



SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Editor's Note

I think we can all congratulate ourselves on keeping calm and carrying on tending our plots this season, with good results on the whole. For many, gardening has been such a solace, and this is reflected in the pieces sent in by allotment holders for this issue.

I hope you enjoy reading it,

Lin Phillips

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

Chairman's Notes

It was the best of times (time on the allotment); it was the worst of times (Covid health and job problems).

Here is a set of cheery items:

After the recent prohibited period, tenants may have essential bonfires from Monday 19th October. As always, please make sure that your bonfire is short-lived and hot, rather than slow and smoky. Be considerate to our neighbours, and ensure that the wind direction is away from the close boundaries – and try to avoid weekends. All green waste should be composted or removed from the site. Any dodgy waste - e.g. plastic or metal - should be removed.

After consultation with the Council, it has been decided to leave site access gates open so touching and infection can be avoided – use the pedestrian gate where there is one.

During the winter there will be some working party sessions – mornings only, social distancing to be maintained, and no lunch provided. Please come along and spend whatever time you can. Thanks to John Goffey for coordinating the work.

The problem of deer intrusion has not been solved. Tenants who have found any form of fence or deterrent that works, please say.

The behaviour of some dogs and their owners remains a problem. We are working with the council to find a solution. Ideas, please.

Some tenants have suffered shed break-ins. The police are aware and are taking steps. As always, don't leave valuable stuff at the allotment (what a pain).

As you know, there could be no Open Day this year, and unfortunately there will be no Sunnyside Christmas drinks do either.

Arrangements for the Society AGM or an alternative are still to be sorted out.

Stay well and good gardening,

John Eaton



Photo—Tom and Gemma Hall

A look back...

It's been a funny old year, with a lot of upheaval for all of us. Having to set up working from home was a real challenge, along with home-schooling three young children. This challenged my mental health, so being able to spend a little more time on the allotment really helped ease some of the stresses of lockdown home life.

The year went pretty well, all in all; after a false start with the late frost in March, which set my beans back, I soon got back to business with a great harvest of currants, followed by a glut of courgettes and tomatoes. I now have more chutneys and sauces than I know what to do with! C

Coming into September, my pears and apples started coming through - which again has led to more cooking and chutneys! My beans never really recovered, but did come through with a modest harvest in the end. Notable also-rans include my autumn raspberries, pumpkins and potatoes. I'm continuing to harvest carrots, leeks, beet-roots, parsnips, and brassicas, so as you can see, whilst 2020 is a year to forget for all of us, at least my veg plot has given me some respite in a horrible year.

Christian Wallace, SSN1A&B



Christian's harvest

Wise Words

One of my favourite quotations, by William Wordsworth is:

"The Wisest, Happiest of our kind are they that walk Nature's way"

And some astute observations from Gertrude Jekyll on the joy of gardening:

"...the lesson I have thoroughly learnt and wish to pass on to others, is to know the enduring happiness that the love of a garden gives"

"...for love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies, but always grows and grows to be an enduring and ever-lasting source of happiness"

Plus a few inspiring quotes from a recent article about the mental health benefits of gardening and spending time in Nature:

"Those who plant a garden, plant happiness" (Roman Maxim)

"If you want to be happy for life; tend a garden"

"Paradise is another word for a Garden"

"All the World's problems can be solved in a Garden"

John Driver, A44B

Seed Order Scheme

If you have already sent me your orders, thank you very much; I will be in touch when the seeds are delivered in December (potatoes in January). For other paid-up members who wish to place an order this year, please remember to get your completed order forms and payment to me by October 31st.

Thanks,

Andy James, Treasurer and Seed Order Co-ordinator

PS – and don't forget that your annual rent is due; pay the Council online or by cheque only.



Butternuts—Simon Nicolle B35



In praise of digging....

Have you ever wondered exactly how much energy it takes to dig over an allotment? Have you debated with gym member friends whether you are just as fit as they are? Wonder no more. In the interest of scientific inquiry, I recently wore a heart monitor to dig over a neighbouring plot, B23 on Sunnyside Old. My monitor told me that in 46 minutes of toil I had burned 328 calories and worked at 66% of my maximum heart rate. This, it turns out, is very comparable to my average strength training sessions which involve the usual squats, push-ups and general jumping around while being shouted at by a tattooed personal trainer. A typical 40-minute workout last week burned 293 calories, and put my heart rate up to an average of 68% of maximum.

