

Newsletter

Ash Road Allotment Association

The Newsletter

Any news? Please contact Chris Martin.
Email: chris.e.martin@ntlworld.com

Coffee and Advice

Remember you are invited for Sunday coffee. Come along at 11 am.



Allotment Website

We've just launched a new website.

Why not check it out at <https://www.ashroadallotments.co.uk>

We've tried to put together a website that will be of interest to the local community. So if someone is curious to learn more about our site, or they are thinking about renting a plot, the website will help answer their questions.

But we also hope that the website will be useful for plot-holders. There is a Members' Area, with documents and information relating to the site (the password is the same as the gate code). Over time we hope to add more information and 'how to' and 'when to plant what' guides.

Charity of the Year

Each year the Committee selects a Charity to benefit from donations raised at our events. This year's charity is the Martin's House Children's Hospice.



Improving Our Water Supply

You can't have failed to notice that a number of trenches and holes have appeared on site over the Winter. In particular, trenches have been dug in the area of the site close to the 90s plots and also at the lower end of the site, closer to the 100s plots and along the path to the Rokeby Gardens entrance. The Committee would like to apologise for any inconvenience, but these excavations are a critical part of a project to upgrade the water supply to the allotment site.

Some sections of the water supply pipes on site are the original lead pipes. In the last couple of years it has become clear that leaks have developed. Over this winter the Committee has put in place a programme to replace these old pipes. In the absence of accurate plans of the water supply network, a series of 'test pits' had to be dug first to confirm where the pipes are located. The first phase of work enabled us to find the sections of pipe where leaks were occurring. In more recent weeks trenches have been dug and new, replacement pipe laid. These are the excavations and blue pipes that you will have seen at various locations around the site.

The final stage of the work is to connect the new, blue pipes into the water supply system; test that all is working correctly and then backfill the remaining holes. We hope to be able to have the water supply switched back on as soon as possible, but the Committee would ask for your patience while this essential work is done. We hope that with the new pipes in place for the summer season water wastage will be reduced and our water bills somewhat lower!

Notices.....

Here are a few important notices about allotment safety and being good neighbours:

Please do not dump any more rubbish in the skip in the top car park or elsewhere on site. The skip is now full - you need to dispose of your own rubbish off-site.

After May 1st **Bonfires are only permitted after 5pm**. If you have a bonfire consider your neighbours (on and off-site), avoid creating too much smoke and compost rather than burn green material.

Every **plot-holder must keep the edges and paths around their plot maintained**, grass trimmed and overhanging brambles and branches cut back. A number of the footpaths between the plots are becoming very narrow. These paths enable people to move around the site and must be wide enough to allow a wheelbarrow to pass. Please do not allow paths to become blocked or narrower than necessary.

Drive VERY SLOWLY along the access road to the top car park. Remember that you are driving past other people's plots and dust raised by cars being driven too fast has become a nuisance.

Please **do not remove the 'scalpings' (grey gravel/aggregate material) located alongside the top car park**. This is for Committee-use only for the maintenance of the access road and car parks.

Please **Remember to close the entrance gates and scramble the padlocks at all times**. This is important for the security of the site. The main access gate should be left open ONLY between 10am and Noon on Sunday morning.

Allotment Events 2019 - Dates for Your Diary

Sunday, 12th May - Plant Sale

Sunday, 30th June - Coffee Morning for Macmillan Cancer Support

Sunday, 4th August - Allotment Barbecue

Sunday, 1st September - Allotment Annual Show

Plant Sale

The first event of 2019 is the **Spring Plant Sale on Sunday 12th May**. This is a great way to get vegetable plants and seedlings for planting out this summer. The sale also raises money for charity.



But we need your help.

- Would you be prepared to grow some plants for the sale? Or if you have too many vegetable seedlings for your own needs by the day of the sale, why not bring them along and donate them to raise funds for a good cause and help out other plot-holders?
- Also, if you have surplus plant pots - please can you leave these on the table by the Hut. They will also be useful for the Sale.

Allotment & Garden Products

Hazel hurdle rods 8-15ft long, bundle of 20, £15	Biochar soil improver 25 litre bag, £7
Hazel hurdles & Hazel screens CONTACT US FOR A QUOTE	Pea sticks 5ft, bundle of 10, £10
Bean poles 7ft long, bundle of 10, £10	Garden stakes 5ft long, bundle of 10, £8

BULK-ORDER PRICING ALSO AVAILABLE - GET IN TOUCH FOR INFO

☎ 07835 354 417

✉ leedscoppiceworkers@gmail.com



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facebook®

Still haven't joined us on Facebook? Follow the link - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1115906655100815>.



'Spud in a Bucket'

OK, here's a fun competition for the summer that will be judged as one of the classes at the Allotment Show on Sunday 1st September 2019.

