovely day, in all respects: the sun shone and it was fun to meet our fellow gardeners and exchange tips over a cuppa and a piece of cake. Thank you to everyone who took part and especially to those who helped out on the day. A total of £261 was donated to 'Seeds for Africa', who sent a very nice email of thanks.

Many of these items are only available at the Alderman Moores shop due to lack of space at Bower Ashton, so do come and visit. As always we welcome your thoughts about what we should stock — please let us know.

Elaine, Stores Manager

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Top 10 Crops To Grow Over Autumn and Winter

(Adapted from an article in 'The Telegraph', 20 Oct. 2008.)

There is still a good range of crops that can be sown right up to the end of October than can supplement the leeks, parsnips and sprouts that should already be settled in. Except for garlic, onion sets and cabbages, sow in modules in a cold frame or greenhouse and plant out as mini-plants a few weeks later. While slugs and snails are less of a threat now as they start to hibernate, they can still ruin tender young seedlings. Here's another 7 crops that can be sown now:

1 Broad Beans

Sowing broad beans in autumn has several advantages: it leaves more time to do other tasks in spring, they are ready a good month earlier than those sown in April and they usually don't get black fly. Plant twice as much as you think you need and protect with fleece and/or other barriers to mice, wind and inclement weather. Thin out if necessary in spring. Good varieties are 'Aquadulce Claudia' and 'Super Aquadulce'.

2 Peas and Pea Shoots

For a late spring crop, it's worth trying to sow seeds now, especially in mild areas. Plant one inch deep and about one inch apart, to make up for a higher loss rate. Plant in groups of three lines all 12 inches apart to form thick rows, and make each thick row 18 inches apart. 'Meteor' is a first-early variety and overwinters well.

3 Garlic

The easiest crop to grow. Plant cloves individually to a depth of 2.5 inches on light soils and a lot less deep on heavy soils, but always a minimum of one inch below the surface. The distance should be about one foot apart each way. 'Solent Wight' is a trusty variety (stores well and has large cloves).

4 Onions, Spring Onions and Shallots

There are quite a few varieties of onions from sets that can go in now. 'Electric' is a good red set, 'Radar' a good yellow and 'Shakespeare' is a highly reliable white. Sow some spring onions now. The Stores will be stocking popular varieties shortly. Shallots, with their sweet, subtle flavour, are becoming popular and they store well.

5 Winter and Lambs Lettuce

'Winter Gem' is a good variety of winter lettuce and can be sown right through the winter until January in a cold frame. Undemanding and easy to grow, lamb's lettuce can be sown up until the end of October outside. It can be picked until December or later if the weather is mild; protect with fleece.

6 Spinach

Another vegetable that is very popular now. Pick it younger and just wilt the leaves rather than ruin it with overcooking. Useful varieties that will tolerate being sown until the end of October are 'Riccio d'Asti' and 'Merlo Nero'. The big advantage of autumn sowing is that there is no tendency to bolt.

7 Spring Cabbage

If you talk to your plot neighbours, or ring round some garden centres, you may find some spring

cabbage plants still available or surplus to requirements. Plant 12 inches apart each way and earth up the soil around their stems after they have got going. Fleece or cloches can help. Thin early plants for spring greens and leave the rest to heart up. Watch out for pigeons.

Seasonal Recipes

Fresh, young runner beans are a gem amongst the many wonderful vegetables available during the British summer. Brought to the British Isles in the 17th Century by John Tradescant (gardener to King Charles I) they were grown as a decorative plant before being used as a food in Britain.

Runner Beans with Tomato, Garlic and Chilli

(Recipe from BBC Good Food magazine, 2007)

This is an excellent recipe for everyone. Non-vegetarians may want to try adding a handful of cubed French or Italian salami, or Spanish chorizo to the pan at the same time as the garlic goes in. I've tried this version while writing this piece and it is delicious.

- 300g Runner beans, preferably young
- 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- 2 Garlic cloves, finely sliced
- Large pinch chilli flakes or fresh chillies, deseeded and finely sliced
- 2 Cloves
- 2 x 400g Tins of plum tomatoes, or a mixture of tinned and fresh allotment tomatoes
- Small bunch of basil, torn

Run a potato peeler down either side of the beans to remove any stringy bits. Cut on the diagonal into 2-cm pieces. Heat the olive oil in a large, wide frying pan and add the garlic. Cook for two minutes then add the beans, chilli and cloves.

Cook for two minutes then tip in the drained tomatoes. Cover and cook for 20–30 minutes or until the beans are tender and the sauce is thick and rich. (Older beans may require double this time; you may want to par-boil first.) Stir through the basil just before serving.

Contributions to the Newsletter

If you have any interesting articles, recipes, news or views that you would like to share with others in the Newsletter, please phone or email the Editor using the contact details on Page 1. We are always very grateful for contributions from the members of HWDAA.

Your Editor