

BHAS EAST SHEEN ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

Autumn Show Report:



The weather was perfect for the show, and as always the weather throughout the year dictates what is exhibited.

The warm moist winter and spring has resulted in lots of slugs and snails which eat anything green that happen to be in their path. Fungal disease has also affected onions and garlic, Rust, in particular attacked garlic which needs a cold winter to build up resistance to this disease and so only 2 entries of onions and no garlic **Tip:** (*Elephant Garlic is more resilient to rust and I had a good crop of this garlic this year*).

Also, apples and pears are rotting on the trees more than in previous years. No pears were entered in the show and only 2 entries of apples. Crops have been smaller this year after the bumper harvest last year.

The hot dry August has meant that the dreaded blight did not strike tomato crops for the show and there was a very impressive entry of tomatoes of every shape and colour, making it very hard to pick winners. It is always good to see plot holders experimenting with new varieties.

Potatoes have also done well this year, with less slug attacks in the hot dry soil and again it was difficult to pick winners. There was a good range of varieties on display.

The same went for the very impressive Squash and pumpkins (including 2 mammoth pumpkins!)

The hot weather has helped some fruit, there were 3 very good entries of grapes but blackberries and raspberries were much smaller this year.

Aubergines and peppers are difficult to grow without a greenhouse or polytunnel. The entries from John and Monica Hynd were superb.

In the single vegetable class there were some magnificent cabbages and a cauliflower that had survived slug attacks and some beautiful vegetable collections. (Interesting to see a pot of Lemon Grass exhibited)

I was disappointed not to see more flowers, only one entry of Dahlias and 3 mixed flowers which were very pretty.

Art work displayed by the children was worthy of The Tate Gallery! There are some budding artists growing up on the allotments. All the pictures on display and the truly scary vegetable monsters showed real imagination and creativity as did the the miniature gardens. Well done all of you.

Thank you to everyone who entered the Show. As always, it is a pleasure to see and judge the hard work that has gone into growing some very impressive produce.

Mary Thorp (Judge)



Some photos of a good day...Produce and People:



And the winners are....





John Hynd collects his cup!

[A list of all the winners in each category - Congratulations to all!](#)

Priory:

Seniors: Anna Stokoe

Novice: Desmond Millen

Best Plot: John and Monica Hynd

Hertford:

Seniors: Jenny Jeffries

Novice: Sabina & Neil Herbert

Best Plot: Tim Douglas

Pavilion:

Best Plot: Nick & Harriet Hinton

Palewell Park:

Seniors: Alex Clark

Best Plot: Bob Pratt

Triangle:

Novice: Derek Morris

Overall Cup Winners:

Best Senior: Anna Stokoe (Priory)

Best Novice: Derek Morris (Triangle)

Best Plot: Tim Douglas (Hertford)



Children's Corner

Word Search....

E	P	I	P	E	S	O	H	P	E	A	P
M	L	E	L	O	P	D	A	T	H	Q	G
S	T	N	E	M	T	O	L	L	A	C	E
P	P	P	E	S	Y	E	L	V	T	P	Y
U	Y	N	G	C	G	H	D	D	V	Q	S
I	V	S	P	A	D	E	I	G	Q	N	K
W	A	T	E	R	I	N	G	C	A	N	K
P	X	K	Z	E	O	O	I	I	K	R	H
O	J	L	K	C	T	O	L	P	O	T	T
P	X	B	Y	R	X	Z	X	F	R	H	C
O	T	A	M	O	T	W	M	A	M	D	A
L	A	Q	U	W	Y	M	E	D	E	G	L

Allotment

Earth

Fork

Hosepipe

Pea

Plot

Scarecrow

Snail

Spade

Tadpole

Tomato

Watering can



Message from the Chair:

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

Did anyone read a recent article in the Telegraph Magazine about the seemingly unstoppable dark force of the Japanese knotweed? This pernicious import is choking gardens, undermining foundations and even driving one poor homeowner to suicide! The article details the plight of one such homeowner who has been unable to sell her house due to her neighbour's overwhelming knotweed infestation.

Now we are not there yet, but this whole story brought to light the importance of maintaining your plot – not just for yourself, but for the benefit of your neighbours and the Allotments as a whole.

The Council's minimum requirements for a well-maintained plot is three quarters of the space under cultivation, with a minimum of 3 crops being grown within a generally tidy condition. Which I don't think is too much to ask.

It is the Committee's responsibility to ensure that these requirements are met and you have to spare a thought for our hard-working secretaries who often have to issue the same warning letters to the same people year after year.

So, with rents due in a couple of weeks now might be a good time to take stock of what you aim to get out of your allotment.

