

# THE ALLOTMENT

HAMPTON COURT WAY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

**Dear All** During a recent site inspection I was surprised to see how many plum and damson trees looked very sickly, so I decided to do a little bit of research. I discovered many of our trees are suffering from rust fungus. Pear trees have **European Pear Rust** (orange & brown spots on the leaves) and plum trees have **Plum Rust** (small yellow spots on top of the leaf with tiny brown spots on the underside), both spread rapidly by airborne spores.

Although most information suggests fruit is not affected this does not apply if the infestation is severe or if it takes hold early in the season. Fruit may be under-developed and fail to ripen or be totally inedible. It is possible to treat with a chemical spray, although on a large tree this may not be practical. Myclobutanil (Systhane)

in various forms such as Bio Systhane Fungus Fighter can be applied in July. However, good crop management is probably the best solution

Burn fallen leaves and fruit debris in autumn or take it off site for disposal elsewhere to reduce the number of spores laying dormant over winter. Avoid over application of nitrogen fertilisers that encourage soft growth which is more susceptible to fungus. Maintain an open centre to fruit trees to allow good air circulation. As a general rule prune **pip fruit** trees in winter (apple) and **stone fruit** in summer (plum).

Another common disease of fruit trees is **Brown Rot**; the skin of infected fruit will have a brown appearance with small raised light brown bumps. If fruit is left on the tree it will dry and shrivel completely. There is no chemical

treatment available for brown rot. Infected fruit should be removed as quickly as possible and burnt. Do not leave rotting fruit on the ground.

It would seem if blight didn't get your crops then rust or rot just might ..... Oh the delight of airborne fungus spores. There is much to do in autumn and winter, thank goodness the weeds stop growing for a while!

**Jill** (Site Manager)

In the **Flower Show** our site **won overall Best Allotment**. West End Allotments won **1st** for the Flower Decoration and the Vegetable Basket. A big thank you to all who submitted entries and everyone who showed support on the day. The challenge is definitely on for next year. We want to win all the prizes!

BEST  
ALLOTMENT  
SITE

**Working Party on 11 October from 10am 'til finished. Refreshments provided. JOBS: Road repairs, Raking (corners by entrance & by plot 3b), Cutting Hampton Court Way hedge, Raking woodchip back. Bonfire - on 17b weather permitting.**

## OCTOBER

With still plenty to do and crops to harvest, October can also bring the first frosts to kill off all but the hardy plants.

### SOWING & PLANTING

Over-wintered **Broad Beans** can go in from the mid October. They don't like sitting in water so add drainage to heavy soils.

Sow **Beet Leaf Spinach** and **Chinese Cabbage**.

Plant out **Spring Onions** or **Japanese Onion Sets** and **Garlic** if it is cold.

### GENERAL TASKS

Keep weeds under control and clear plot of debris.

Check **Brussels Sprouts** stand firm as wind-rock breaks the roots that take in nutrients (earth up a few inches around the stems then tread-in or stake). For yellowing leaves apply a liquid nitrogen feed around each plant.

Check other **Brassicas**, remove yellowed leaves to avoid **Botrytis**.

Dig in **green manure** crops, cutting off foliage about 30cm off the ground and compost. Dig in the rest.

As the plot clears dig it over. Autumn is the best time for digging. The deeper the **fertile soil**, the better the crop.

**Heavy clay soil.** Leave clods unbroken. The freezing/thawing actions of winter will break them up, giving you a fine soil to work with in spring.

Spread **manure** or **compost** over the surface and the worms will mix it up.

Sow **green manure (Winter Field Bean (Vicia faba) and Winter Tares (Vicia sativa)**. Both good for heavy soils

It is a good time to make **compost** as lots of bulk foliage should be available. Layering with lime and manure as it builds will ensure rotting gets a good start.

Start a **bean trench**, digging it out and lining with newspaper (six sheets thick) before adding compostable waste, lawn clippings etc and covering with soil.

### FRUIT

Prune and tie **Black & Redcurrants, Gooseberries, Raspberries & Blackberries**. Plant new stock. For a good nitrogen supply prepare ground by adding bonemeal to the base of each planting hole and forked in.

### GREENHOUSE TASKS

Open vents on fine days to prevent fungal diseases.

Sow hardy lettuce like **Arctic King**

### HARVEST

**Potatoes.** When the leaves starts dying cut off stems and leave the crop for a couple of weeks. The skins should set and hopefully prevent stray blight spores from infecting the crop. On a dry, sunny day dig up the potatoes. Brush off soil and let them dry before storing in sacks in a frost free, dark store.

Pick **Beans** and compost foliage. Leave roots and nitrogen full nodules in the soil to act as a fertiliser.

Dig up maincrop **Carrots** to be stored in sand or peat through the winter.

**Parsnips** left in the ground will be sweeter after a frost.

Harvest **Drumhead cabbages**. They keep well in a frost-free shed but *be aware*, slugs may lurk under the leaves. Sprinkle the outside with salt to deter them from eating away through the winter,

Any **green tomatoes** on outdoor plants can come in now before the frost gets them. You can make a green tomato chutney or ripen them up indoors. Green tomatoes can actually store quite well in cool conditions and slowly ripen.

