

WOODLEY ALLOTMENTS TENANTS ASSOCIATION

at Reading Road
Gardening In Harmony with Nature

Newsletter - OCTOBER
2022
Issue 103

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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.

Editor – Mike McNamara – E14

Our Website can be found [here](#)

Notices

Plot Inspections

The Committee has received quite a bit of feedback following this year's summer plot inspections. The Committee carry-out these inspections on behalf of Woodley Town Council (WTC) acting on the parameters defined in the 2022 Tenancy Agreement that we have all signed.

A common theme that has emerged via feedback from tenants who received 'adverse' plot inspection reports, has turned out to be that they were not able to work on their plots this year due to various personal circumstances.

The Committee & WTC fully understand that there may be circumstances that prevent people from working their allotments. The Committee has mentioned in several Newsletters to contact the Committee if tenants are having problems maintaining their plots. Several tenants had already done this and consequently have not had adverse plot inspections this year.

Memorial Garden scheme to go ahead

You will have received a Special Bulletin along with this Newsletter with an outline plan for the proposed Memorial Garden. The committee is interested to hear all feedback to this idea. Let us know via the usual email address at the end of this newsletter.

Manure, wood chip, compost

You will have also received a Special Bulletin about this subject as well. We are looking to build a list of suppliers so please send any feedback you have via the normal email please.

October – Some To Do's

October is really the last of the growing months on the vegetable plot. With little to sow/plant, there is still harvesting to be done & stored away to eat through the winter. With that in mind, here are some jobs for this month.

- It's time to harvest the last of the crops such as runner beans and courgettes, as well as pumpkins and squash
- Over-wintered broad beans such as 'Aquadulce', can go in from the middle of the month to provide an early crop next year
- Last chance to plant out overwintering autumn onion sets. Good varieties to survive the winter include the red 'Electric' and the yellow coloured 'Shakespeare' or 'Senshyu Yellow'
- Sow some hardy peas such as Meteor for an early spring crop
- Rhubarb crowns can also be planted now; established clumps can also be divided
- Spring Cabbage can be planted out and will be ready throughout the colder months
- Keep hoeing to stay on top of any pesky weeds that may appear.
- Many more tips at [Allotments & Gardens](#), [Gardeners World](#) & the [NSALG](#).

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



A Winter Checklist

Although not with us yet, it soon will be. You would think that there was nothing to do on an allotment during winter, but yes there are some big jobs you can be getting on with.

Keep on top of weeds

Weeds will carry on growing where the soil is warm enough. If nothing more, cut off seedheads and incinerate them. Ideally, though, work over your plot now and uproot as many perennials as you can or throw a 10cm deep mulch over annuals to smother them out.

Tend to your compost heap

It's no good throwing piles of 'stuff' on the compost heap and leaving it to turn into something you can use in the spring. It doesn't work like that! Turn already full heaps over once every month to ensure all parts spend at least some time in the middle of the pile, where it gets hottest. This will ensure full and even decomposition and make it ready for use.

Start digging - or don't

Digging the soil in autumn, before it freezes solid, exposes soil pests to foraging birds, and disturbs weed growth. Blitz small areas at a time and use a small spade that only allows you to lift a certain volume of soil, you don't want to hurt your back. If you're a no-dig gardener, check your coverings.

Make a Runner Bean Trench

Runner beans need very rich soil that is full of nutrients and creating the perfect environment for the plants will help provide a cracking summer harvest. Leaving a good strip of ground uncovered dig a runner bean trench and then fill your trench with kitchen scraps, compost, manure, or any old plants you're done with. This stuff will rot down and make sure the runner bean plants get all the nutrients and trace elements, as well as help to keep moisture around the roots.

Rake up deciduous leaves to make leaf mould.

One way to do this is to raise your mower to the highest setting and mow the leaves up (even if you rake them up elsewhere then scatter them on the lawn). This chops them up nicely, and adds a few grass clippings to the mixture, which speeds up rotting. Create a leaf mould cage out of some chicken wire and fill. The editor also goes out and about the public lanes of Berkshire to collect leaves, by spring you should have some nicely rotted leaf mould to use.

