

Newsletter

Ash Road Allotment Association

The Newsletter

Anything for the newsletter? Please let me know. Chris Martin. Email: chris.e.martin@ntlworld.com

Coffee and Advice

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

Remember that we also have an **allotment 'shop' at The Hut**. This is open every Sunday from 10.30am.

Ponds

The benefits of water on site - for frogs, toads, newts and other wildlife are widely recognised. The Committee is prepared to allow ponds on plots, but **only** on very strict conditions:

- Any pond **must** be located well away from the 'public' pathways that cross the site, or otherwise the pond **must** be protected by a barrier/fence to avoid the risk of anyone falling in.
- Pond/ pond edges **must** also be kept clearly visible for safety reasons.
- Ponds should be no larger than 1 metre by 1 metre and 30cm deep (approximate dimensions).
- Ponds should have a liner and be filled **only** naturally from the rain or rainwater collected in a butt. Water from Allotment Site water system must not be used.

Children's Safety

- **Parents need to closely supervise children AT ALL TIMES and not allow them to stray from their 'home' plot.**



High Summer

The last few weeks have been extremely warm and dry and, apart from the odd shower, it is possible that this weather may continue for the rest of the month and into August. While the sunshine is great, keeping our allotments watered has been a challenge. Included in this newsletter are some tips for sensible watering.

Barbecue, Sunday 5th August

Remember - you are all invited to the Allotment Summer Barbecue on **Sunday, 5th August, starting at 2pm**. Hopefully it will be a warm afternoon and it will be a great chance to meet fellow allotmenters. There will be tea and coffee available, 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 £3.00 per person, with proceeds to the NSPCC, the children's charity.

Rubbish Disposal

Rubbish and Waste material **must under no circumstances be left on or by either of the car parks**. Yet again waste has been dumped by the top car park. Plot-holders must take ALL waste off-site or home and dispose of it appropriately.



Annual Show

A reminder that our Annual Show is on Sunday 2nd September. For those who are new to the allotments the Show is a great social event, with various 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.

Also, this year, we are planning to have a **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! We hope that if we get enough entries we can use these to put together an Allotment Calendar for 2019. You can make as many entries as you like - within reason! Please ask permission before taking photographs of other people.

Top Tips for July

Making the best of your produce

This is a great time of year for picking and harvesting, but dealing with all that produce can be a problem. Here are some ideas:

- Lift small quantities of vegetables at a time, as you need them, and leave the rest in the ground to maintain freshness.
- 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.
- You may have more courgettes than you need!....there are many recipes on-line, some involving slicing thinly and then frying in butter or olive oil and adding thyme or lemon juice. Try them as a quick snack, or on toast. You can also slice and sauté or griddle courgettes and they can be frozen for future use.
- Many vegetables freeze well, but they are best 'blanched' (boiled briefly and then cooled quickly) - such as peas, broccoli etc.
- Onions, garlic and shallots are (or will be) ready for harvesting. Loosen the soil around the roots for a few days and then lift and dry (under cover or in the hot sun). Make sure they are fully dry before storing.

Watering sensibly

The soil is now very dry and we may have more hot and dry weather to come. We need to be careful with the amount of water we are using because it all has to be paid for. Here are some ideas:

- Prioritise watering '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 or evening if possible, to minimise the loss of water from evaporation. Apply mulch (if you have some) to lock in the moisture. Even grass clippings can serve as mulch if you have nothing else.
- It is better to water selected plants by giving them a good soaking to their roots on a single occasion, rather than a lot of quick 'sprinkle' watering, which wastes water by evaporation.

Planning Ahead

You need to be planning ahead. The hard ground is a challenge this year, but plant out your winter brassicas/leeks for winter/spring supply if not already done. It is also the last chance to sow peas or french beans so they can develop before autumn frosts. Succession sow more salad crops.

Other Tasks

Summer prune cherry trees, gooseberries and currant bushes after harvest. Check climbing plants have supports. Greenhouses and polytunnels will need to be well ventilated in this hot weather - best to leave doors open.