

SUNNYSIDE ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

2/2002

"And then, and then came spring!". The past few weeks of sunshine have made the opening activities of the gardening season a real pleasure. Visit Costa del sunnyside for unseasonal warmth, blossom and bird song, while you dig, tidy and sow! Ted is at his path cutting again, fine tilth is the result of winter efforts, and many plots are unsullied before the growing season produces its crop of weeds!

In this newsletter, you will read a reminder to the late starters to try and start gardening as quickly as possible. It is up to us all to keep this splendid amenity, a pleasure to enjoy. You will read about the new hazel coppice, the second planting being attended by our Town Mayor, Garrick Stevens. He was an allotment holder here at Sunnyside before being weighed down by civic duties and so particularly appreciates our efforts to improve the environment. We are lucky to be guided in this activity, by the expertise of Patrick Stileman. He gives us below some more advice on the planting of trees and shrubs.

TREE PLANTING

I'm sure that I do not need to preach the virtues of tree planting, and how trees can, if planned properly benefit the environment for ourselves, and just as importantly for future generations.

Choosing the right tree for the location is crucial. Far too many trees are planted with no consideration given to their final size. As a result, the trees end up requiring drastic surgery, or complete removal, because they are causing excessive nuisance. In brief, consider the size they will be when they are mature. If you have a small garden, plant a tree with a small mature height and spread. Soil type is also important. Ph, drainage, and nutrient content are all important considerations when choosing your tree. A good rule of thumb is to look around to see what trees are growing well in the area.

The size of the tree that you intend to plant is worth considering. A small plant will have a better chance of survival, establish itself and grow away much faster, and cost less than a large plant. However, for that instant effect a large tree will be needed which will have its own special planting requirements.

Trees will come either as bare rooted, root-balled, or in pots. The planting season for bare rooted, and root-balled is from early November to the end of March. Potted trees can be planted throughout the year, so I shall describe how to plant these, though essentially the principals remain the same for all trees:

- Dig a pit which is wider than the pot radius, and slightly deeper.
- Aerate the base and sides of the pit with a fork to help with root penetration. Add a compost, or mulch (such as leaf mould) to the pit to assist with establishment, and water retention.
- Remove the tree from its pot and loosen the roots if they are tightly compacted.
- Place the tree in the pit, and rotate it as desired, and ensure that it is as upright as possible.

- Back fill the pit with soil, ensuring that the eventual soil level is on the same point of the tree as the soil level in the pot. As it is replaced, firm the soil in.
- If the tree is large enough to require staking, drive the stake into the ground, so that it is approximately two inches from the tree stem. Ensure that the stake does not pass through the root ball. This may mean that the stake should be put at a 45 degree angle. Attach the tree to the stake with a proper tree tie and spacers. (not baling twine!)
- If rabbit or deer guards are required, then consider which type is best for the tree you are planting. They can be spiral plastic guards which wrap around the stem, low tree/ shrub shelters, tall tree shelters (as we have with the hazel plantation), or fencing.

Finally, water the tree in well, and ensure that it is kept watered during dry spells throughout the summer. If the tree is staked, check the tightness of the strap after one year and loosen if necessary. Remove the stake when the tree is able to stand alone.

Patrick Stileman

YOUR COMMITTEE

Peter Chapman (Chairman)	871470
John Savage (Treasurer)	873877
Jenny Sippings (Secretary)	865890
Patrick Stileman	874457
Clive Weakley	875373
Angela Wheelden	874440
Fiona Duck	874334
Ken Harbord	865757
Graham Hall	873408
Ted Dyer	872684

While on the subject of trees, Peter Block recalls memories of the tree growing on his plot, B30...

Sunnyside Allotment veterans will remember Arthur Davis who took over several allotments from the Vicar in 1934. When Arthur's wife died, he planted a hazel in her memory. When Arthur died towards the end of 1994, I took over his plot, B30 and planted a Christmas tree in his memory, next to the hazel. The Turkish hazel and Norway spruce are both flourishing, the hazel bearing cobs for the first time last Autumn.

Below: Arthur Davis celebrating 60 yrs on Sunnyside Allotments in August 1994, shortly before he died.



HAZEL COPPICES

We now have two Hazel Coppices, with the second coppice being planted on Sunnyside New on 16th March. The Town Mayor Garrick Stevens planted a tree in what is to be known as the Jubilee Hazel Coppice and a report appeared in the Gazette which came out on Wednesday 3rd April.

PLOT CLEARANCES

Our thanks go to all those who took part in clearance of overgrown plots this winter and I am sure you will be pleased to hear that plots 1 and 32 on the New site have been let following clearance, so our efforts have been worthwhile.

