

Harlow Hill Allotment Association

Spring 2019 Newsletter

HELLO PLOT HOLDERS & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Welcome to the summer edition of the newsletter. It has been quite a good gardening year so far. The weather has been fairly kind, though there were some cold spring days particularly in early June, and at present the soil is very dry. We have had plenty of strong winds, but that's nothing unusual at Harlow Hill. The vegetables are about where they should be, but after the cold days in early June, they've had a bit of catching up to do. Mid-July, and we are now coming into the time of plenty: broad beans are being picked, soon there will be peas, new potatoes can be lifted, fresh lettuce can be nibbled, runner beans are beginning to climb up the poles, gooseberries are ripe for picking – all the things and many more that make allotment gardening a joy (despite the weeding).



Please try to support some of the allotments events.

OPEN DAY

SATURDAY 3rd AUGUST FROM 10 am - 1 pm

This is the day when we invite local residents to come and have a look at what we are doing, and see what good neighbours we are. And we really are good neighbours! We are quiet and well-behaved, and we keep our garden tidy and looking attractive.

We could still value a few more helpers for an hour or two on the day, but even if this is not possible it would be good if you could spend a short time on your plot and chat with visitors who come along. And please try to have your plot looking at its best, with your plants looking happy and well-tended, the weeds notable for their absence, and the paths mown.

BRITAIN IN BLOOM

The Britain in Bloom visit (judging Harrogate for the Britain in Bloom Awards) will take place on **Thursday 1st August**. As usual, our allotment site will form part of their route and will be the only allotment site that is seen. The other Harrogate sites will provide some photos and information about their sites, but we need to ensure our site is looking at its best on that day. This is particularly the case for those plots that border or are close to Beckwith Avenue. I think our site is looking great this year, so it shouldn't be too hard to impress them.

PICNIC ON THE PLOT

SATURDAY 31st AUGUST from 12 noon

All members welcome and people on the Waiting List will be invited. Bring some food to share and have a chat about this year's gardening successes.

HARROGATE & DISTRICT ALLOTMENT FEDERATION SHOW

SUNDAY 18TH AUGUST FROM 11 am - 4 pm in the SUN PAVILION, VALLEY GARDENS



*Veg Monster from
2017 Show*

Show schedules and entry forms are available in the allotment shop or on line at <http://www.harrogateallotmentshow.org/> or at our website www.harlowhillaa.org in the Members' Area. We hope that lots of you will enter the show again this year, and that there will be many entries from plot holders who have never given it a go before. Both plot holders and associate members are eligible to enter. Children or grandchildren of plot holders may enter the children's classes. Lots of options – Fruit & Veg, Flowers, Baking, Novices, Children – so give it a try. Entries cost £3 per adult, £1 per child and you can enter as many classes as you like for that fee. Leave your entry form, with the entry fee, at the allotment shop, or at Angela's house, 74 Otley Road, Harrogate. Deadline for entries is **Thursday 8th August**. If you need any advice or information, contact Angela.

This year's charity is HENSHAWS We are raising funds to support their horticultural activities.

Once again we are running the TOMBOLA STALL so we would be grateful for any unwanted gifts or other items suitable for tombola. From 3rd August, donations for the Tombola Stall can be left at the allotment shop at the weekends or dropped off at Angela's house at any time. We will need volunteers to help on the stall on the day. If you can help for an hour, please let Angela know.

Books, plants, produce and cakes will also be needed for the stalls being run by other sites. Books can be left in the allotment shop at any time. Plants, produce and cakes can be taken to Valley Gardens on the day or left at the allotment shop on the morning of Saturday 17th August

Each committee member has some raffle tickets to sell and there are some in the allotment shop. Good prizes - £50 cash, meal & store vouchers etc.

Volunteers are also needed to help set up in Valley Gardens early on the Sunday morning from about 7 a.m. and to help dismantle the tables etc. at the end of the day from 4.00 p.m.. If you can help, please let Angela know (email: dicken.angela@hotmail.co.uk or phone 01423 505748)

The Valley Gardens is a glorious site for the Allotment Show. And if you have a few minutes to spare, have a look at the borders and in particular the dahlias border.

LOCAL 6TH FORMERS VISIT THE ALLOTMENTS

A small group of 6th Formers from nearby Rossett School visited the allotments on Monday 17th June as part of their Community Engagement Day. It follows a successful visit the previous year. The 6th formers supervised by a member of the school's staff checked fencing, did some litter picking and generally had a look around. We are very much in favour of encouraging young people to take an interest in gardening and allotments.

PLANT SALE MAKES MONEY FOR LOCAL CHARITIES

Thank you so much to everyone who helped at the allotments plant sale on 18th May. Special thanks to those who helped on the stall and helped with the setting up and pricing, and thank you to everyone who donated such a wonderful variety of plants and other items, and to those who came along to buy. We raised an excellent £169.50, and this will go to Horticap and the Harrogate Homeless Project.

Anne Ellis, Secretary

REACH FOR THE STARS – 2019 ALLOTMENT COMPETITION

In association with Harrogate Autumn Flower Show, the Harrogate & District Allotment Federation is asking plot holders to plant up a container with an imaginative support, fashioned from anything around the allotment, to create the highest plant or climber possible. Hopefully, some of you will have seen this in the last newsletter and are cultivating a whopper! It should include a container no higher than 40cm – the rest is for plant growth only! The height attained will be a key factor – measurement will be taken from the base of the plant stem. But also taken into consideration will be your resourcefulness in finding a suitable container, in constructing the plant supports and how well it serves its purpose. The winner will receive a pair of tickets to this year's Harrogate Autumn Flower Show! To enter, please submit a photo of your plant in a pot with an 8' cane positioned on top of the pot near the base of the stem. On the back of the photo, give the height of the plant measured from the base of the stem to the top of the plant together with your name and allotment site. Entries should be submitted to Angela Dicken, 74 Otley Road, Harrogate HG2 0DP by **Friday 9th August**. The entries will be judged by Nick Smith, Show Director of the Harrogate Flower Show.

