

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

***FREE* coffee** at the Hut - EVERY Sunday morning at 11 O'clock. Listen for the airhorn that announces coffee is served.

Keep a Look Out

There have been some reports of pilfering from plots and sheds recently.

The best preventive advice is to avoid keeping anything valuable in your shed - in particular, power tools. This may be awkward, but better to bring such items to the site as and when you need them, rather than risk them being stolen. It is also probably advisable not to padlock your shed. A locked shed could be taken to indicate that there are valuable items inside and a would-be thief would be likely to cause more damage breaking into the shed.

Keep a look out. This is an encouragement to speak to people you don't recognise on neighbouring plots and not to be offended if other people check who you are. This is a good way to get to know other plot-holders anyway!



The Fun of the Show

The weather may have been mixed for the Allotment Annual Show on 1st September, but everyone still had a good time. Plenty of people entered produce into the various show judging categories and the crowd all enjoyed the prize-giving, as well as the excellent home-made refreshments. It was great to see plenty of our newer members among those taking part and winning prizes.

The event raised £688 for Martin House, the charity providing hospice care and support for children and young people and their families.

A big thank you to Lynne Snowden, all the Committee members and others who worked very hard to set everything up and make the day a success. Thanks also to the local businesses who contributed prizes, and to Allotment Association members who baked and donated cakes and gave bottles for the tombola and items for the food hamper. Last, but not least, thanks to all of you for coming along and bidding for all the wonderful produce that was auctioned during the course of the afternoon.

A list of prizewinners is on page 2. More photographs can be found on the Facebook page.

In total our events have raised more than £1,000 for charity this year

KINGS SEEDS

CATALOGUES

AVAILABLE NOW

Remember that copies of the latest Kings Seeds Catalogue are still available under the Hut Awning, so pick one up anytime.

The catalogue covers a range of vegetables, fruit, flowers, sundries, organics and herbs - all good quality seeds and **much lower prices** than normal catalogues. Ash Road Allotments Association also benefits from a small commission.

The first deadline for orders is Sunday 13th October, the second deadline is the 15th December

Stapled to each catalogue is a note explaining how to place your order, and how you will know when your order arrives. Soft fruit and potatoes should preferably be ordered by the first deadline. **If you have any questions please contact Susan Frost, who coordinates the orders, by email at susanslatterfrost@gmail.com**

Plot Rents

Rent bills for the 2019/20 allotment year (starting 1st October) have been sent out. **Payment will be required by NO LATER THAN 15th November.**

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on **Wednesday 13th November at 7.30pm** at HEART (Headingley Enterprise & Arts Centre), Bennet Road, Headingley, LS6 3HN.

Please come along to participate in your Association. Remember that we are a 'self administered' site, not directly run by the City Council. Further details about the meeting will be sent out during October.

Annual Show Prize Winners

The winners of the Schofield Cup and **prize for 'best plot'** were Neil Cuthbert and Sab Georgas (plots 63S and 65). Second place went to John Bland (plots 8N and 9S) and in third place were Wez Roberta and Anton Calabrese (plot 8S)



First prizes for produce were awarded as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Top Tray | Michael Thompson |
| • Novice tray | Catherine Irish |
| • Cucumber | Janice Bairstow and Darren Turnor |
| • Any Brassica | Stephen Humphris |
| • 6 French beans | Jenny & Mike Willison |
| • 6 Runner Beans | Jean Cathcart |
| • Onions from sets | Greg Potter |
| • 3 Leeks | Michael Thompson |
| • 3 apples | Gareth Thomas |
| • 3 potatoes | Rosa Dunton |
| • 7 Shallots | Wendy & Andy Smithson |
| • Heaviest Marrow | Wes Roberts & Anton Calabrese |
| • Largest Pumpkin | Nick & Barbara Smith/John Bland |
| • 5 Tomatoes | N & B Smith/Christine Bosch |
| • 3 Beetroot | Michael Thompson |
| • 1 Courgette/Squash | Rosa D/ Janice B & Darren T |
| • Exotics | Nick Smith |
| • 3 Carrots | Nick Smith/Michael Thompson |
| • Any other veg | Ash Hewitt & Nat Krisman |
| • 3 Dahlias | John Bland/Adrian Luke |
| • 3 Gladioli | Adrian Luke |
| • Vase of flowers | Janice Bairstow & Darren Turnor |
| • 12 Blackberries | Nick Smith |
| • Dish of soft fruit | Susan Frost |
| • 5 stone fruits | Alan Foale |
| • Jam or Jelly | Rosa Dunton/ Christine Bosch |
| • Chutney/Pickle | Wes Roberts & Anton Calabrese |
| • Victoria sponge | Wes Roberts & Anton Calabrese |
| • Loaf of bread | Nigel Humphrys |
| • Best Cup Cakes | Seren Thomas |
| • Spud in a bucket | Sylvia Evans |

What to do now?

Things may be winding down on the allotment in October, but there's still plenty to do.