The idea is that everyone who would like to take part will grow the same variety of potato, from a seed potato provided by the Committee.

To give everyone a chance we are restricting entries to one potato and bucket per person.

Please collect your potato and bucket from the Hut on Sunday mornings, or see a Committee Member. The cost is £1.

One potato grown in a bucket is a great fun class and we encourage everyone to have a go. No one knows what weight of potatoes they have grown until Show Day, when the buckets are emptied, the crop weighed and the winner decided

So come on, have a go - and Good Luck!

Things to do in April

Here are a few suggestions for 'things to do' this month.

However, if the weather is not fit for planting, then please delay until it is. Frosts are still occurring on clear nights and chilly nights look likely to last until at least mid-month this year.

Sowing and Planting

- From mid-month you can plant your seed potatoes. Remember to 'earth up' and cover shoots as they emerge to protect from frost. For new plot-holders potatoes are an excellent crop for clearing rough allotments - the digging and earthing up helps improve the soil and the foliage can shade emerging weeds.
- Growing onions is relatively simple for beginners and there is still time to plant onion sets (the small onion 'bulbs').
- If you have been growing seedlings at home, hardier veg can be planted out this month (e.g. peas, and broad beans). But stand by to protect with fleece etc. if frost is forecast. Put up your frames or poles for peas and beans to grow up.
- Most root crops (carrots, beetroot, etc.) can be sown outdoors directly by the end of this month, though for carrots the heavier soils and slugs on our site can be a challenge and some people plant them in containers. For carrots you will need to have a fleece or other barrier with edges buried in the ground to guard against carrot root-fly.
- Check your other seed packets to see what can be planted directly outside in April. Sow outdoors once the soil is warm enough and if ground conditions are not too wet. Cloches and fleece covering the soil can help warm it up before planting. Remember to check whether the seedlings need protection from frost/or covering with a cloche or fleece to germinate.
- Make sure you 'harden off' (acclimatise) any seedlings or shop-bought plants. This means placing them out in a sheltered spot during the day and bringing them indoors at night, or using a cloche/mini greenhouse for 7-10 days, gradually increasing exposure to the weather before planting out in the ground.
- If you are getting a head start by growing tender crops as seedlings under cover this month don't transplant these out into final beds until after the last frost in May. This includes sweetcorn, but also some crops that are great for beginners, including climbing and runner beans, squash and courgettes.

Watch Out For.... the enemy!

- **slugs and snails** eat seedlings overnight. Plant more than you need or plant larger plants that can outgrow attacks.
- **Wood pigeons** love to feast on new shoots of beans and peas, so keep your crops covered with netting or a cage.
- **Weeds** are starting to grow rapidly - so start hoeing to stop the weeds in their tracks.

For lots more information go to: the 'Allotment & Garden' website at www.allotmentgardening.org.uk the *National Allotment Society* website at www.nsalg.org.uk or the *RHS* website at www.rhs.org.uk. All of these sites have guides and 'what to do this month' information - but remember that timings will be a couple of weeks later in Yorkshire than in the south!

Leeds City College Students Help Out!

If you've been on site on Thursday afternoons you may have noticed a lot more activity than usual over the last few months. Leeds City College runs Public Service Diploma Courses for students who wish to develop skills for work in the public sector services (such as Police, Fire Service, Armed Forces etc) and you may have seen groups of their staff and students on our site. The College has its own plot and they have made a great start, clearing all the weeds and overgrowth, building a shed and laying out paths and raised beds.



But the College has also generously offered some of their students' time to help out with communal work tasks across the site and in recent months they have carried out a really impressive amount of work that benefits us all. Particular mention must be made of the work they did on Plot 17S to get it ready to be re-let (**photo left**). Those who know that part of the site will remember the impenetrable 'jungle' of brambles that filled the plot. Thanks to the students this has been cleared - an amazing transformation - and the plot has now been re-let. The students have also completed works to repair the raised beds on the 'Easy Access' plot and, more recently, have helped out with our project to replace the old lead water supply pipes across the site.

The **photo top right** shows them digging a trench for new water pipe in the section of the site to the west of the Hut (in the area of the 90s plots).

The students and staff of the College are proving a great asset to Ash Road Allotments and I'm sure all plot-holders would agree that a huge 'Thank You' is due to them for the work they have done: it is much appreciated. I think we would all hope that they are also enjoying their time on the site (I don't envy them the bramble cutting - that was tough!) and here's hoping that we may have some new converts to the joys of 'growing your own'.

College staff, Emma Langford and Paul Bastow, have said we should let them know if there are any other tasks with which they may be able to help, even for individual plot-holders who may be struggling to cope, so if you have any suggestions please email me, or speak to any member of the Committee. In the meantime if you see the staff or students on site, say 'Hello' and Thanks!