

THE URBAN JUNGLE

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

Issue 24 - September 2011

Introduction

What a year this has been for us allotmenters! A very dry, warm spring followed by a cool, wet summer and now it looks like we have an Indian summer and I, for one, have started to water plants again. It isn't too early to start thinking about next year though, so the section on King's Seeds is well worth a read.

Summer BBQ

Well, we certainly know how to choose the right day! What fun we all had in the morning, putting up the marquee in the pouring rain. But, right on cue, the sun came out just as the first burgers were ready! And, with equally superb timing, as the last raffle prize was drawn, the wind suddenly got up and threatened to blow the marquee across the car park! Despite - or perhaps even because of - the weather, the forty or so members and friends who came had a marvellous time and we all agreed that it has to become an annual event. (We may even have it in September, when the weather is often more reliable!) And thanks to Ines and Sue, who master-minded the whole thing and prepared a mountain of salads; to Joe and Adam, who manned the BBQ; and to Mick and Rose for organising the raffle. We are also indebted once more to John and Antony for delivering and returning the two BBQs kindly loaned to us by Harlyn, together with some tables for the food. And not forgetting the increasingly wet - but still cheerful - team who put up the marquee: Graham, Joe, Adam, John L, Barbara C, Sue, Gordon, Callum, Ewan, Angela and Trevor.

The raffle raised over £40 and the BBQ tickets covered expenses.

King's Seeds

For those of you who haven't used the scheme before, King's are an established and reliable seed company offering a very extensive range of products via their catalogue - although it's not quite as glossy as some of the other companies. They are also inexpensive - often up to half-price compared to other catalogues, and the Society gets a small percentage as well! Simply fill in the order form at the back of the catalogue and hand it in with your payment (plus £1 for p&p) before the cut-off date of **November 5th**. (Please note: cheques should be made out to **Ruislip-Northwood Co-op Smallholding & Allotment Society**, not to King's Seeds.) The orders are delivered to us in bulk - but individually packed. We will notify you when they arrive.

This year, thanks to the efforts of Cathy and Adrian, members should have received a catalogue hand delivered to their home address, so that all can take advantage of this great scheme. If you haven't received one by now, contact Trevor or your Seed Secretary, Cathy (07905-413157).

Order forms together with remittance can be either handed to Trevor or any committee member, or alternatively left in the collection box in Cathy and Adrian's greenhouse, (through electric gates – turn right at second plot – greenhouse in front with shed alongside). The greenhouse will remain unlocked so please payment by cheque only – for cash payments, please give to Trevor or a committee member.

Due to the high cost of postage, potatoes are not particularly cheap, unless you order in quantity; one way round this is for two or three of you to club together. Otherwise, those who want to support a local business, may wish to visit Giles at Haste Hill Nursery in Fore Street. He has already placed his main order, so will be stocking the obvious varieties, but if enough members respond he may be able to add further varieties. If you are interested, please email Trevor as soon as possible and we'll see if something can be arranged.



Waiting Lists

Such is the interest in allotments, our waiting list continues to grow. (In common with all the other local sites: one in Ruislip has 13 plots and a waiting list of 25!) Two appeals: if you know of anyone who wants an allotment, tell them to contact Trevor sooner rather than later; and, if you have more land than you can cope with, please consider giving some of it up so that it can be offered to someone on the list. The only way the site will thrive is by ensuring that as much land as possible is well-cultivated.

Crop Thefts

From time to time, we have incidents where crops are stolen. But recently we have had a spate of thefts of quality crops - often soft fruit - and the whole crop has been taken in spite of being netted. This does seem a little more than opportunism. They seem to be happening late evening, or possibly even overnight; often on a Thursday or Friday.

The police have been informed, but unless we know of every incident we can't pass details on to them and the police will not be aware of the size of the problem. So, if anything goes missing from your plot, please report it immediately, (plus any information on dates/times, etc). It can then be logged and the incident reported.

And, of course, be vigilant: If you see anyone you don't recognise, or someone who is wandering around, please report it - again with dates & times - and, if possible, approach them, (or at least make it obvious that they have been seen). "Can I help you?" or "Are you looking for someone?" is usually all that is needed. If the person is there for a genuine reason - and most are - they will say.

If you have arranged for someone to water your plot while you are away and in return have asked them to pick any of your crops to prevent them "going over", please let us know and as many other plot neighbours in your area that you see.

And - as a longer-term policy - try not to plant expensive and desirable crops where they can be easily seen from the main paths. Erect a lightweight temporary windbreak of netting well ahead of harvesting or plant a tall prickly crop like blackberry at the exposed end of your plot.

Contact Mobile Numbers

Michael, our Site Manager, now has a contact number so that all emergencies, e.g. plumbing leaks, fences, repairs, equipment etc can be reported directly. It is: **07884-416935**. To report thefts or intruders, or for plot inquiries, continue to contact Trevor on: **07914-921390**. Hopefully, this will enable us to deal with problems quickly. Other inquiries can still be emailed to: joelstreetallotments@tiscali.co.uk

Hedge Cutting

Thanks to the hedge-cutting team who have done their usual splendid job. And especial thanks to Emlyn who - thanks to having professional equipment at his disposal - managed more than his fair share in double-quick time!

And Finally

I was hoping to include a recipe for a really easy, tasty tomato sauce but once again I don't have enough room. Perhaps next year!

The next newsletter will be the end of year one, which goes out with the invoices and the notice of AGM.

Jenny Jessup