Of course, although this gives you ammunition in the argument about the futility of gym memberships when you could be in the fresh air, digging, there are one or two other factors to consider. Digging allows you to make friends with your local robin population, and to enjoy that atavistic pleasure of turning over the soil, which heaving weights in a sweaty sports centre can't give you. However, it is also a repetitive movement, and, like so much gardening, can suddenly lead to a bad back and a sore knee, so perhaps it is a good idea to do some warm-up exercises before you dig. My trainer suggests opening out the chest and shoulders by rotating your arms. Do some gentle stretching before picking up the spade. In this way, we allotment diggers can have the best of both worlds.

Barbara Newton, B21

Tenancy Changes

Welcome to:

C7B Spencer Wilson

Goodbye to:

A44B John Driver

N4C, N4D Wendy Calder

N26 Rob Wittaker

N31B Holly Lansley

N70 Debbi Figueirido & Simon Weightman

Organic Gardening

Organic gardening methods help maintain soil fertility, protect the purity of groundwater, and prevent further decline of beneficial insects and native birds.

Soil fertility can also be supported by 'green manuring' through the planting of crops such as grazing rye or winter field beans outside the main growing season. Bitter lupins help to fix atmospheric nitrogen in their roots, while mustard, rape and phacelia can be grown as green manure on vacant ground, then dug in before the plants set seed.

Controlling Weeds Naturally

Whilst chemical weedkillers can give fast results, they can also have a devastating impact on the eco-system and introduce hard-to-remove poisons into your vegetables. Here are some ways you can control weeds in a greener way:

1: Weed your beds after rain, when the soil is soft and damp. If soil is hard, this is also hard on the back, and you'll probably snap off pieces of roots that will generate more weeds.

2: Avoid over-tilling your soil, and cultivate it only when you really need to. Even light cultivation will bring long-dormant seeds to the surface, where exposure to sunlight will sprout a healthy new crop of weeds.

3: Mulch is healthy for the soil, and keeps weeds in check by depriving them of light. A 2-3 inch layer is enough, as slugs and snails can't hide in deep mulch. Small organic mulch like shredded bark and damp leaves blocks light most effectively. Don't make it too deep, or your seeds won't penetrate. Mid-late spring is the best time.

4: Don't let weeds go to seed. Chop off weed heads with a mower or strimmer, but set your mower as low as possible - otherwise, you might be controlling tall weeds while allowing lower-growing weeds to flower and spread.

Charlotte Cowell, C35

Time to muck in!

It's the time of the year for clearing our beds, digging or forking them over, and ideally covering them with some kind of semi-permeable membrane for the winter. Our local manure suppliers are (or have been, up to now – hopefully they are still delivering) as follows:

Dave Burgin – 01442 832997
Phil Marks – 01442 823357
Nigel Durrant - 01442 403351

Working Parties

The winter working party season is upon us again, with the first one took place on 11 October. This year we have to make some adjustments to meet the Government's current virus restrictions; all volunteers will therefore have to obey the 2-metre social distancing requirement, and there will be no free lunch. Otherwise, the proposed working parties will follow the usual arrangements, namely:

- Working between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm on the second Sunday of the month from October to March (excluding December).
- Bring your own tools, and meet at the Tea Hut on SSO at 10.00 am, or join later in the morning.
- Work for as long (or as little) as you like.
- Bonfires from 19 October.

These working parties are essential to keep Sunnyside in good order, the car parks and other communal areas cleared, and new projects undertaken - so do please join us when you can.

John Goffey, B16



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/>

Perennial Sunnyside Dos and Don'ts

- Do dispose of plastic and metal rubbish, and don't let it pile up on your plot.
- Cars are NOT to be parked in front of your plot, unless loading or unloading.
- 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. Please make a contribution to society funds.
- Do not take scaffold poles, corrugated iron or breeze blocks.
- Water 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 charge.
- Weeds – pull them up before they set seed, and do cut them down in the autumn to prevent seeds blowing onto neighbouring plots.
- Hoses can be a trip hazard, so please don't leave them out.
- Keep your paths mowed.
- Do provide a plot number at the end of your plot.
- Please don't drive on the allotment roads when they are muddy, as they get churned up and dangerous to walk on.



Comical carrot—Helen Russell A32



Debbie with sunflowers—Steve Poulton N33B



Black cat to ward off intruders—John Eaton

Your Current Committee Members

Chairman:	John Eaton	865307
Secretary &: newsletter layout and production :	Jenny Sippings	865890
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You can email any member of the committee by putting their first name in front of: @sunnysideallotments.org.uk apart from John Eaton who is: johne@ and John Goffey who is: johng@



Enjoying the sunshine



Bottles and brassicas



Ted's bench and garden



October apples