**The Trading Depot** For a good selection of composts, seeds, pots, fertilisers, netting and more, all at significantly lower prices than garden centres.

## NOVEMBER

Hard frosts and heavy rain usually arrive so it's good to grab some time on the plot, in case there isn't another chance.

### SOWING & PLANTING

Plant out **Garlic**. It likes a period of cold prior to growing away in the spring. Heavy soils that hold water can make cloves rot. To stop this dib the planting hole, add 30mm of sharp sand or fine gravel in the base of the hole then pop in the clove and fill above with compost.

Sow autumn planted **Broad Beans** but again the soil need to be well drained.

**Hardy Peas** (eg. **Meteor**) can go in now.

It may be late for most green manures but early in the month you could sow **Grazing Rye** to hold nutrients in the soil over winter.

### GENERAL TASKS

Similar to **October** with maybe digging. Ohhh how we love to dig because we know, better soil means better crops

Winter **Brassicas** attract hungry birds so cover with netting if required.

Check **Brussels Sprouts** stand firm (Oct). If you're making a **bean trench**, continue filling it, adding a little soil over each layer of waste as you go.

If there is a good supply of leaves you may want to make your own **leafmould** and build a **leafmould cage**. Drive four stakes into the ground and staple chicken netting around to make the cage. Fill with leaves and leave for a year. The pile should reduce by two thirds, so top up as more leaves fall.

### FRUIT

Prune **Apples and Pears**. Mulch around the base with compost. Check stakes on **young trees** are firm to avoid wind root damage, causing poor growth or death.

Continue to tend and prune **Raspberries, blackberries** and **hybrid berries**. This is an ideal time to plant bare rooted canes, adding bonemeal and plenty of compost to the soil.

### GREENHOUSE TASKS

Wash down and clean, prior to insulating if you intend to use it through the winter. Reduce ventilation on cold days but give the green house a good airing on sunny days, to stop fungal conditions, especially downy mildew, from developing.

Continue successional sowing of **Winter Salad** crops.

### HARVEST

**Leeks**. Harvest every other one in a row leaving the rest to grow on.

**Brussels Sprouts**. Pick from the bottom of the plant upwards.

**Kale, Winter Cabbage** and **Cauliflower**. (*Cauliflower tightly wrapped in cling-film and kept in the fridge could stay fresh for as long as six weeks*).

Maincrop **Carrots** can still be lifted. (Oct).

**Jerusalem artichokes**, as well as **Salsify & Scorzonera** will be available.

Harvest **Celery, Celeriac, Kale** and **Kohl Rabi, Turnips, Swedes and Spinach**.

Check **stored vegetables** for rot.. Look at potatoes for slugs that may emerge from one potato and go on to damage others.

## DECEMBER

December & January are usually the months for choosing and ordering seeds.

### SOWING & PLANTING

Plant out **Garlic** (see Oct notes).

Sow **Onions** in seed boxes in a greenhouse or cold frame. *A cold frame can be kept frost free by insulating with newspaper when temperatures drop. A cold frame can also heat up in the winter sun so check ventilation is good.*

Continue checking winter **Brassicas** and remove yellowing, dead leaves (Oct)

Keep plants like **Brassicas** netted to avoid bird damage.

### GENERAL TASKS

**Turn the compost** heap and ensure compost is covered to prevent rain leaching nutrients and to keep in heat for decomposition.

You can still make **leafmould** (see Oct).

Keep things tidy to avoid housing pests that wait for spring. However, a little untidiness on the edges is not bad as it provides shelter for good predators.

Check **sheds/greenhouses** are firm to protect against winter wind damage.

### FRUIT

Take hardwood cuttings of soft fruit.

**Gooseberries, Red/White/Black Currants, Worcesterberries, Jostaberries & vines** can all be propagated by cuttings inserted in the open ground now.

Dig up old **Rhubarb** crowns Split from the top down with a spade into three or four. Leave on the surface to get frosted before planting out in early Spring,

Check **young trees** are still secure (Oct). Plant bare rooted **fruit trees** and bushes

Prune **Apple & Pear** trees.

Cut down canes of autumn fruiting **Raspberries** and burn to prevent fungal diseases spreading.

### HARVEST

**Kale, Winter Cabbage** and **Cauliflower**. are best harvested now.

**Brussels Sprout** (see Oct).

**Leeks** (see Oct).

**Carrots** should come up to prevent pest damage, for storage see October.

**Parsnips** and **Swedes** can be lifted and stored although they are hardy and may be left in the ground if not needed. (cover with fleece or straw to prevent the ground freezing them in).

**Jerusalem artichokes, Salsify & Scorzonera** are still available.

Harvest **Perpetual spinach, Celeriac, Chicory Endive, Kale, Kohl rabi, Lettuce, Winter Radish, Spinach, Turnips**.

Again **check stored vegetables** for rot and look at sacked potatoes for slugs.

#### SITE REMINDERS:



The site speed limit is

**Bonfires - 1<sup>st</sup> October - 30<sup>th</sup> April** and only if the wind blows **south to north**

Please display your **plot number**



Place it clearly at the front of your plot

**Date for the diary: The AGM will be held on Monday 19th January 2015**

#### Who's Who

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