

# Newsletter

Ash Road Allotment Association

## The Newsletter

Anything for the newsletter? Contact Chris Martin. Email: [chris.e.martin@ntlworld.com](mailto:chris.e.martin@ntlworld.com)

## Coffee and Advice

You are invited for **\*FREE\*** coffee on **Sunday mornings**. Come along to the Hut at 11 am.

## Summer Barbecue



You are all invited to a Barbecue on **Sunday, 4th August, starting at 2pm**.

It will be a great chance to meet your fellow allotmenters. There will be tea and coffee, but please bring your own drinks if you'd like something else to drink. Vegetarian food will be available. We'd also really welcome **donations of desserts or salads** - so please bring something along if you'd like to contribute.

The charge for the Barbecue is £3.50 for savoury food, £2.00 for beverage and dessert. All proceeds to the Martin House Children's Hospice. Friends and family welcome.



## Enjoying the Summer

Make the most of the summer and come along to our **barbecue on Sunday 4th August** (see news item left) and remember that the **Annual Show also takes place on Sunday 1st September** (see item on the next page and further information in the August newsletter). A number of you also came along to the very successful **coffee morning** that we had on 30th June in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. The good news is that along with the enjoyment of coffee and home-made cakes we also raised £322 for the charity. Thanks to all involved!

## Children's Safety

With school holidays nearly upon us, it's worth a reminder about the need to keep children safe on site this summer.

It's great to see children on-site taking an interest in growing fruit and vegetables. As an Allotment Association we've always been understanding of the need to keep small children occupied and unlike many other allotment sites in the City we do allow some small items of play equipment on plots. However, in return, please can we ask that children are closely supervised at all times and not allowed to wander off their 'home' plot without an adult. Children should not be running around the site playing 'hide and seek' or running onto neighbour's plots - as tempting as this is for them! Remember the allotment is a 'working site' and not a park and, inevitably, there are some risks of which children will not be aware.



## Annual Show

A reminder that our Annual Show is on **Sunday 1st September**. For those who are new to the allotments the Show is a great social event, with various fun competitions to enter. There will be more information about the Show and how to enter for the various categories of competition in next month's newsletter.

**In the meantime if you were a cup winner last year, please remember to return it in time for this year's show.**

We are planning to repeat our very popular **photo competition**. There will be two **separate categories and prizes, one for adults and one for young people (aged 16 or under)**. Photographs can feature any aspect of Ash Road Allotments, so get 'snapping', or dig out those photos that you may have already taken previously, so that we have a coverage of all seasons.

Entries will need to be printed so that they can be displayed and judged at the show (more details in the next newsletter), but please also keep your digital copies secure! You can enter a maximum of **five** photos. Please ask permission before taking photographs of other people.

## Top Tips for July

### Top Tasks

- **Weed regularly** - weeds are growing vigorously and will compete with your crops for light and water. It's easier to hoe them when they are small, rather than wait until they are grown
  - **It's the peak time for 'berry' fruits** - black currants, blackberries, raspberries, red currants etc. All these freeze well. Pick them and 'open freeze' them (spread out on trays in your freezer) and then bag them up. These will be a great for jam, cake, pudding and compote making in future months.
  - **Summer prune** - cherry trees, gooseberries and currant bushes after harvest and tidy the strawberry patch. Thin out your emerging apples, pears, plums etc to get bigger fruit later or so branches don't break.
  - **Pinch out the tops of climbing beans** - this will stop their growth, prevent them becoming top-heavy and tangled. Removing the tops of broad beans will also reduce black fly infestation.
  - **Feed any tomatoes and peppers** - start watering regularly with a liquid fertiliser as soon as the first fruits appear.
  - **Pinch out tomato shoots** - remove side shoots and the growing tip at the top after 4-5 trusses have formed.
  - **Harvest potatoes** - the early potatoes should be (or soon will be) ready for harvest.
  - **Dry out garlic, onions and shallots** a few days before harvest and loosen the soil around the roots. Choose a dry spell, lift the bulbs and dry (under cover or in the hot sun). Make sure they are fully dry before storing.
  - **Prioritise watering** for 'thirsty' crops (such as squash, celeriac etc.), but many others do not need watering so often. Established fruit trees and bushes should be able to survive without watering. Water late in the day if possible, to minimise loss by evaporation. Apply **mulch** (if you have some) to lock in the moisture. Even grass clippings can serve as mulch if you have nothing else.
  - **Greenhouses and polytunnels** need to be well ventilated now we are in high summer- best to leave doors open.
- ### Sow, Plant and Planning Ahead
- **Brussels sprouts, cabbages, cauliflowers** - July is the time to sow cabbages for spring and your last chance to plant out sprouts, winter cabbages and autumn cauliflowers.
  - **Peas and French Beans** - last chance for sowing or planting - any later and the pods are unlikely to develop before the first frost.
  - **Leeks** - finish transplanting out leeks if you haven't already.
  - **Lettuce and other salad crops** - succession sow more salad leaves for an ongoing supply into autumn.

## Best Plot

Nominations are being considered for 'Best Plot', with the winner announced at the Annual Show in September. Please email nominations to [ash\\_road\\_allotments@aol.co.uk](mailto:ash_road_allotments@aol.co.uk)

## Slug Pellets

The public sale of Metaldehyde-based slug pellets ceased on 30th June. There is a further year to use up stocks. From 30th June 2020 it will be illegal to use these pellets (except for some commercial uses).

The Allotment Shop is selling off its remaining stock until 31st August only. **You must stop using these pellets by 30th June 2020.** Use responsibly - in the minimum dose and in limited areas close to vulnerable crops. We will be investigating whether to stock environmentally-friendly alternatives.

## Manure and Wood Chip



Remember to pay for woodchip or manure that you take, £1 per barrow-load. If the Hut is not open to pay please put your payment in the mailbox attached to the rear of the Hut (pictured, above). There is a supply of slips to include with your payment (and a pencil) so that you can note what you have taken, your name and your plot number.

## Plot Inspections

Plot Inspections will continue through the summer. This is the peak season for allotment work so it is only fair that the Committee should be able to see that you are making some effort to use your plot productively.



Allotments are in high demand and we have a waiting list of people keen to be able to 'grow their own'. A high proportion of those on the waiting list are the younger age-groups that we should be making special effort to bring into allotment growing. Having an allotment is a real privilege, but if a plot is not being used productively the Committee may have to ask you to 'downsize' for the start of the next allotment year (from 1st October) or, potentially, to give up your plot to someone else on our waiting list who can make better use of it. Allowance will be made for those plot-holders who have only taken on their plot this year.



## Batcliffe Woods Task Day

Batcliffe Woods is the name of the woodland that borders our allotment site on the western side. The Friends of Beckett Park and various other local residents groups (including the Ash Road Area Residents

Association) are working with a newly appointed Ranger to manage and improve the woodland. There is very much a shared interest for us at the allotments because there are common environmental and security benefits from working together - and some of our plot-holders are also members of the various local amenity and residents groups involved.

There is to be a **Batcliffe Wood 'Task Day' on Saturday 17th August.** The focus will be on removal of the old wooden paling fencing alongside our boundary. We have previously identified this as being a security risk - some parts of it have been used to help intruders climb over our newer metal fence and into our site - so it will be great to see this removed. **If anyone would like to volunteer to help on this Task Day, please contact me (Chris Martin) or email [ash\\_road\\_allotments@aol.co.uk](mailto:ash_road_allotments@aol.co.uk)**