Harvest remaining summer vegetables (runner beans, courgettes etc) before the first frosts. Lift carrots, potatoes, squashes etc and store. Pick your apples and pears. Green tomatoes can be used for chutney or will ripen at home on a sunny windowsill.

Sow or Plant the following, but protect from pigeons and squirrels and avoid waterlogged ground.

- **Cabbages** - This month, or next, transplant out your cabbages for spring harvest in final positions.
- **Onions/ Garlic** - plant over-wintering onion sets and garlic cloves.
- **Broad Beans** - Sow seeds of early varieties by October. They should overwinter and crop in June.
- **Strawberries** - plant out new strawberry plants. The sooner they are in, sooner established, and the bigger next year's crop.
- **Fruit Bushes** - plant new, bare-root fruit bushes in October so that they can get well established.
- **Rhubarb** - In October and once dormant you can plant new sets or divide/replant crowns.

Prune summer blackcurrants, redcurrants, blackberries and gooseberries. Plant new bare root bushes so that they get established before winter.

Stake brussels sprouts and other brassicas with sturdy canes to avoid risk of them blowing over.

As ground becomes vacant it can be **dug over and improved**. You can leave the clods unbroken and winter freeze/thawing will break them up to give you a fine tilth for planting in the spring. Sow a green manure, if you like, or spread well-rotted manure.

Clearing away and composting the remains of the summer harvest, old vegetation, dead foliage etc. If not diseased put on your compost heap.

Tidy your plot, clear away poles and canes and check tree ties - so you are winter gale-ready!

Just Rented a Plot?

Your new plot may be overgrown. However, you can prepare for next year's growing season and, if you clear some ground, there are winter crops that you can get in now (see the left-hand column for more information).



Once you have cleared the top growth of vegetation, you need to dig out the roots of perennial weeds, such as dandelions, bindweed, creeping buttercup and couch grass. You could also sow a green 'manure' on any bare ground you will not be using until spring. This can be dug into the soil in February to April. Alternatively you could try rough digging, to open the soil up to Winter frost and rain that will break the clumps down ready to pull out weed roots in Spring.

Once you have made a start on your plot, sit down and study your favourite 'how to grow vegetables' book, or read the King's Seed Catalogue (copies on the tables under the awning behind the Hut). Work out your 'rotation' plan for the next few years. 'Rotation' means that you don't grow the same crop in the same place each year and this helps reduce the risk of pests and diseases. October and through the winter is also the time for maintenance tasks - building a compost heap, repairing or building raised beds or paths and repairing that tumbledown shed that you inherited. If you plan to have a new shed, remember you need permission.

And don't forget - say 'hello' to your neighbours and ask for advice!

House-Keeping for Bees

As well as Bumblebees and honeybees (which live socially) there are over 240 species of 'solitary' bees in the UK. Most nest in small tunnels or holes in the ground and you can leave area of bare soil or gravel for these. Others use the hollow stems of dead plants, or holes in dead wood and, although solitary, a few of these bees group their nest cells together.

In recent years gardeners have started to encourage these bees by providing artificial nest houses of tubes or tunnels, sometimes in the form of 'bee hotels' - although some experts dislike that term because they will be a permanent home during a bee's short life.

Now is the time of year for bee hotel house-keeping. The single most important thing about a bee hotel is that it should be cleaned out every year, with new materials installed every year otherwise your bee hotel will become infested with parasites, mites and fungus, which are all harmful for bees and can kill them.

More information can be found at www.nurturing-nature.co.uk and www.foxleas.com On the latter site there is a downloadable pdf on making and managing a bee hotel.

A Big 'Thank You'.....

This month I thought we'd say 'Thanks' to those who have voluntarily offered their time to help improve and maintain our site. As a self-administered site everything depends on volunteers, whether they are Committee members or other plot-holders. All of the running and maintenance of the site, and the organising of the events that take place during the year, would not happen without people giving up their time. A big 'Thank You' to you all. Here are some examples from the last few weeks.



Thanks to those who came along to our 'Work Party' last month (picture, upper right). A start was made on a project to increase car park capacity, clear ground for better storage for manure and wood chip and to create a new, lettable plot. Well-earned refreshments were consumed during a break (picture, right). We organise work parties from time and it would be great to see more people come along, so please try and get involved in at least one of these work parties.



A really big 'Thank You' also to the Public Services students and staff from Leeds City College who also volunteered their time for their own work party (picture, left)! They carried on where our earlier work party finished and really got stuck into clearing the overgrown areas of the main car park and continued the preparation of ground for the storage bays and new allotment. Great work!

Thanks also to Jane Thompson and Mick Rowan for painting the old shipping container close to the main car park on a very hot weekend! (you can also see it in the photo to the left) The final plan is to get local artists to paint the container with an appropriate allotment mural to cover the green base-coat.

Finally, a particularly big thanks to Malcolm Cuthbert, Val Johnson and Sally Dowell for their efforts to successfully unblock and clean the composting toilet nearest the Green and the Hut. Not a job that many would like to do., so your efforts are really appreciated.