

Autumn 2021

Allotment News

Hotwells and District Allotment Association

Thanks to all our fantastic volunteers

Despite erratic weather many allotments across all our sites are looking better than ever and even producing bumper harvests. As usual, we win some and lose some – for me it was the best year ever for sweetcorn and outdoor tomatoes (blight resistant!) and the worst for beetroot.

Everything I say or write as chair seems to come back to an appreciation of the work of our many volunteers. Our site reps keep the shared areas of each site looking good, interview prospective new tenants when plots become vacant and much, much more. In June, we put up a plaque in the shop to commemorate the work of Bob Franks who did so much for HwDAA and the promotion of allotments generally. At the same event we thanked retiring volunteers, Lesley and Angie, for their years of work organising seeds, potatoes and shop volunteers. We are also losing David Thornley, our president of many years, and thank him for all he has contributed.

We have a new volunteer co-ordinator, a new team of shop volunteers and new people who have taken on responsibility for stocking the shop. We also have volunteers doing wild life surveys and linking us into wider environmental networks. Our environment officer is working with the shop group to reduce the use of plastics.

Inspections - A Gentle Reminder

Following last year's suspension of inspections due to Covid we have resumed our annual check to see that plots are well tended and productive.

Most people respond positively to a gentle reminder from site reps that plots need regular attention. We are always trying to balance the need for productive plots while recognising that tenants manage busy lives and life events. And for HwDAA, as for allotment associations across the country, demand for plots has increased hugely. We are looking at the timetable for inspections so that site reps do not end up in the Autumn with very overgrown plots, covered with

bindweed and brambles, that are difficult to bring back into cultivation. Many tenants, overwhelmed by the demands of a bigger plot, are relieved to go down to a smaller one. Please talk to your site rep if you would like to do this.

I wish everyone a golden Autumn, continuing harvests, and a flying start to Spring growth.

Jenny Hendy, HwDAA Chair

Email: chair@hwdaa.co.uk

Shop news

The allotment shop sells extremely good value seeds, potatoes, onion sets, netting and much more. It also contributes to the income of the association, allowing reasonable rents and additional site maintenance. Takings have been down because of the lockdowns so we are really hoping people will use and support the shop in the coming months. Onions and broad beans are now available for Autumn planting and garlic will be in soon. Bags of peat free compost are also available. The shop now takes contactless payments as well as cheques.

The shop is on the Alderman Moore site. It is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 10.30am-12 noon.



Photo: Nisus Larsen

More volunteers wanted

HwDAA has some fantastic volunteers but we are always looking for more help. We need:

- A shop co-ordinator: to take an overview of the shop and the many volunteers involved.
- A website manager: to be responsible for the operation and design of our website, which is increasingly important for communication and information for tenants and people wanting a plot.
- A working party for Alderman Moore to help clear some overgrown plots.
- More shop volunteers are always needed.

We are pleased to have so many younger people and families as new tenants and, if you have the time, we would be delighted to welcome some of you as new volunteers. Contact Jenny Hendy, HwDAA Chair. Email: chair@hwdaa.co.uk

What three words

Our allotment sites don't have postcodes but we've always let the emergency services know what the nearest postcode is to each site entrance. These are displayed on the health and safety notices on site noticeboards and on the website health and safety page.

What Three Words is a system that divides the whole world up into three metre squares and allocates three unique words to each square. The emergency services use this system to go to a location.

The three key words for our sites are:

- Kennel Lodge 1: stove.pills.crisp
- Kennel Lodge 2: public.water.salon
- Meadows: mouse.forms.cases
- White City: drama.dream.boxing
- Bower Ashton: print.festivity.angle
- Alderman Moore: dart.verbs.candy

If you need an ambulance or fire services you can tell the operator the What Three Words for your site. This will help them find you. You



can find out more at: what3words.com/ways-to-use

Want to check the words above? For KL1, just enter: <https://what3word.com/stove.pills.crisp>.

Bob Corfield, IS Manager



Money matters

Rent Invoices

Plot rent invoices for the year starting 1 October 2021 will be issued in early September. Most invoices are issued by email. Please keep an eye on your spam folder in case the invoice email goes in there. Rents are unchanged from last year. The due date for payment is 1 October 2021.

