# WOODLEY ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER Gardening In Harmony with Nature May 2021 Issue 86

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"Security at the Front Gate"
Please ensure that you
close and lock the gate
when you enter or leave
the site.

Our Website can be found here

# Covid-19 – How it still affects us!

Editor: Mike McNamara - E14

# Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

The current Lockdown restrictions continue to be eased. However, there is still a need to be aware of all the current restrictions/rules concerning the current health crisis and the changes as they occur over the coming weeks.

We still advise all plot holders to protect their hands when touching the gate/padlock when entering/leaving the site – please use the bin by the gate to dispose of any used gloves/masks.

Plot holders must **NOT** wash their hands (or any of their tools) in the water tanks around the site. Please use your own container/bucket for this. The latest updated (May) advice can be found at...

National Allotment Society - Covid 19 Emergency Measures

UK.GOV - Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do

### **Notices**

**Bonfires** – Are no longer allowed onsite until 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021. Woodley Town Council will be monitoring the site for any infringements of the Tenants Agreement.

**Speeding** – Further letters are being sent out to serial offenders still driving at excessive speed on the site. **Please Reduce Your Speed On Site**.

**CCTV** – As we expand our CCTV coverage of the site, we need another 10ft. aluminum scaffold pole. If you can help with this, please contact us on the normal email address.

# May - Some To Do's

May usually is a busy month and this year should be no exception with the ground slowly warming up ready for sowing and planting out.

However keep an eye out for a late frost – remember last year. With that in mind, here are some jobs that you could be getting on with.

- Sow seeds for French Beans, Runner Beans, Beetroot, Broccoli, Calabrese, Cabbage and Cauliflowers
- Plant out Brussels sprouts, summer cabbages, Celery, Celeriac, Leeks
- Earth Up early potatoes if they have started showing through, keep an eye out for a late frost
- Thin out crops sown last month, including beetroot and carrots. Be sure to cover carrots with fleece afterwards, as thinning out releases a carrot smell that attracts carrot fly
- Some other seeds to start off in the greenhouse/undercover include sweet corn, courgettes, squashes, winter brassicas like cauliflower, broccoli, purple sprouting and Brussel sprouts
- Put up poles for runner and climbing French beans. Support peas and broad beans before they become too tall.
- More tips at <u>Allotments & Gardens</u>, <u>Gardeners World</u> & the <u>NSALG</u>.

"What's to grow next season? Now is the time to start planning your next sowings – use our guide on page three"



# Plot Inspections – Some background

The Allotments Association Committee has restarted Plot Inspections again and as there have been a number of comments about these, we thought it a good idea to explain some background to the reasons for them.

Please note these initial plot inspections have only been used to set a 'baseline. Going forward and allowing for the easing of 'Covid' restrictions, the Committee will use the 'baseline' to measure additional inspection results against the criteria set out in the Tenants Agreement.



So what's the background to Plot Inspections? In December 2019 when we issued a Special Bulletin - Plot Inspections — What are the Criteria? - the waiting list stood at six with four plots available all of which were massively overgrown, despite the existing plot tenants insisting that they wanted to keep these plots.

Today, with the increase in popularity of gardening/allotment take up, the waiting list has seen an increase of ten-fold to **68**! With only two plots available!

With the increase in the waiting list (which estimates to a 2 years wait) and a shortage of available plots, it is incumbent on the Allotment Association Committee to ensure that all current plots are actively being used in accordance with the criteria set out in the Woodley Town Council Allotment Tenant Agreement that we all sign every year.

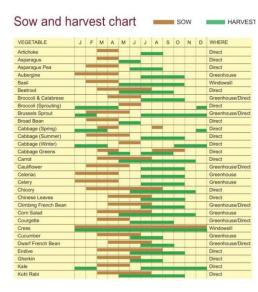
Some of the requirements set out by Woodley Town Council include:

- After one year, 70% of each plot should be cultivated, forming the basis for future plot surveys carried out by the allotment association
- Keep your allotment well maintained and in a proper state of cultivation at all times and keep the allotment paths and surroundings immediately adjoining your plot clean and free from weeds.

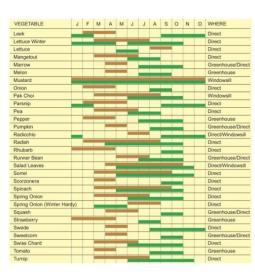
More details of what is expected according to the Tenants Agreement can be found in the Woodley Town Council/Allotment Association jointly published Special Bulletin which can be downloaded from our Blog.

Addressing one recent comment, the committee does understand that during the winter seasons plots will see less work on them than in the growing season. We therefore highly recommend covering the plot to stop the spread of weeds, this will not only indicate that the plot is being 'looked after' but also help when bringing it back into production in the spring.

We hope this backgrounder explains the reasons for ongoing plot inspections.



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 highvalue items in your plot shed"

# Other Items

**Allotment Waiting List** – The waiting list now standing at **68**, with only two available plots currently.

**Plot Inspections** – Plot inspections have resumed and any unworked plots will be identified & reallocated to the waiting list. The next inspections will be during week 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

The committee would like to point out that if you are struggling to work/maintain your plot due to its size and it is proving too much for you, then please contact the committee on the usual email below and we can discuss various options including splitting larger plots in two and releasing the split portion onto the waiting list. Please also let us know if you intend to be away from your plot for an extended time.

If there are any plot issues at all, direct contact with us is the best way to get a resolution.

# **Our Website and Plant Shop**

We continue to make more changes to the <u>Allotment</u> <u>Website</u>. Check out the latest 'News & Information' on our <u>Blog.</u>

The online shop has had a very successful launch this year with nearly all the current produce being purchased.

We do have a few items left these include:

- 4 x Red Veined Sorrel
- 1 x Lemon Balm
- 1 x Horse Radish
- 8 x Comfrey
- 15 x Rosemary
- 5 x Sage

All priced at £1.50 each.

We will be restocking the online shop with more products later in the summer, so keep an eye out for some upcoming bargains. You can purchase all the items either with a PayPal account or with a Credit Card. You can visit the shop here.

# Launchpad Update

Corporate volunteers will be back on site in May, so hopefully we are on our way back to 'normal'. Tenant volunteers have helped massively to maintain the plots during lockdown. However, we will be looking for more help particularly when the dry, hot weather comes along and the watering starts. If you can help; please email us.

We are also looking for donations of certain plants for the Launchpad plots; Butternut squash, French beans, Chard, Spinach, if you can donate any, please leave these on the table outside the Launchpad polytunnel. Many thanks.

# **AGM Update**

If the current government time-table continues we will look to hold our next AGM on the 21<sup>st</sup> June at the Oakwood Centre in Woodley.

If you have suggestion\_items for the AGM Agenda or would like to join the committee then please email suggestions or your name to the usual email address.

If COVID circumstances change, we will hold a virtual AGM. We will publish more details nearer the time.

# **Skips Onsite**

Skips will be on site for the second bank holiday in May, dates are 28<sup>th</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> May.

We will be issuing a Special Bulletin covering more details including what can and cannot be put into the skips.



Website Plant Sales – Many people have excess seedlings; you can always share them around other allotment holders. However, you can also donate them to our online shop via an email to <a href="mailto:donateplants@woodley-allotments.org.uk">donateplants@woodley-allotments.org.uk</a>. Money raised by the sales will go towards allotment site projects.

## **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