

THE ALLOTMENT

HAMPTON COURT WAY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

A Spring message from your site manager

Hello all,

Welcome to the season's first newsletter of 2018. I was hoping that we had seen the last of the snow but, if the weather forecasters have it right, there may be a bit more on the way just in time for Easter. This is also supposed to be the time to plant out potatoes but perhaps mid to late April would be a better plan this year.

If you haven't already made a note our **site work day is on Saturday 7th April, 10am until 4pm**. Please come along and help with the various maintenance tasks. It would be really nice to see more people join in instead of leaving everything to the same 15 or so who usually do all the work. **YOU MUST NOT WORK YOUR OWN PLOT ON THIS DAY.**

If you are on site you will be expected to help **NO EXCUSES**. If you refuse to help you will be asked to leave the site. In accordance with the terms of the Tenancy Agreement it is the responsibility of all plot holders to keep the site in good order.

It is hoped that a skip will be available for the work day. Please remember that only non-biodegradable items should be put in the skip; carpet, plastics, old netting and the like. **Tyres are not permitted in the skip.** If you have any paving or brick rubble please leave this in a neat pile on Plot 1. Metal items should be left next to the skip for collection by the scrap man.

Those who came to the AGM will know that there was quite a lively discussion about whether or not the gates to our site should be locked. It was felt that there were insufficient members present to take a proper vote but if you are interested the choices are:

- (a) lock both gates at the Broadfields entrance
 - (b) lock one gate so that pedestrian access can be continued
 - (c) leave both gates open as we do now.
- If you want to express a preference please drop me an email.

The guest speaker at the AGM mentioned a radio programme that may be of interest: **BBC Surrey 104FM/104.6FM on Sunday mornings 9-12, "Dig it - the gardening phone-in with Joe Talbot"** Call 03459 570057 if you want any gardening advice. There is also a "Dig it" gardening

competition that you may wish to enter. To take part email up to three photographs of your garden to DigIt@bbc.co.uk OR post your entries to: Dig It, Broadcasting Centre, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7AP.

The categories are
(i) Best front garden
(ii) Best back garden
(iii) Best small area (balcony, window box etc).

Only one entry per household and the last date for receipt of entries is Sunday 31 July.

If you would like to try the non toxic sheep wool pellet slug repellent **Slug Gone**, recommended by Jean Griffin at the AGM, this is now available from **The Trading Hut at Beachamp Road Allotments**.

Despite assurances from the Council that the draft Lease would be with us in February this has yet to materialise. The latest enquiry, received last week, was in relation to sheds and greenhouses on our site and clarification on signatory details. With any luck there will be some positive news very soon.

Lastly, please make sure you park on your plot completely and not partially on the road, there have been several complaints recently.

Jill

PESTICIDE FREE INSECT CONTROL



Slugs

In April increasing temperatures and wet weather provide good conditions for slugs

to grow and multiply. No single method of control will be completely effective so best to try several different strategies. Here are a few suggestions:

Dig over soil in winter to bring slug eggs to the surface. They are more likely to be killed by frosts. The pearly white eggs are about 3mm in diameter, found in clusters they can often be spotted while digging and removed.

Create a suitable slug den. In daylight slugs like moist dark places. Use tiles, flat stones or an over-turned grapefruit to offer a hiding place then remove the slugs.

Hunt for slugs at dusk or dawn with a flashlight and eradicate.

Build a pond to encourage slug eating animals such as frogs by building a pond.

Parasitic nematode. Bought as a powder, mix with water and apply with a watering can. The ground must be sufficiently warm and moist as nematodes quickly dry out and die. Nematode specifically infect slugs and kill them in about a week leaving your plot slug-free for about 6 weeks.

Down side: nematodes can be expensive.

Remove debris from your plot. This will reduce suitable slug hiding places.

Beer traps. Make out of large yoghurt pots. Cut a window near the top of the pot for slugs to crawl through. Pour in a little beer, replace the lid and sink it into the ground with the 'window' just above ground level around crop beds.

Slugs don't like copper. Protect potted plants by placing copper tape around the pots. Make sure slugs can't reach plants by crawling up drooping stems or leaves.

Slug killing products containing aluminium sulphate and ferrous phosphate can be used in desperate situations, but are still toxic to wildlife. Use sparingly.

Wireworm

Wireworm, larvae of Click Beetles, attack plants underground damaging roots, tubers, bulbs and stems. Potatoes are susceptible. In large numbers they may attack roots of strawberries, brassicas, beans, tomatoes, seeds/seedlings.

Damage can occur all year but mostly in spring and autumn. Holes 2-3mm across appear on the outside of tubers or root crops allowing entry to other pests and diseases such as slugs, woodlice and bacterial and fungal rots.

The beetles lays the eggs just below the soil surface from May to June. A month later small white larvae hatch, growing up to 3cm long and developing a tough golden brown skin. They can pupate for up to four years. In warm soils (above



10°C) they feed close to the surface. In hot or cold weather the larvae go deeper.

To reduced Wireworm numbers :

Turn over the soil in autumn and before planting to expose wireworm to predators such as birds, frogs and other beetles.

Check home made compost before use and expose to predators if necessary.

Harvest susceptible crops early if soil is known to be infested with wireworm.

Use raw potato, buried in a number of places about 15cm below the soil surface. Remove and destroy as necessary.

Burying pre-soaked grain 10cm deep, before planting crops, (a mix of half wheat, half corn (soaked for 24 hours to promote germination). To heat soil around the bait cover with black plastic. Remove bait regularly and destroy.

DIARY REMINDERS - 2018

WORK WEEKENDS

Sat 7th April 10am - 4pm

Sat 6th October 10am - 4pm

SUMMER BARBECUE

Saturday 21st July 6pm

AGM

Monday 14th January 2019

Literary Compost

*Sweet April showers do spring
May flowers.*

Thomas Tusser

*In the Spring, I have counted
136 different kinds of weather
inside of 24 hours.*

Mark Twain

If you would like to publish anything in the newsletter we would love to hear from you. Please email:- sheenaclarke0@gmail.com or macanjill@ntlworld.com

SITE REMINDERS:

**Site speed limit is 5mph;
This applies to everyone!
Please respect the limit.**



Bonfires - only until 30th April.

PLEASE - Don't wash your veg or tools in the water tanks.

YOUR PLOT NUMBER MUST BE SEEN!



Who's Who

CHAIR - Julie Smith
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TREASURER - Tom Appleton
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SECRETARY - Sheena Clarke
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SITE MANAGER - Jill McDermott
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TRUSTEES - Sheena Clarke,
Marie Mullard & Tom Appleton

MEMBERSHIP / LETTINGS -
Piotr Hennig - piotr@admojo.co.uk

COMMITTEE - Marie Mullard
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COMMITTEE - Ian Billett

WEBSITE - Rupert (Plot 13)
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