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Summer is Approaching

With the last of the frosts behind us, it's time to look forward to a busy growing season. Many of the plots on the site are bursting into life with early potatoes showing their growth and various other vegetables establishing themselves for the growing season.

We've noticed a number of new plot holders out in force bringing their plots into order – from personal experience I can vouch that it does take some doing, but in the end the effort is worth it.

Took over on Oct 15th – Work in progress at May 26th



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Important Housekeeping Points

The Main Gate – The Allotment committee would like to remind all allotment holders that you must always close and lock the main gate after entering or leaving the site.

Speed Limit – The speed limit on the site is set at 5MPH, this is done for everyone's safety. Please remember most of the ground is slippery at the moment, so please keep your speed down when driving on the site.

June – Some To Do's

Flaming June as the saying goes should bring a steady increase in warmer weather and with even longer days, there is now plenty of time to get all those tasks done.

- Plant out sweetcorn after hardening off, arranging plants in blocks to aid pollination
- Cover developing and ripening fruits with netting or fleece to protect them from birds
- Enjoy the last harvests of asparagus this month, then leave the ferny top-growth to grow up over the summer
- Spread mulch around thirsty crops such as beans and courgettes to hold in moisture around their roots
- Continue watering new plantings until established
- Carry on with the thinning out of seedlings of earlier sown crops
- Hoe at every opportunity to remove weeds and break-up the soil. This allows water to soak down into the earth
- Train in climbing beans and continue to put in supports for your peas. Water along the rows of peas to swell the developing pods
- Watch out for aphids (black fly on broad beans and greenfly on various crops) and thrips on brassicas – spray the plant with soapy water (diluted washing up liquid)
- Empty, mix and refill compost bins to speed up decomposition.

Age UK Assistance

Gardening/Outdoor work volunteers needed for Age UK Reading Required

Age UK Reading is currently piloting a gardening service in Southcote as we recognise the great therapeutic benefits of a well maintained garden. Sadly, as people get older they may find the garden becomes difficult to stay on top of and it can then go from being a source of relaxing space to a stressful problem.

Age UK are working with local gardening charity [Food 4 Families](#) to try to provide a friendly, reasonably priced and trusted gardening service that not only helps people with their gardening but actively works to offer other support and signposting that Age UK Reading can provide.

Key Responsibilities include:

Carry out basic garden maintenance tasks such as mowing, tidying, edging, hedge cutting

Work in a team with other volunteer gardeners and the Lead Gardener

Essential Knowledge and skills include.

Ability to do basic physical garden maintenance tasks as described above.

PC literate to the point you can email

Able to travel to gardening locations.

More details and full contact info can be found at the [Reading Voluntary Action](#) website.

Site Security – Please always lock the main gate when entering or leaving the site.

Shed Break In's

If you suffer a break in to your shed, make sure that you report it to the Police. Make sure that you also get a Crime Number for each incident.

Allotment Pests & Diseases

Carrot Fly

Carrot fly is a particular problem between May and September – when female flies lay their eggs. There are varieties of carrots on the market that have been bred to be more resistant to carrot fly (e.g. Fly Away and [Resitafly](#)) but none are 100% proof.

To deter low-flying female flies, cover plants with horticultural fleece or place two foot high barriers around the plants (plastic bottle cloches work well).

A biological control (pathogenic nematodes) can be bought from mail-order companies (known as [Nemasys](#) Grow Your Own); to help control the young larvae or you can opt for chemical control in the guise of [Westland](#) Plant Rescue Fruit & Vegetable Bug Killer (Lambda [cyhalothrin](#)).

More about Allotment Pests and Diseases in further editions.

Dates for Your Diary

*Allotment road repairs. We'll need your help and assistance to tidy them up this August Bank Holiday.
More later.*

Wanted – 2 x 3.9 m scaffold poles+ joint for the construction of CCTV for the back of the site. Contact us if you can help.

Our Contact Details

*If you have any suggestions for items that you would like to see covered in further editions of this newsletter,
please do contact us at:
readingrdallotments@hotmail.co.uk*