Paying your rent

The preferred method of payment is by bank transfer to our usual bank account using your site and plot number as payment reference. You can also pay in the allotment shop on Saturdays and Sundays, 10.30am-12 noon or by sending a cheque to the treasurer. Details are on the invoice.

Tenants who are getting universal credit or council tax reduction may be eligible for a discount. Details are on the website. Please let the treasurer know as soon as possible if you are eligible.

Garden Centre Discounts

On request, the treasurer can provide a simple proof of membership which enables tenants to claim discounts on plants at Riverside and Brackenwood garden centres. Tenants who requested a proof of membership last year will automatically be sent one this year and do not need to apply again.

Loose Compost on Sites

Loose, peat-free, green compost is now available on Alderman Moore, Bower Ashton and Kennel Lodge 1. The price is £4 per wheelbarrow load or £30 for a year's worth, working on the principle of 25-27 barrow loads. Payment can be made through BACS using the same bank details as your invoice payment. For the reference put in your plot number followed by the word compost.

John Buchanan, Treasurer
Email: treasurer@hwdaa.co.uk

Wildlife friendly surveys

Allotment plots should always be wildlife friendly to encourage a diverse range of fauna and flora. There are many simple things that individual tenants and HwDAA can do to make the sites even more welcoming to wildlife whilst ensuring that they are still being cultivated and well-managed. Many of us are already doing some of these things such as keeping free of pesticides and enriching the soil with homemade organic compost and growing plants which attract pollinators.

We carried out simple surveys of Kennel Lodge 1 in May and of Bower Ashton in August. We walked the boundaries, looked at plots and talked to plot holders. They told us they had seen weasel, fox, vole, mole, toad and frogs. Badgers and rabbits are also around but alas no hedgehogs.

On KL1 we counted fifteen ponds and found eight on Bower Ashton. We saw newts, and several plot-holders spoke of having tadpoles.

We were also pleased to see two beehives, on different plots on Bower Ashton. Both were using mesh screens to channel the bees' line of flight, as recommended by HwDAA.

We thought that the perimeter of the sites might offer potential for further wildlife habitats. On KL1 there is 303m of wall but also 192m of hedge or fence with hedging. All of this was mature hedgerow, undoubtedly providing nesting shelter, flowers for pollinators and food for birds.

On Bower Ashton almost the whole perimeter of the site already has wildlife-friendly growth, such

as hedges, trees, ivy or brambles.

KL1 also has an area of land known as the Annexe. This contains a low-lying and damp plot of no use for conventional growing. It is actively being managed for wildlife. It's a useful reminder that there may be similar rough patches on other sites. Perhaps in those quieter, slightly scruffy ends of a plot, behind the shed or bean pole collection.

Further Improvements

Small scale improvements add up, and simple actions that could help with wildlife are often ones that can be taken by individual tenants.

These include:

- Ponds, even modest in size. These are one of the easiest ways of increasing the diversity of wildlife.
- Nesting and bird boxes
- Insect hotels, whether they be bought, constructed or just a square foot or so of intentionally untidy roof tiles and small logs.

HwDAA could play its part by actively encouraging tenants to make their plots more wildlife friendly. For example site reps could include these points in their conversations with new tenants. Site volunteers could also be recruited to give practical tips or viewings of their ponds. Further tips and articles will be included in the newsletter and on the website.

You can read the full report on the HwDAA website:

https://www.hwdaa.co.uk/wildlife_surv.htm.

***Martin Howard, Bower Ashton
and Paul Finch, Kennel Lodge 1***



Snippets

We enjoyed a small gathering of ten shop volunteers for an allotment BBQ in August.

Blessed by fine weather, we had the added bonus of a Hot Air Balloon overflight of Bower Ashton. It was great for the “ Volleys “ to meet up and for some to see another allotment site. Why not become a shop volunteer and join us next year?

