

EAST SHEEN ALLOTMENTS AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

ALLOTMENT NEWSLETTER, MAY 2015

OPEN DAY ON THE ALLOTMENTS IS ON SUNDAY 17TH from 12.00pm-3.00pm. Bring your friends and join us for a drink or three and a BBQ lunch.

- All the usual fun of the fair, with cake and preserves, plants and second hand tools for sale and a raffle with some great prizes, including two tickets to Hampton-Court Flower Show.
- And lots of fun for kids, big and small... Make a SCARECROW, any size... Make a NUMBER SIGN for your plot, the more imaginative and bright the better with the number WRIT LARGE!, scarecrows and signs to be on your plot by 10am on SAT. 16TH MAY for judging.
- And on the day "CHILDREN'S I SPY" Pick up a card and match up the pictures with what you can find on Hertford Allotments. And of course there will be plenty of prizes.....

Contributions of cakes jam, chutney, plants and raffle prizes welcome on the day or before and if you can help on a stall that would be great.

THE AGM. will be held at The Trading Shed on **SATURDAY 20TH JUNE AT 12.00 AM.** Everyone on the Allotments is welcome but you have to be a member to vote. **If you care about the future of The Allotments, please come.** Alex Clarke is retiring as Chairman and Allotment Secretary. A new Chairman and Allotment Secretary is urgently needed if the allotments are to be run efficiently with The Council. Job descriptions will be sent to everyone. (The Allotment Secretary can be two people sharing the job as has been done in the past).

There will be a new Constitution to discuss, again this will be sent to you before the meeting. Probably the last thing you want to talk about on a mid-summer's day but it is important that everyone is clear and agrees on how the committee works and how membership money is spent.

After the meeting you can all chill-out with drinks and a BBQ.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS. If you haven't done so already, renew your membership now. You should have had a renewal form by email

(some people's reminders ended up in Spam) or by post, you can join or renew membership at The Trading Shed (open Sat. and Sun. 11.00-12.00am) and pick up your new Membership cards there.

And what do you get for your £10.00?

- Use of The Trading Shed (you can't buy anything without a current Membership Card)
- 10% discount at Adrian Hall
- A newsletter every 3 months
- A vote at the AGM
- **Your subscription pays for among other things:**
- Maintenance of main paths and social areas.
- Tree Pruning and removal.
- Twice yearly rubbish collection.

TREE PRUNING. A couple of men from The Council arrived on the plots at the beginning of the year to "lift or remove" Boundary Trees on the Allotments. They removed a few branches and saplings and left! Over the last couple of months most of the major pruning work has been done by a private Tree Cutting company paid for by the committee. The committee will not pay for trees growing on your plot. Dig up any saplings or small trees before you end up paying out £100s to have them removed.

RUBBISH COLLECTION. The committee has been hiring a lorry to collect non-recyclable rubbish from the plots for the last 4 years or so. Every year it costs more. The most recent collection took all day and cost nearly £1000! Much of the rubbish was left by new plot-holders clearing-up after past tenants, but some was clearly not from the allotments and bags of soil and green waste were also dumped.

I'm like everyone else, I like to root around in skips for bits of wood and glass and keep it by my shed "just In case it comes in useful". Broken glass, rusty metal and old nails sticking out from wooden planks can cause nasty injuries and are usually useless (I write from experience) **Resist the temptation to hoard and If you can, please get rid of your rubbish yourself at the local dump.**

MAY ON THE PLOTS

Keep me warm!

Don't be fooled by the warm weather we had in April.

Runner and French Beans, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Courgettes, Peppers and Aubergines all come from warm climates and can suffer if not die if the temperature falls below 10 degrees C.(50 F).Delay planting out until the end of May. If you have already planted out any of the above, listen to the weather forecast, and if there is any hint of frost or easterly winds, protect your plants with fleece (sold in the Shed)

The same goes for potatoes, cover with fleece or earth-up over the young foliage. Black or withered potato leaves at this time of the year are usually caused by frost or cold winds.

Fight the Mites!

- **Allium Mites have become a major problem on the allotments in the last few years. This tiny insect lays its eggs on the leaves of vegetables like onions and leeks as soon as the temperature rises. The little caterpillar that hatches eats its way through the middle of the plant causing the leaves to distort and rot. Cover with a cage of fleece or insect mesh, now.**
- **Carrot Fly attacks carrot seedlings, the grub that hatches causes the foliage to turn red and stunted, the carrots will be small and riddled with black furrows. Protect as for leeks and onions.**

Insect mesh is expensive but is much tougher than fleece and should last for several years. Not available at The Trading Shed or Adrian Hall. Look on line.

A LITTLE HISTORY. World War II ended this month 70 years ago. On the 24th of November 1945 The Richmond Herald, under the headline "The Allotment Holders Grumble", reported on The Barnes Allotment Association's AGM. Members arrived in great numbers, worried that all their war-time plots would disappear under building sites or football pitches before they had had their say. One plot holder summed up the feelings of his fellow allotment holders with the words: "We have no objection to building on the sites but to give up our allotments to sports fields is just not playing the game."

The mayor replied with the words "It's not been a bad achievement to have 1700 (wartime) allotments in the Borough of Barnes, and I am strongly of the opinion that if every man and woman had an allotment there would be a lot more happiness in the world"

