

# THE ALLOTMENT

HAMPTON COURT WAY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

## Here is the news you've all been waiting for ...

### ...the dates for the Spring work days. Saturday 11th & Sunday 12th April.

"Two days" do I hear you gasp? Hopefully it won't be as bad as it sounds, the sessions run from **9.30am until 1.00pm** each day instead of all day. As mentioned at the AGM several members were disappointed that they were unable to help on Saturdays so it has been decided to trial half day sessions spread over two days. Refreshments will be provided but only drinks, biscuits and cake if you're lucky! Please join in and do your bit to help with the site maintenance, there will be plenty to do and that doesn't mean working on your own plot.

If you have unwanted items now is a good time to move them to the front of your plot in readiness for disposal in the skip or recycling by other members. Only non-biodegradable products should be put in the skip; carpet, bricks, plastic items and the like. If you have metal items please take these to the manure bay near plot 6 and put them in the bathtub ready for collection by the scrap man.

Water supply and taps will be connected in early April; fingers crossed there won't be any leaks.

**Please DO NOT wash your veg or tools in the water tanks.** The resulting sludge is disgusting to remove and it **stinks!** It is a most unpleasant task that has to be done annually before we can get the water turned on. Any volunteers?

**If you aren't already harvesting water on your plot now is a good time to install guttering on sheds and greenhouses to collect water in storage tanks or water butts. Many crops, particularly blueberries, prefer rain water to tap water**

A member recently found two dead rats on their plot and there is concern that someone may be using poison. This is not appropriate as children and pets roam freely so please stop. Poison is not effective long term, is not guaranteed to kill the rats and may be detrimental to health. The best control method is to reduce nesting areas, rats breed every 6 to 8 weeks so turning compost heaps regularly and avoiding static storage areas is a must, soaking compost heaps every month will also help; rats prefer dry heaps and undisturbed mounds for nesting.

You may be pleased to know that the Association's website is up and running

again, it is still under construction but take a look at [www.hcwaa.co.uk](http://www.hcwaa.co.uk).

**Huge thanks to Rupert** (Plot 13) for taking on this role. If there is anything you would like to suggest or offer for inclusion please let me know.

### Other dates for your diary:

**4th July** - Barbecue: 5.30 pm onwards

**15th August** - EMGS Flower Show  
- plan what to grow and show now!

**3rd & 4th October**

- Autumn work days: 9.30'til 1.00

**If you want to take part in the Great British bee survey this is the link to register your interest** <http://www.greatbritishbeecount.co.uk>

There are a whole host of other wildlife surveys being done throughout the UK, look at this link to The Natural History Museum for ideas <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/british-natural-history/uk-biodiversity-portal/get-involved/citizen-science-projects/>

Jill 



## WISHING YOU A HAPPY EASTER

### April

Spring should be underway with the sun warming up the soil and crops beginning to flourish. However, there has been frost, and snow may still strike so watch the weather forecasts and keep the fleece handy. If you are a bit behind on the plot there is still time to get Onions planted.

**HOEING** - Sharpen your hoe. It will become your best friend. *Slide it back and forth slightly below the surface of the soil and you'll stop the weeds in their tracks.*

Hoeing not only kills weeds, it keeps the top soil broken up, which stops water

evaporating in a drought and helps prevent water running off when it rains.

### SOWING & PLANTING

**DIRECT SOWING:** Beetroot, Peas, Broad Beans, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Kale, Chard, Kohl Rabi, Leeks, Spinach, Beet spinach, Rocket, Lettuce, Radish

**Plant Outdoors:** Onion & Shallot Sets, Globe/Jerusalem Artichokes, Asparagus, and Potatoes.

On the subject of potatoes - if you have any Comfrey on your plot, apparently it will help produce a great potato crop. The Comfrey can be chopped up and put

it your potato trench or made into a tea. Potatoes love it as it is full of nutrients (*tip spotted on the net*).

**UNDER COVER:** Aubergine, Celery, Outdoor Cucumbers, Tomatoes (Using a foil covered board as a reflector).

**SOW OUTDOORS:** French beans, Lettuce, Sweetcorn (Sweetcorn can be pre-chitted. Lay the seeds on damp kitchen paper in an airtight container. Check often and as soon as a small white sprout appears carefully plant the seed 3/4 inch deep in a 3" pot of multi purpose compost. When the shoot grows to 1" plant out under a cloche. Do not disturb the roots

## FRUIT

Plant out Strawberries.

