

WOODLEY ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

Gardening In Harmony with Nature

May 2020
Issue 74

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"Bonfires – Don't forget bonfires are now banned until the 1st October 2020. WTC have indicated that they will strictly enforce this change."

Covid-19 – How it affects us!

Editor: Mike McNamara – E14

Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

There is still a need to be aware of the current restrictions and rules concerning the current health crisis.

We advise all plot holders to protect your hands when touching the gate/padlock when entering/leaving the site – use the blue bag by the gate to dispose of gloves. We also ask all plot holders to **NOT** wash your hands (or any of your tools) in the water tanks around the site. Please use your own container/bucket for this. The latest advice can be found at...

[National Allotment Society - Covid 19 Emergency Measures](#)

[UK.GOV - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): what you need to do](#)

Notices

Thefts - Most of you will be aware that we suffered a break in on the site over the Easter weekend. Sadly it is difficult to stop the determined thieves who cut through the perimeter fence to gain access. That said; we are fortunate on our site that these incidents are relatively rare compared to other sites in the area. More on this subject on [page four](#).

Skips – These are being postponed till later in the year. However, we are hearing reports of 'fly-tipping' around the site. If you have rubbish on your plot, then **you** have to take responsibility for it, **do not dump** it elsewhere on the site.

Dogs – The committee have received complaints about dogs wandering around the site. All dogs that are brought onto the site by plot holders must remain on their leads at all times. Any dog poo must also be cleaned up immediately.

May – Some To Do's

Typically May is one of the busiest months on the vegetable plot. The soil is warming up and the plants are growing well. Keep an eye on the weather for a last minute frost & keep some fleece handy to protect tender plants. So with that in mind, here are some jobs that you could be getting on with during May.

- May is the month to earth up your potatoes
- Thin out seedlings of crops sown last month, according to the spacing's on the packets
- Plant out Brussels sprouts, Summer cabbages, Celery, Celeriac & Leeks
- Sow Beetroot, Carrots, French Beans directly outside
- Courgettes, Squashes, Pumpkins, Marrows, Sweetcorn can be sown under cover
- If you have not done it yet put up your runner bean poles
- Continue weeding – especially perennial weeds which will be starting to appear now – if you get on top of them now, they'll be easier to control for the rest of the year. Hoe regularly to prevent annual weed seedlings growing.
- More tips at [Allotments & Gardens](#) and [Gardeners World](#)

“Clear the old leaves off strawberry plants and protect any early strawberries with netting to keep birds and squirrels out.”



Project Updates

Launchpad – from Carolyn Davies

As we have not had any corporate volunteers so far this year several tenants are helping us out to keep things growing.

Many thanks to Teresa Bastiman, Vassily, Robert Townsend, Lewis Hodge, Lianne Lewis & Tina and Scott for your input so far and more people will be joining us soon.

Great progress made digging over and preparing the ground for planting soon. Potatoes, broad beans, onions and garlic all in the ground and growing well. Carrots, spring onions and radishes in the raised beds.

Although we have lots of seedlings growing in the poly tunnel and elsewhere we will always welcome any extra you may be able to donate. Just leave them in the poly tunnel on the Launchpad plot.

Bee Hives – from Steve Cook



We now have three Bee Hives in place. One of them has produced a second Queen which has now been split off. Three other tenants have also indicated that they will be setting up new hives later this year.

If you are interested in this project, contact the committee via the normal email.

Bee Keeping Info

Swarms

It is possible that Bee Swarms or colonies might crop up on the allotment site or indeed in members gardens. They can set themselves up in compost bins or sheds now that we are in the “swarming season”.

If they can be definitely identified as honey bees as opposed to bumble bees or wasps, Steve Cook (our resident Bee Guru) would be pleased to investigate if it is possible to remove and re-site them into our new onsite Bee Enclosure which can be found at the end of row A/B.

If you think you have found a swarm/colony, please contact Steve on 0118-969-8582.

More about Bee Keeping

With our own Bee keeping project now up and running, perhaps you are thinking about having your own Bee hive – think about all that honey!

So what does it take to keep a successful Bee hive?



The Reading Beekeepers Association (Steve Cook is a member) has lots of information for beginners and it is worth while visiting their [website](#) to learn more about this subject if you are interested.

Sow and harvest chart



A handy guide for Sowing & Harvesting



Click on these for larger version

“Site Security is important for all of us.

Please lock the gate when you enter or leave the site.

Also don't leave high-value items in your plot shed”

Other Items

Allotment Waiting List - With the recent lockdown rules resulting in a big surge in gardening, we can report that the current waiting list for an Allotment plot has risen to 35!

Here's an interesting article about one person's wait of [twelve years](#) for their chance to have an allotment.

Woodley Pilot Light Trust/Woodley Food Bank

Donations - Jenny Vertigan (Plot C36) has a grey box on her plot, which is opposite the M&S car park with the polytunnel.

Please feel free to leave any donations here. No fresh items though.

Removal of items from site/plots

The committee regrets that it needs to inform all Allotment Plot Holders about an incident involving a fellow tenant on Good Friday.

This individual was seen entering the communal shed and stealing a roll of steel mesh fencing, the property of Woodley Town Council (WTC).

Thanks to the vigilance of a fellow tenant, the culprit was identified, questioned and the incident reported to the council with a request that this person's tenancy is immediately terminated.

We are waiting on feedback from the council about this matter.

We can confirm that there is no relation between this incident and the pilfering that took place last year.

All thefts are a reminder that we should not let people on to the site without checking that they are tenants and that we should all lock the gate after leaving the site.

It is most important if you see something suspicious that you report it to the committee so that we can take the appropriate action.

In accordance with the AGM mandate, more covert cameras have been deployed around the site as we are determined to eradicate the petty pilfering that we experienced last year.

As mentioned in earlier newsletters, we expect to introduce new keys & locks for the site later this year. However, within the confines of the site, it really is down to each of us to act responsibly with regards to the property of others.

If it is not on your plot, then it is not yours to take!

Water Containers – We have been offered a large quantity of 15 litre water containers, the type used in water coolers. These are ideal for mini greenhouses once the bottom has been cut off.

The cost is £ 1.00 each which is to cover the cost of the deposit. If you are interested, please contact via the usual email address.

Wood Chip & Pallets – We continue to receive deliveries of Wood Chip and Pallets. Wood Chip is nearby the Launchpad plots and Pallets can be found by the shed and between the ends of rows E/F & G/H.

Please remember this is for your onsite plot only.



We would like to have a Logo that represents the Allotment Association.

Please send any suggestions to the usual email address below and we will announce it at the rescheduled AGM later this year.

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