WEED CONTROL

There are a number of plots at Sunnyside which have not seen much activity from the tenants so far this year. It is hoped that soon there will be some work undertaken to keep these plots tidy. Allowing plots to become overgrown causes

problems to adjacent tenants and is in contravention of the tenancy agreement.

The Town Council can provide rolls of black damp proof membrane to lay on cleared plots to suppress weed growth. Please apply to the Town Council if you wish to make use of this service.

Inspections will take place later this year to see whether there are any gardens whose tenants have not complied with their tenancy agreement and this may lead to the termination of tenancies by the Town Council.

RUBBISH CLEARANCE

All the dumps on the Old and New sites are now closed and unwanted glass, plastic and metal should be kept on your plots until you are advised of a further collection later this year.

PLOT NUMBERS

There are still a number of tenanted plots which do not carry an identifying number. Your committee has decided to offer a service to tenants who wish to obtain timber for number boards to decorate themselves or who wish to commission simple painted number boards. Anyone interested should contact Ted Dyer on Sunnyside Old or by telephoning 872684.

We would ask that a donation be made to Society funds for provision of the number boards – painted or unpainted.



SUNNYSIDE CHURCH CAR PARK

The Town Council and Sunnyside Church are in discussion on a new lease for a period of 5 years.

Once the lease has been signed and the Church has some security of the tenure, it is expected that resurfacing of the roadway and car park will be undertaken. As before tenants will have the right to use the car park and access will be maintained for deliveries to the allotments. There will not be any increase in the area of allotment land covered by the lease.

BIRSE CONSTRUCTION

Unfortunately the construction company no longer require access through Sunnyside New, as previously mentioned. Therefore, they will not be providing the site with a car park.

WATER SUPPLIES

All tanks at Sunnyside are now fitted with taps. Tenants who wish to use a pressure hose can do so by visiting the Town council Offices and paying a water levy. A tap key is also required and will be provided by the Town Council on payment of a £2.00 deposit. We have also been provided with a new tank on 'A' road on Sunnyside Old which will shorten the distance to carry water for those tenants by The Cedars.

SOCIETY SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription of £2.00 is now well overdue, please let John Savage have your subs if you have not yet paid (or leave in the tea hut,



Far Left: The Mayor plants the first tree.

Left: Some younger members of the allotments lend a helping hand.

clearly marked with your name/plot number). Only paid up society members can make use of the good NSALG seed scheme that we have used in the last couple of years.

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF ALLOTMENT AND LEISURE GARDENS

The quarterly magazine of the society is available for loan from the Tea Hut on Plot B15. Anyone wishing to peruse the magazine, or back numbers, is welcome to do so.

GARDENING LORE

Here are some old proverbs. Perhaps they hold a grain of truth!

'Sow dry and set wet. This rule in gardening never forget.'

'Sow beans in the mud, and they'll grow like wood.'

'Sow peas and beans in the wane of the moon; who soweth them sooner, he soweth too soon.'

'Sow for beans in a row, one for cowscot, and one for crow, one for rot, and one to grow.'

(Can anyone find out what cowscot is?)

PS

Don't forget to ask for your 10% discount if you hire any equipment from Berkhamsted Tool Hire

OPEN DAY AND SOCIETY BARBEQUE

We are well under way with planning this years Barbeque and Openday on Saturday 29th June. As last year the Open day will run from 11am onwards and it would be helpful if as many tenants as possible could be on their plots to answer any queries the visitors may have. Last year a number of new tenants signed up following the open day and hopefully this years event will be as worthwhile.

A sub committee has been set up to organise the day (Angela Wheeldon, Jenny Sippings and Fiona Duck) and they will be promoting the event with posters around the town. It is planned to have refreshments available in the Tea Hut during the day and volunteers will be needed to man the hut and also to donate biscuits and cakes for the visitors (and hard working tenants!). If you would like to contribute in any way please contact any of the sub

committee either by phone or at the allotment as soon as possible. An invitation will be extended to all town Councillors to come up to Sunnyside to see what we can do to make our sites attractive to visitors.

The barbeque will again take place from about 4.30pm. Sunnyside Rural Trust have kindly allowed us to use their facilities (kitchen and toilets) again, and we will site the barbeques on their patio as last year. All tenants and their families and friend's are invited to attend – please bring your own meat and drinks, we will supply salads and bread. Blankets or ground sheets were useful last year as well. Patrick Stileman and Daniel Bartlett are coordinating the barbeque and would like to hear from anyone who has large barbeques that we could use on that day or who would like to help in any other way.