

THE URBAN JUNGLE

The Newsletter of the Ruislip-Northwood Co-operative Small Holding and Allotment Society Limited

Issue 23 - June 2011

Introduction

Another really packed newsletter

Welcome To

Sandra, who has taken the lower half of Matthew's plot, and Olivia, who has taken the plot between Renate and Cyndy

Feedback from Walkabout

On Saturday May 28th, we invited our landlords for their annual visit. Ken Guy, chairman of the Trustees and Eileen Bowlt, our local historian, spent the afternoon touring both allotments and smallholdings and their comments throughout were extremely favourable. They were particularly impressed by the new stable blocks being built to replace the older ones, and the work Tim is doing to increase security along the footpath; also by the efforts of members to make their plots both productive and attractive.

Stop Press: Harlyn Summer Fayre

Once again, one of the hottest days of the year! The Fayre - and the sunshine - attracted plenty of families. And, although it was rather late in the year for plants, we managed to have plenty to sell, even if the majority seemed to be tomatoes! Thanks to all those who donated plants, and thanks to those who turned up to help set up, or to sell: Hanna, Cheryl and Barrie, Penny, both Barbaras, Renate, Robert and Jenny, Sue, Ines, Angela & Trevor. We didn't do quite as well as last year, but still raised £40 for our funds.

BBQ Tickets

These are now on sale, available from Graham and Janice, Joe, Sue and Trevor. All tickets cost £3.00 per head, to cover BBQ food and salads. You will need to bring your own drinks. Please feel free to invite family and friends. Please note: no further tickets will be sold after Sunday July 10th, as the catering team needs to know numbers.

Now that the soft fruit season is upon us don't forget to make your jam and chutney contributions for the produce sale. The welcome rain has saved us a lot of watering, so we can profitably use our spare time indoors. If we all make a pound jar of each, it will be a sure fund raiser! Have copies of your recipes handy as well. There are bound to be requests....

Tidy-Up Weekend (July 9th/10th)

As usual, we will be having a grand tidy-up of the entire site the weekend before the BBQ. Volunteers are needed for mowing, strimming, weed-killing, pruning, litter-picking and general tidying. (One of our ambitions is to get all of the small paths between plots clear and in working order!) A formal working-party will take place on Sunday 10th, from 10.00 till 12.00, but for anyone who cannot make that date, there are one-off jobs that can be done on the Saturday, or at your own convenience.

Hedge-cutting

.... And don't forget hedge-cutting the previous weekend, Sunday July 3rd. The "heavy gang" is in place, but we need folk to vanish the prunings from the pavement and stack them ready for burning. We are hoping to complete the outside at least in the one session. Help needed from 9.00 until the job is finished (mid-day?). Even if you can come for an hour, it will be helpful. Bring a barrow, rake and stout gloves.

Tomato Blight

This seems to be a permanent problem these days, especially in July and August when the weather turns humid. If you grow tomatoes, spraying is essential. Copper fungicide was the usual spray, but has not been readily available recently, the second choice, Dithane, is no longer marketed. There is a Dithane replacement product "Fruit and Vegetable Disease Control – Protective Fungicide", sometimes marketed as the "new" Dithane. Be prepared to spray any time from early July, at 2/3 week intervals until late August, depending on weather conditions. Detailed information on these for our area can be found on Blightwatch: www.blightwatch.co.uk Our username is: joelstreetallotments our password is: blight. (This site is aimed at professional growers, so is very detailed. If you haven't used it, please do!)

If the worst happens and any plants are affected, do not leave them to spread infection onto neighbouring plots! Pull them up and either put them in your Council green waste bags, or burn them. (Bonfires are not allowed during the summer, but this is an exception. Please notify a Committee member first.)

Watch out for Potato Blight too. It is the same as Tomato Blight, so the treatment is the same. If you see blight on your potato plants, cut off all the foliage and dispose of it as detailed above. If you act quickly, it will stop the blight from affecting your potato tubers

Machinery

There have been a couple of problems recently with regard to borrowing machinery. As the Society membership now exceeds 100, it is more important than ever that we all take care of the machines. When I looked into the shed one morning, 3 mowers were out of order and both Stihl grass trimmers needed rethreading and refueling. This left only one mower available for use to tidy the site. This is an inefficient use of storage space.

Michael, our Site Manager, works extremely hard to maintain the machinery safe for loaning out and we are fortunate to have a number of members who help him. It is up to the members who use it to do so responsibly and return it in a clean condition. Nobody wants to take out a dirty machine; if you don't have the time to clean it after use, you don't have time to use it. Please use it on another occasion when you are not in a rush.

The following instructions will be posted on the machine shed door.

Do not help yourself to machinery. There is usually a key holder on site to issue you with a machine in working order. Machines tagged with a "not in use" or "out of order" label are not for loan.

Do not pass a machine on to a plot neighbour. If your neighbour damages it, you could find yourself with a repair bill.

Refueling MUST be supervised by a key holder. The wrong fuel can cause damage.

Grass Trimmers

These are for trimming long grass, not bramble.

Do not replace the Trimming line unless a key holder has shown you how. Your helpful neighbour may not be familiar with the Stihl machines and all Trimmers are different.

There is also a knack for releasing more line - please ask a key-holder!

Do not pull the line out beyond the length of the shield; the excess line will be cut off automatically. If you find the machine shreds line, you are wasting it.

Mowers

The older machines are issued for use on short grass paths and lawn areas. YOU WILL DAMAGE THEM IF YOU USE THEM ON ROUGH LAND.

ALL MACHINES MUST BE THOROUGHLY CLEANED BEFORE RETURNING. NO MACHINE MUST BE LEFT ON AN UNATTENDED PLOT. ANOTHER MEMBER MAY BE WAITING FOR IT.

PLEASE REPORT ANY MALFUNCTION TO THE KEYHOLDER WHO LOANED IT TO YOU.

Skip

As some of you will have been aware, we have recently had a skip delivered to remove carpet which members have found on their plots and which is now banned on site. The Society is indebted to the services of Gerry, Tim D., John and Antony for expertly filling the skip. Thanks also go to Michael, Barbara and Trevor.

Unfortunately we were not able to extend this service to ploholders because some members had filled a trailer full of rubbish and left it in the car park. This had to be cleared because of the increasing rat population. The carpet, which had already been stacked for some time against Tesco's wall, had to be cleared of two wasp nests before it could be put in the skip. It is a matter of health and safety that no rubbish is dumped in the car park or on plots which may appear to be derelict. Dumped/stacked rubbish attracts fly-tipping which we all pay to remove.

'A Wee Plea'

This is a sincere and heartfelt plea
To the Joel Street Allotment Community.
Nearly a year now we've had our loo,
And here is a reminder on cleaning and what to do:
No water or chemicals can go down the pan
So how on earth can we keep it spick and span?
After the relief of having done your deed,
A scrub round with the loo brush is all you need.
If there's anything to be found on the loo seat,
A wipe round with gel and paper will keep it neat.
If you have created a puddle on the floor,
Pour water from a can as you stand by the door
(There's a water butt near the loo!)
So many of us use it now it is here
And we all need to help keep it clean and clear.

Details on how the loo works and how to keep it clean are inside the loo.

If organic cleaner, antiseptic gel or more loo paper is needed, please see a committee member.

Please remember to put the loo seat down and close the door– this is essential for the effective working of the system. (MAKE SURE THE LOCK IS PUSHED RIGHT DOWN TO PREVENT IT SELF LOCKING)

And Finally

The next newsletter will be out in about a month's time

Jenny Jessup