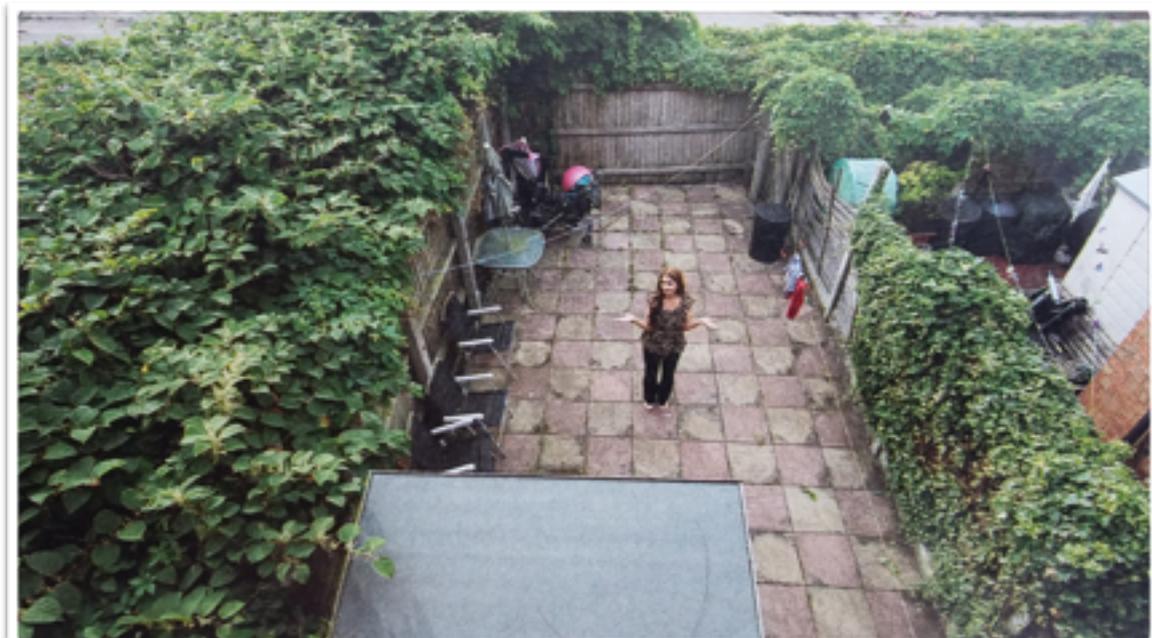
- First and foremost – Enjoyment. Do you actually enjoy visiting your plot and maintaining it on a regular basis? Or has it become something of a chore?
- Time – do you have enough time to devote to maintaining a productive plot?
- Interest – do you still have the same interest in growing produce and maintaining a tidy plot?
- Or, if you are doing the bare minimum - to simply avoid eviction - are you really getting the most out of your plot?

We are lucky as allotment fees are comparatively low. Not like an expensive gym membership where you feel duty bound to drag yourself along to in order to 'get your money's worth'. You can easily skip days, weeks and even months on the allotment because you haven't paid very much for it – but by continuing to hold on to a neglected plot you are denying someone the opportunity of making the most of this valuable piece of land.

The BHAS now has a waiting list of over 300 people – some of whom may not have a garden and who are therefore desperate to get an allotment and make the most of their plot – should they be lucky enough to get one.

It is in everyone's interest to keep up appearances – neglected plots encourage vandalism, spread weeds and cause distress, and can result in a general downward spiral of the entire site.

That's my rant over. ***Happy gardening.***



Composting in your Allotment:

This is a brief guide to some composting practices that have worked for me. The benefits of composting: organic compost is an excellent source of nutrition for soil ecosystems that support plant growth, it's good for biodiversity, it is a great way to recycle organic waste that may go to landfill, it helps retain moisture in the soil and in time saves you money!

Any composting enclosure needs a few basic things to succeed. Whether you opt for a plastic 'Dalek' bin or go for side-by-side wooden compartments, or hybrids of these, the enclosure needs to have contact with the soil to allow worms and other decomposing fauna access; and it needs a sealed top and sides to keep in moisture and heat. If you opt for an open compartment affair a piece of old carpet makes an excellent lid! Open compartments are often found in pairs as composting is usually slow, so after filling one compartment and covering, fill the next compartment, by the time that is filled the first is usually ready.

Generally the ingredients for composting fall in to two types – GREENS (soft sappy materials with high water content) and BROWNS (dry fibrous materials with a low water content) Aim for a 50:50 mix of the two types.

