



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.sunnysideallotments.org.uk
email: info@sunnysideallotments.org.uk

No: 3 July 2020

Editor's Note

Summer is whizzing by, and crops and weeds are growing apace. Plots have been looking well-groomed, due to all the extra time many tenants have had, having put their usual commitments and pleasures on hold.

I'm glad to have received contributions from plot-holders old and new for this issue; I hope you enjoy reading it.

Lin Phillips,
Editor, A18 lin@sunnysideallotments.org.uk 07835 623981

Chairman's Notes

We are still in the grip of Covid precautions, even though there seems to be hope on the horizon. Unfortunately, the Open Day cannot go ahead on August 9th, but we will try to hold some form of event, perhaps in September or October.

As well as harvesting fruit and veg, please keep weed seeds under control as far as possible. I have proved that runner beans do not like frost, so don't be tempted to get ahead by planting before the end of May!

I know that some tenants, especially on SSN, are experiencing deer problems. The Council has looked into an effective way of deer control, but so far the options seem expensive and not likely to succeed. Any ideas welcome.

There have been some reports of theft of tools / produce, so please take care and report any losses to the police and a member of the Committee.

Good gardening

John Eaton



Seed Order 2020

Now that your plot is fully planted (!?) we can start to think about next year's crops.

As you are probably aware, all plot-holders who became full members of our society (by paying their subscription before the end of May) are affiliates of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). This entitles you to take advantage of the seed ordering scheme which the NSALG arranges in conjunction with Kings Seeds (www.kingsseeds.com). A look at the Kings Seeds website shows their prices to be very competitive compared with the likes of Suttons, Thompson and Morgan, etc., and as affiliates we get a further 40% discount (the prices in the catalogue reflect this discount).

How does the scheme work?

Catalogues will be distributed to you when they arrive, normally by early September. I ask you to return your order and payment to me by the end of October. Seeds are delivered to me in December – I will let you know they have arrived, and you collect them from me. Potato orders are received in January – again, you collect from me. Fruit plants are generally delivered to you directly – so make sure you put your address on the order form.

As a Society we get additional discounts – these become part of the income for SAS, and the more we order, the more we benefit. This enables us to fund projects around the site – and will be particularly useful this year as, without our Open Day, we have lost a major source of income for the Society.

I look forward to receiving your orders in October!

Andy James, N57



Sunnyside on Instagram

My wife Gemma and I are using our Instagram to document our progress as two novice allotmenters up for the grow-your-own challenge; four months in, and we're making progress. Here's a picture of our first raspberry off the canes we discovered back in March when we got our allotment. People can follow us on Instagram @sunnyside_adventure

Tom Hall A25B



Water Report

My allotment was showing signs of desiccation several weeks ago, and recent rain has not improved the situation much. While we all welcomed the sunshine in April and May, it seems that the very dry conditions were not ideal for young plants, and they may not catch up, so I am not anticipating a bumper harvest this year. The weeds at least are now growing strongly; the tomatoes are ripening but are undersized, and the cucumbers are few and far between – plus fallow deer have helped themselves to the newest leaves on my apple trees, which will set back the younger trees' growth badly this year.

The water consumption on Sunnyside Old and New has greatly increased, perhaps partly explained by the larger number of plots now being cultivated, the increasing amount of activity during the 'lockdown' period, and, of course, the weather. Since the beginning of April, Sunnyside Old and New combined have used 723 cubic metres of drinking water, 382 cubic metres in May alone. Whichever way you look at it - 723 tonnes or 1.3 million pints or enough water for 2.9 million mugs of tea - we have used more water in three months than in the whole of 2019 – and that's with the Tea Hut out of action this year.

Those allotment holders who pay for the use of a hose will be getting good value for their money this year, and need to be thankful they are not individually metered. They should consider how long the current arrangements will be sustained if climate change means we get more years with dry weather like 2018 and 2020. It would be wise to ensure that you are actively collecting, and using, rainwater from your shed roof. Please ensure that water reaches your plants' roots and is not lost in fine spray, and that your hoses and hose fittings are not leaking.

John Goffey, B16

Thank you for the Welcome

For years we thought about taking the plunge! Each dog walk or Sunday stroll around the Sunnyside area would bring the usual glance at the runner beans, the artichoke plants, the imaginative use of old plastic bottles for irrigation, or the intricate compost mixtures, and we would turn to each other and wonder how would it be... So just before lockdown we took the plunge and made an application to the Council, not expecting to hear anything for some time, yet within days we had chosen our plot - with help from Geoff and Clive, I hasten to add - and were turning up on site, hired lawnmower and petrol strimmer in hand, a nervous smile on our faces, and hands that wouldn't be blister-free for long.

So here's our contribution to the Sunnyside newsletter - the views of newcomers, and frankly complete novices when it comes to the art of growing fruit and vegetables. Maybe we joined at the right time - the start of lockdown, with some time on our hands; maybe it has been the unseasonable hot days during May and June; or maybe, just maybe, it is something we should have done a long time ago. But we love it.

The cobbling together of old bits of wood to make raised beds; the sneaky use of Google to find out what plants go together; or the early morning tranquillity watering the plot before returning home to spend hours in front of a laptop working - all has brought new-found life and interest to this middle-aged couple.