Angela Dicken

FEEDBACK FROM SITE JUDGING

The results of the site judging will be announced at the HDAF annual show on 18 August.

The judges found many more positives than negatives on the site but commented that standards across the sites continued to rise and there was stiff competition this year. They had visited two outstanding sites before visiting us. They noted the significant improvements made on plots that had been neglected the previous year and felt that the majority of plots were well cultivated and in good condition. They were impressed by the lovely floral displays, particularly on the small site and very pleased that the small site created a favourable impression from the road.

They recommended that plots adjoining the road on the main site grew flowers by the boundary fence, either in pots or in the soil as this would enhance the appearance of the site. They stressed the importance of having a good public image in ensuring the continuance of the site. The contributions of plot holders to the Waste Not, Want Not project was noted and the splendid bug hotel on 57A was remarked on.



TIPS FROM THE JUDGES

1. Think carefully about what you put on your plot and bear in mind what will happen at the end of your tenure. There had been a fashion for planting willow trees on some sites which created problems when the plot was eventually given up and the next tenant wanted the space for growing other things. This also applies to features such as gravel and concrete slabs.

2. Recommended **green manures**: red clover and phacelia. Winter tares are hard to dig in.
3. **Mulches** are good for suppressing weeds. If applying mulch it is best to apply a layer of compost first. Bark chip and wood shaving mulches can leach nitrogen from the ground. Mulches can also stop water getting through to the soil.

Anne Ellis, Secretary

GREEN MANURES



Phacelia is a quick growing hardy annual green manure that germinates at low temperatures and is ideal for sowing from March until September. It will grow up to 1m in height and is tolerant of cold temperatures and may over-winter if it's not too cold. It suits most soil types and is attractive to bees.



Winter tares, *vicia sativa*, also known as “Vetches” is a hardy annual that can be sown March - May, or July - September for over-wintering. It is good at nitrogen fixing and for weed suppression on heavier soils but avoid acid or dry soils and dig in before flowering.

Both of these green manures are commonly used on the allotment site.

WATER

It's another dry year, even though it's not as hot as last summer. Most plants need plenty of water, particularly runner beans which are a really good late summer and early autumn vegetable.

If you use a hose, you need to purchase a water licence for £10 from the Allotment Shop. Please make sure the butt is full before you start (watering can users may want to water whilst your hose is connected to the tap), and if you are a watering can user, please make sure to fill up the butt after you have finished.

ANYONE SEEN MY WORMS?

This was the heading of a small article I wrote for the last newsletter. Apparently a few plot holders have commented on the lack of worms.

Sue Firth offers useful advice on “How to Attract Earthworms to Your Garden” If you have no earthworms, or very few, attracting them to your garden can allow you to take advantage of all their benefits. There are multiple types of earthworm ranging from microscopic to several feet in length. The most common found in gardens are night crawlers and field worms, which both thrive in cool soil and can be spotted on the surface of the soil when it's dark, or during a rainstorm when their burrows flood. If you shine a light on them they'll retreat back into the soil. The earthworms typically used for compost bins are branding worms and red worms which don't survive in your ordinary soil – they're used in worm composting boxes and compost piles, and do well provided the pile doesn't get too hot.

To help encourage them to make homes in your soil, add organic matter. If there are few earthworms in your garden it may be because your soil is compacted or low in organic material. You can add chopped leaves, straw, grass clippings, dead roots, semi-decomposed compost, and animal manure which will allow worms to thrive. Earthworms feed on soil and dead or decaying plant remains including straw, leaf litter and dead roots well as animal dung. Dry or wet? Earthworms prefer damp and cool environments, but not too dry, too wet or cold. The thicker the soil canopy, the easier it will be to maintain those desirable conditions.



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TIDY UP DAY

Many thanks go to everyone who helped with the clearing the ditch and cutting the hedges on Saturday 22nd June. It made a real difference to the site and was much appreciated by people who walk along the ginnel



WASTE NOT WANT NOT

This is a reminder that if you have surplus fruit or veg, the Waste Not Want Not project would be very pleased to receive it. This goes to Harrogate Food Bank, Harrogate Homeless Project, Carers Resource, Woodlands Community Garden, St Mark's Resurrection Bites, and St Peter's Church.

There are two yellow boxes adjacent to the allotment shop and these are taken to Waste Not Want Not on a Monday morning.

Thank you for your continued support.

Ian Clarke, Chair

AND, FINALLY, A GARDENERS' QUESTION

Why no moss on the allotment's paths and rides (but people's lawns at home are full of it)?

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

1st August

Britain in Bloom visit to Harlow Hill Allotments – we will be representing all the allotment site in Harrogate, so we will need to make sure our site looks at its best.

3rd August

Harlow Hill Allotment Association Open Day

8th August

Deadline for Allotment Show entries

9th August

Deadline for Allotment Competition entries

18th August

Harrogate & District Allotment Federation Annual Show in the Sun Pavilion, Valley Gardens

31st August

Picnic-on-the-Plot