GREENS	BROWNS
Fruit and veg scraps from home	Paper towels & bags
Old flowers and plant stems	Egg boxes
Soft prunings	Newspaper and cardboard
Weeds, see note below	Wood ash, not from coal or mdf
Grass clippings	Sawdust, not mdf
Chicken manure	Woody prunings, well chopped
	Old straw, hay
	Autumn leaves
	Gerbil, hamster, guinea pig & rabbit bedding

Some important DONT'S: no meat or fish, cooked food, sandwiches, plastic, tin cans, glass, glossy magazines, nappies, drink cartons, straws. Avoid putting any diseased plant material in your compost bin as it is unlikely your mix will get hot enough to kill pathogens. Best to burn.

Check your composting mix often to ensure 50:50 mix. If it looks a slimy mess you need to add more browns, if it is dry and twiggy, sprinkle with a water/comfrey or nettle mix. It is worth giving it all a turn once in a while to get a bit of air in, use a garden fork or giant composting corkscrew. Chopping up large lumps with a spade will also help the process along.

An important note on WEEDS. Persistent/pernicious weeds e.g. couch grass, bindweed and ground elder should not be added direct to your compost. Put these in an opaque plastic sac with no holes. They will eventually rot down and the roots die. Only then add to your compost.

If you don't produce sufficient organic waste individually why not get together with your neighbours to combine your efforts?!

Nick Ives, Pavillion Allotment.



October Tasks:

This is the month when it feels as if the year is starting to turn. The days are noticeably shorter, the sun is lower in the sky and temperatures are dropping. Leaves are changing colour and beginning to fall and you are likely to get the first early frosts.



At this time of year the work is primarily about clearing away and composting the remains of the summer's harvest.

Clear old vegetation - remove all dead foliage and old, dying plants. Unless there are signs of disease add it all to the compost heap.

Remove plant supports - clear away all bean poles, canes and plant supports and store.

Earth up - leeks and celery to keep the stems blanched

Harvest fruit - continue picking apples and pears/ cook or eat any that are damaged straight away, only store perfect fruit, any that are blemished will simply rot and infect the others stored.

Sow or plant in October:

Broad beans - sow seeds of early varieties, they should overwinter and give you a crop in the following June.

Cabbages - last chance this year for transplanting spring cabbages. Plant them in ground that has been well firmed and cover with nets to protect from birds, especially pigeons.

Garlic - plant garlic cloves. The longer they are in the ground, the bigger next years bulbs will be for harvesting.

Rhubarb - entering the dormant period, so now is the best time to plant new sets or divide and replant old crowns.

Trading Shed News:

Buy your garlic and spring flower bulbs from the Trading Shed. Four types of garlic are available with prices much cheaper than garden centres.

From mid-January the Shed will stock the usual range of seed potatoes, onion sets and shallots, plus John Innes Compost (1-3) as well as anti-insect mesh to help protect from carrot fly, leek moth and many other pests.

Opening hours are displayed on all allotment sites. If you can't get to the shed during open hours see Mark (plot 75 Priory) for out of hours opening if you have an emergency.

The shed also stocks gardening related second hand books, tools etc. All donations welcome. Stock suggestions are always welcome.

(Mark Gourlay - Trading Shed Manager)

A message from King's Seeds - Save 50%...

What are you going to grow in 2017 in your allotment? You can order from Kings and make a substantial saving.

For full details pick up a 2017 Kings catalogue and an order form from the Trading Shed. Completed order forms together with your remittance are to be sent directly to Kings and your order will be sent to your home address. Alternatively you can order online.

There is no deadline for orders, so you can wait until spring 2017 if you prefer.

Kings Seeds supply a very wide range of high quality vegetable and flower seeds and other things for your allotment, so pick up a catalogue and order form and save yourself some money.

Simon Silvester <https://www.kingsseeds.com>

Key Contacts:

Chair: Duncan Hoadley

Allotment Secretaries: Joint Secretaries: Susan Moore and Aileen Izett

Membership Secretary: Janet Bostock

Treasurers: Sophie & Alistair Kennedy

Minutes: Adrienne Cleasby

Events Organiser: Nicolette King

Newsletter Editor: Brenda Lattimer

Trading Shed Manager: Mark Gourlay

Site Reps:

Hertford - Derek Lawrence-Brown Plot 26

Palewell Park - Paul Edelin (plot 15)

Palewell Fields/Pavilion - David Abel

Priory - Donal Douglas

Priory - Keith Norton

Triangle - John Bentham

Useful Links: click on the links in red for more information



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Editor: Brenda Lattimer

If you have any comments or suggestions about the newsletter, please email me.

For contact details please see the newsletter emailed to BHAS members.