Hand pollinate peaches and nectarines with a small paint brush. Cover if it is cold

Mulch the base of fruit trees to ensure good nutrition but keep away from the trunk to avoid rotting

## PESTS

To stop carrot root fly from laying eggs by your carrots cover them with a fleece, ensuring the edges are buried.

**Slugs and snails** are about now and will eat entire rows of succulent young seedlings overnight so take action now.

## HARVEST

*Purple Sprouting Broccoli, Chard*

Re-check stored crops.



## MAY

*"Ne'er cast a clout  
'til May be out"*

English Proverb

May is one of the busiest months but, as we know, the weather can be as unpredictable as April. It is good to be prepared for anything and not plant out too soon.

## CULTIVATION

There are two main cultivation jobs for May. Firstly Hoeing - to control weeds. Try to do this on a dry day so that the weeds do not have a chance to recover. Secondly, thinning out of root vegetables. Space will help develop the crop.

## SOWING AND PLANTING

If the weather is dry soak the seed drills before sowing and then water with a fine rose after sowing and covering with a fine layer of soil.

*French Beans, Runner Beans, Beetroot, Broccoli and Calabrese, Cabbage and Cauliflower, Chicory, Kale, Kohlrabi, Peas, Turnips and Swedes, Salad crops should be sown in succession, Lettuce and Leaves such as Rocket, Radishes, Spring Onions*

**UNDER COVER:** *Sweetcorn (does not like its roots being disturbed. Tip: pack toilet roll inners with compost and sow in roll, planting out the whole roll when ready), Courgette, Marrow, Pumpkin (don't like the cold so well worth starting off in pots).*

## PLANTING OUT

If plants are large enough, plant out now: *Brussels sprouts, Summer cabbages, Celery, Celeriac, Leeks.*

**IN A GREENHOUSE;** *Aubergine, Peppers (Chilli and Sweet, Cucumber, Tomatoes*

## FRUIT

Prepare cages or netting for soft fruit.

## GENERAL TASKS

Weed Control - Hoeing as in April.

## PESTS

As in *April* those pesky Slugs are about as are carrot root fly.

## HARVEST

*Hardy Lettuce, Spring Onions, Fast Growing Radish, Potatoes (undercover), Winter Cauliflowers, Spring Cabbage, Sprouting Broccoli, Kale,*

Asparagus may be underway.

## JUNE

June is the last month for sowing many crops as we approach midsummer.

## SOWING & PLANTING

**DIRECT SOWING::** *French and Runner Beans, Maincrop Peas, Beetroot, Carrots, Turnips, Swedes, Cauliflowers, Chicory, Endive, Kohlrabi, Sweetcorn, Squash, Courgette and Marrows.*

**SUCCESSIONAL SOWING:** *Beetroot, French Beans, early Carrots, Kohlrabi, Early Peas, Lettuce, Rocket, Turnips, Endive, Radish, Spring Onions.*

**PLANTING OUT:** *Broccoli, Calabrese, Brussels Sprouts, Summer Cabbage, Runner and Dwarf Beans, Outdoor tomatoes (cold-frame conditioned to stop them checking), Leeks.*

## PESTS & PROBLEMS

**Caterpillar Eggs** - Check underside of leaves, particularly on brassicas and remove the eggs before they hatch. The eggs are usually yellow or white and can be wiped or washed off quite easily.

**SLUGS and SNAILS.** We have them by the truck load, Use pellets, traps, biological controls or just pick them off. It doesn't matter how it's done. Just get rid of them.



## FRUIT

If the weather is dry and bright water well when the soil is dry a few inches below the surface - about 10 litres per square metre. This should last for about a week during hot, dry weather.

In June apples drop excess fruit, after which it's good to thin-out overcrowded branches and remove any damaged or rotting fruits.

Tie in blackberry canes as they grow. Check netting and fruit cages for gaps, Mulch or feed finished rhubarb to enable plants to build strength for next year.

### SITE REMINDERS:

Site speed limit is 5mph; particularly important to remember during the summer when there are children on site.



*Bonfires are NOT permitted from 1st May to 30th September.*

**Please don't wash your veg or tools in the water tanks.**

Please make sure your plot number can be clearly seen



### DIARY REMINDERS

**11 - 12th April - Site work-days**  
**4th July - Summer Barbecue**  
**15th August - EMGS Flower Show**  
**3rd & 4th October - Site work-days**

### Who's Who

**CHAIR** - Julie Smith  
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