But there is one other benefit from Sunnyside that many who use the site for a walk-through will not always get to know. That is the friendship, the laughs and quite frankly the encyclopaedic knowledge that so many allotment owners have brought to our plot since we joined in early May. Yes, we recognise that at times you must all wonder what we are doing, and smile when we stand with recognisable weed in hand, wondering if it is a new form of broccoli or courgette, but let me just say thank you for the welcome! (And here is a photo of our own Margot, for those who remember 'The Good Life').

Clive and Jules, A17



Margot

Tenancy Changes

Welcome to:

A1B	Charlotte Morton-Boyce
A21	Geoff Smith
A29A	Charlotte Winder
A17	Clive Michel
A37	Penelope MacGregor
A44A	Tanya Davies
N2	Frances Ede
N11	Sylvia Irvine Robertson
N12	Rebecca Clark
N33B	Mark Thomson
N55B	James McGahern
N56A	Ali Cameron
N61	Joe Yates
N66	Rachel Campbell

Goodbye to:

A17	Karen Sutton
A29A	Abigail Gatt
A37	Tim Buchorski
A44A	Richard Evans
N2	Alexander Taylor
N11	Mark Grego



Richard and Helen's decorated compost Heap A32

Beans, Rats and Plot Envy

Invaders! Some creature has cleared out a whole patch of broad beans. He or she bites off the pod, nibbles some of the succulent beans, and drops the half-eaten pod under the plants. The patch is near my compost heap, so should I suspect rats?

Apart from these depredations, what a blessing the allotments are, with the open skies and good company. Fortunately, I don't suffer from PE (plot envy), so I can only admire my neighbours' immaculate and productive plots.

Chris Locke, B31A

Using Natural Insect Repellents

Nobody wants to see bug-infested vegetables on their allotment, but the dramatic decline in both insect and bird life means that we need to be responsible and choose chemical-free insect repellents wherever possible.

Some plants can offer protection from vegetable-eating pests. Chives are effective in keeping carrot fly and aphids at bay, whilst borage can protect your tomatoes and cabbages. When planted alongside strawberry vines, borage also has the benefit of attracting bees, which can increase pollination and give you a higher yield of fruit.

You can also make your own organic preparations to replace your chemical solutions. One effective recipe is to combine pureed garlic cloves with water and oil and allow to sit overnight, then strain the mixture and thoroughly mix soap into the residual liquid. You can then put this mix into a spray bottle and apply to plants, as you would a normal insect repellent.

If you haven't got the time to cook up your garden solutions, then there are many organic options available online and in all good gardening centres. For example, organic wool-based slug pellets not only provide a great slug barrier around plants like strawberries, but also trap moisture and contain slow-release nutrients which will nourish your plants.

The Treehugger website includes more information and some great recipes for clean, pest-free gardening that will save your vegetables without killing the earth:

<https://www.treehugger.com/natural-homemade-insecticides-save-your-garden-without-killing-earth-4858819>

Charlotte Cowell, C35



Sunnyside Dos and Don'ts

- Rubbish disposal – please do your own. Don't let plastic and metal pile up on your plot - and definitely do not dump it in the corner of the car-park!
- Cars – are to be parked only in the designated car-parks, above Grantham Mews entrance, in the Church car-park, or on Ivy House Lane – NOT in front of your plot, unless briefly, just to load and unload – then please move your car.
- Woodpile (on Grantham Mews border by B Road, on SSO) - please take wood for constructing frames, etc., on your plot, but remember to replace the tarpaulins and weigh them down.
- Water use – morning and evening, to reduce evaporation. Keep at least one water butt attached to your shed, and if you are using a hose, you must apply to the Council and pay the annual surcharge.
- Weeds – pull them up before they set seed, and do cut them down in the autumn to prevent seeds blowing onto neighbouring plots.
- Bonfires – only sparingly, when the wind is not going to blow the smoke onto our neighbours in any direction, and not at weekends when they are likely to be using their gardens. Burn only dry materials, to avoid smoke.
NB: currently, the NSALG is advising no bonfires at all during the Covid crisis, as they exacerbate any breathing difficulties that other people on the allotments or nearby might have.
- Hoses can be a trip hazard, so please don't leave them out.
- Paths between plots are the responsibility of the tenants, and should be kept mowed.
- Please provide a plot number at the end of your plot, for navigation, inspection, and visiting purposes!
- And finally, do keep your plot cultivated. Remember that the Council requires the Committee to inspect all plots periodically, and to report the numbers of untidy or uncultivated ones.

Your Current Committee Members

Chairman:	John Eaton	865307
Secretary &: newsletter layout and production :	Jenny Sippings	865890
Treasurer:	Andy James	865061
Newsletter Editor:	Lin Phillips	862882
Other members:	Angela Wheeldon	874440
	John Goffey	864967
	Diana Ball	875277
	Geoff Halls	878176
	Kate Rankin	866827
	Jeanne Woodcraft	872852
	Steve Atkinson	07770276797

You can email any member of the committee by putting their first name in front of: @sunmysideallotments.org.uk apart from John Eaton who is: johne@ and John Goffey who is: johng@



Don't forget to check out our Facebook page, where members are increasingly posting great photos and comments on their successes (and challenges) on their plot.

Please join our group for allotment gardening chit chat.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1466477513362340/>



Annick's deer deterrent