Cover root crops with straw

Don't forget crops left in the ground. Weather is not as predictable as it once was. Maincrop carrots, parsnips and Jerusalem artichokes are impossible to lift from frozen soil, so mulch them to insulate. The simplest way is to pop a tunnel cloche over your row and pack it with straw.

Happy Winter on the allotment.

Sow and harvest chart

VEGETABLE	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	WHERE
Artichoke													Direct
Asparagus													Direct
Asparagus Pea													Direct
Aubergine													Greenhouse
Basil													Windowsill
Beetroot													Direct
Broccoli & Calabrese													Greenhouse/Direct
Broccoli (Sprouting)													Direct
Brussels Sprout													Greenhouse/Direct
Broad Bean													Direct
Cabbage (Spring)													Direct
Cabbage (Summer)													Direct
Cabbage (Winter)													Direct
Cabbage Greens													Direct
Carrot													Direct
Cauliflower													Greenhouse/Direct
Celeriac													Greenhouse
Celery													Greenhouse
Chicory													Direct
Chinese Leaves													Direct
Climbing French Bean													Greenhouse/Direct
Corn Salad													Greenhouse
Courgette													Greenhouse/Direct
Cress													Windowsill
Cucumber													Greenhouse
Dwarf French Bean													Greenhouse/Direct
Endive													Direct
Gherkin													Direct
Kale													Direct
Kohi Rabi													Direct

A handy guide for Sowing & Harvesting

VEGETABLE	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	WHERE
Leek													Direct
Lettuce Winter													Direct
Lettuce													Direct
Mangelout													Direct
Marrow													Greenhouse/Direct
Melon													Greenhouse
Mustard													Windowsill
Onion													Direct
Pak Choi													Windowsill
Parsnip													Direct
Pea													Direct
Pepper													Greenhouse
Pumpkin													Greenhouse/Direct
Radichio													Direct/Windowsill
Radish													Direct
Rhubarb													Direct
Runner Bean													Greenhouse/Direct
Salad Leaves													Direct/Windowsill
Sorrel													Direct
Scorzoner													Direct
Spinach													Direct
Spring Onion													Direct
Spring Onion (Winter Hardy)													Direct
Squash													Greenhouse/Direct
Strawberry													Greenhouse
Swede													Direct
Sweetcorn													Greenhouse/Direct
Swiss Chard													Direct
Tomato													Greenhouse
Turnip													Direct

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 – The waiting list continues to reduce and is currently at **60**, with just **five** vacant plots of varying sizes waiting to be allocated during October. The Committee has noticed a trend towards new tenants taking on smaller plots.

Away from your plot for an extended period? – Please let us know if you intend to be away from your plot for an extended time for any circumstance including illness & extended holidays so we can keep an eye on it for you and exempt it from any plot inspections.

Plot inspections – The Summer round of plot inspections has now been completed and Plot Inspection Reports have been delivered by email or pinned to your plot if you have not completed our [“Opt-In”](#) form.

Covid-19 Update - Covid continues to affect our lives in one way or another. The Committee would still ask all plot holders to continue to act responsibly when on the allotment site.

We still advise all plot holders to protect their hands when touching the gate/padlock when entering/ leaving the site. 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 (16th June 2022) advice can be found at...

- [UK.GOV – Coronavirus update latest details](#)
- [National Allotment Society - Covid 19 Precautions](#)

Launchpad Update

We continue to harvest and deliver to Launchpad as well as receiving donations from other tenants. Many thanks to all that continue to support this important Charity.



Committee Contacts

If you have any questions about any issues on our allotment site, please feel free to contact any of the Committee on their plots or use the email address at the end of this newsletter.

- Vice-Chair - Sarah Lane (H28)
- Treasurer - Kerri Evans (C29a)
- Secretary - Gill Germain (C23)
- John Anderson (H27)
- Teresa Buley - (E18)
- Tony Carter - (D21)
- Barry Jackson - (G28)
- Mike McNamara (E14)



Bonfires now allowed.

As from the 1st October 2022 bonfires are now allowed.

But you can only start one after 4pm, they should not be left unattended at any time and must be completely extinguished before you leave the site. Please also be considerate of the wind and what you burn.

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:

readingroadplots@woodley-allotments.org.uk