Rik Goldsmith, Bower Ashton

We had a mini 'plot crawl' last year during the second lockdown to share and see each others plots. I am always slightly embarrassed by my plot because it is a bit wild and unkempt. So I created a tiny exhibition in my shed, to show what I get up to, which is mostly painting. My first visitor 'paid' with produce and drummed up interest from the haulingway as other allotmenters passed by. It has been very sweet to connect with neighbours on the site over lockdown particularly. I would love this kind of thing to happen more often and enjoyed seeing their plots, it was really inspiring.

Sally Dove, Bower Ashton



Photo: Sally Dove

The Get Growing Garden Trail is an opportunity to explore Bristol's secret fruit and veg gardens. This year, the Trail has 23 sites opening over the weekend of 18-19 September, giving HwDAA allotment holders a chance to see how they do it in other parts of the city.

The website also has a lovely video of growers across Bristol including some of those at Bower Ashton. For more details go to:

www.bristolfoodnetwork.org

Jane Stevenson, Alderman Moore



Real Seeds only sells open-pollinated seeds - no F1 hybrids or genetically modified types.

This means you can save seed from all their plants so there's no need to buy new every year. There is a free Seed Saving Instruction Booklet on their website which gives advice on timing, drying and storage. Saving seeds from plants that have performed well for you means you can get good seed and great vegetables that are adapted to your local conditions. Their website also has an interesting video of a 140 year old seed packing machine in action. It picks up and opens the paper packet, puts in a scoop of seed, glues the flap, folds it over and stacks it neatly in a wooden tray. Go to: realseed.co.uk

Pete Vowles, Kennel Lodge 2

Wendy Rowley is carrying out a survey on the use of food waste as compost on allotments. She is an MSc student at UWE in the school of Environmental Health. The survey takes about three minutes to complete and is entirely anonymous. You can find the survey [here..](#)

Rules and regs

Animal traps (cages) are not to be used on any of our sites. Their use is illegal unless you hold an annual general licence issued by the appropriate authority. Unlicensed use of such a trap could mean the termination of your tenancy.

Autumn and winter are the best times to plant fruit bushes and trees but it's important to make sure you choose only cultivated fruit trees growing on dwarfing rootstock. This will limit growth to 12 ft in height. Any other trees are not allowed on allotment plots.

Get your shed ready for winter. Plot holders are responsible for maintaining the sheds on their plots. This includes minor repairs and re-felting where necessary. The HwDAA shop sells shed roof felt, nails and wood preservative.

For more information on sheds and trees go to www.hwdaa.co.uk

Learn more - grow more

As well as learning from our allotment neighbours, there are always plenty of opportunities in Bristol to learn more about growing and wildlife. We plan to let you know about some of these in each newsletter – and if you are already involved in any opportunities for sharing knowledge and expertise, please let us know.

Avon Wildlife Trust

Tree Identification in Autumn: a short online and in-person course.

Join ecologist Matt Collis for a two hour online session learning the theory behind tree ID, followed by a face to face autumnal walk-and-explore later that week.

Monday 4 October and Sunday 10 October, 6pm - 8pm. For more details go to:

www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk

Avon Organic Group

Talk : Rhizome Clinic: growing herbs to make herbal remedies

Becs Griffiths and Annwen Jones are two clinical herbalists passionate about working towards social justice. They set up a Community Herb Garden in St Werburghs seven years ago, to support Herbalists Without Borders.

Thursday 23rd September. For more details go to: www.groworganicbristol.org

RSPB

The RSPB website offers thirty-three wildlife garden ideas such as how to build a hedgehog house, and a list of recommended plants for bees and butterflies. There's nothing complicated here, so it's ideal as a reminder for us who, for example, keep saying 'I must get round to making a pond', and for children to inspire parents, or vice-versa! To get inspired go to: www.rspb.org.uk

Bristol Photo Festival

Growing is one of the themes in the new Bristol Photo Festival. Room to Grow is a photo exhibition at Windmill Hill City Farm. This outdoor show has photos displayed throughout the gardens. It looks at the stories and history of both allotments and allotment holders, with photos from the public taken throughout the 2020 and 2021 lockdowns. If you contributed do let us know. The exhibition is open every day from 9am-5pm until 31 October.

There are many more allotment photos both old and new on the festival website and everyone is

invited to add their own photos to this archive. See how many HwDAA ones you can spot on the website. www.bristolphotofestival.org

Martin Howard, Bower Ashton

Recipes

Rhubarb Pudding

Serves two but I always double this recipe up.

Ingredients

1 egg, 1/2 cup sugar, 1 rounded dessertspoon self-raising flour, 1/4 tsp nutmeg, 1 1/2 cups diced rhubarb

Heat oven to 375F, 190C.

Beat egg and sugar until light and fluffy. Then add flour, nutmeg and lastly rhubarb. Put into a well-greased pie dish and bake for about 30-40 minutes. Serve with cream or ice cream.

Mavis Whitfield, KL2

Winter Squash or Pumpkin Curry

Ingredients

Pumpkin, or squash (roughly 1kg), tomatoes - 800g, tin of coconut milk, vegetable stock 400ml, vegetable oil, 2 onions, 4 cm piece of ginger, 4 cloves of garlic, 1 fresh red chilli, 1 tsp mustard seeds, 1 tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp ground coriander, 1 tsp turmeric, 1 lime, a handful of fresh coriander.

Chop onions and cook slowly in oil. Whilst they're softening peel ginger and cut into fine matchsticks. Add ginger to softened onions cook for five minutes. Stir in turmeric, cumin and coriander.

Roughly chop tomatoes and stir into onions, cook softly for about seven minutes. Pour in the stock, bring to the boil and turn down to a gentle simmer.

Peel squash, cut flesh into large chunks and season with salt and pepper. Lower the squash into the pot and simmer for 20-25 minutes. Stir in the coconut milk carefully so as not to break up squash pieces. Cook for a further few minutes. Stir in lime juice and coriander.

Serve with rice.

Jobs for Autumn

September and October are busy months for harvesting and storing crops such as winter squash, pumpkins, onions and potatoes.

Harvest pumpkins and winter squash before the frost arrives. Leave a length of stem on the fruits and cure them by putting in a greenhouse or sunny windowsill for about two weeks. Once the skins are hardened they will keep for months at room temperature.

Onions need to be stored in the light and potatoes in the dark, frost free.

There is still just time in **September** to sow seeds that will give you salad leaves throughout winter such as chervil, dill, coriander, corn salad, land cress, rocket, winter lettuce, mustards, mizuna and other Oriental leaves. Once plants are established you can pick the larger leaves every ten days or so, leaving the plant to grow on. These plants are frost hardy but do much better under some sort of shelter.

In October and November sow broad beans, winter onions, shallots and garlic which are all available from the allotment shop.

Stake Brussels sprouts and sprouting broccoli plants to prevent these tall plants from being blown over in strong winds

The fruited canes of summer fruiting raspberry can be cut to ground level after harvesting in summer. Select the strongest new young canes, around six to eight per plant, and tie them in along wire supports.

In November and December you can start to harvest Brussels sprouts and kales. You should start picking from the bottom of the stalk. Take out any yellowing leaves at the base to ensure good air circulation.

Autumn is a good time to clear and tidy up the allotment in preparation for next year. It's important not to leave the remains of summer crops to rot as they can harbour overwintering pests and diseases.

Fallen leaves can be added to compost or to make leaf mould. Compost is invaluable for improving your soil so think about making a new

heap and turning existing ones. For no diggers Autumn is an ideal time to mulch while the soil is still warm. Spread your home made compost on your beds and let it do its good work over winter.

Useful websites

- The HwDAA website has lots of useful allotment information - www.hwdaa.co.uk
- The National Allotment Society - for growing guides and much more - www.nsalg.org.uk
- The Royal Horticultural Society has a Grow Your Own section - www.rhs.org.uk



Your new newsletter

This is the first copy of our new style newsletter. It will come out every quarter following the seasons. We welcome relevant contributions from all members of HwDAA. If you have any news or stories from your site - growing tips, recipes, successes, failures, new ideas - I'd love to hear from you.

You don't have to produce a polished piece, a few sentences or draft notes are fine. The maximum for any article is 500 words and all items can be edited.

The newsletter is a work in progress so do let me know if you have any comments or ideas about how you would like to see it develop in the future.

The next edition will go out on 14 December. Please let me have any contributions by 26 November.

Gillian Turner, Editor

To email the editor [click here](#)

