

Harlow Hill Allotment Association

Winter 2020 Newsletter

for all Plot Holders and Associate Members

Happy Gardening New Year! A few days ago I went up to the allotments on a sunny late January morning. The hoar frost had all but disappeared but lingered in the long shadows. The air was cold. The forecasters had said that the previous night would be the coldest of the winter so far. My visit to the site was with the intention of taking a few photos for this edition of the newsletter. Winter flowers were in short supply, but rhubarb shoots were a welcome sign of spring. It was good to see several plot holders busily at work, and we had pleasant brief chats - which all goes to show what a sociable organisation we belong to, and that whatever the time of year there is always something to do on an allotment.



Winter scene at Harlow Hill but the rhubarb is beginning to shoot"

ALLOTMENT SHOP

The Allotment Shop will **re-open on Saturday 1st February 2019**. The shop will be open on **Saturdays and Sundays from 10.30 till 1200**. A new price list will be sent out to all plot holders and associate members in the next couple of weeks. Please support the Allotment Shop. Call in for a chat and a look around anytime we're open. Our prices are often cheaper than commercial shops, you will be helping to raise funds for the Association and you don't have to carry your purchases very far.

If you ordered seed potatoes back in October/November 2019, they will be available for collection from 1st February in the shop. We will also have some loose Charlotte, Desiree and Maris Piper potatoes available for £2/kg.

We are trying to reduce the plastic in the shop and once we have used up current stocks we will try to replace them with more environmentally-friendly alternatives. We are also aiming for all peat-free composts. Why? Peat is primarily sourced from lowland raised bogs, a rare and important habitat for the flora and fauna that depend on it. British bogs are at an all-time low, depleting far faster than they can replenish themselves. As gardeners, we recognise that it's important to be in tune with the environment and be aware of our impact on it. The peat-free alternatives we have available now are much improved. I've had great success with both the Dalefoot range of composts (bracken & sheep's wool mixtures) and the Melcourt Sylvagrow peat-free compost (endorsed by the RHS) that we have available in the shop, so think about giving them a try.

The shop is staffed by a rota of plot holders and we couldn't run the shop without them. If you would like to help, please contact me (Tel: 505748) for more information.

Angela Dicken

ANNE ELLIS IS STEPPING DOWN AS OUR SECRETARY - SOMEONE TO TAKE HER PLACE URGENTLY NEEDED

We're very sorry that you are standing down, Anne. Many thanks for being such an efficient, committed and enthusiastic secretary, and we'll really miss you. We urgently need a new secretary after the AGM in March. This is a good way to get to know how the allotment site works, to get to know fellow gardeners and make a contribution to the running of the site. The committee members are very supportive. It would be useful to have some IT skills. The role involves maintaining contact with members and informing them about events, liaising with the committee and the chairman, filing documents, and taking minutes at meetings, although the last task could be shared.

If you are interested and would like to know more please email Anne at hhaasecretary@outlook.com to arrange a chat.

WASTE NOT WANT NOT – WEEKLY COLLECTION NOW THROUGHOUT THE WINTER

There are two yellow boxes outside the shop where surplus fruit and vegetables can be left. A group of organisations (e.g. Foodbank, Harrogate Homeless Project, Carers Resource, Woodlands Community Garden, St Mark's Resurrection Bites, St Peter's Church) are collecting surplus food from various sources and putting it to good use to feed people who need it. The project is coordinated by Harrogate Churches Together.

The yellow boxes are collected each Monday morning. For the first time since starting the project, plot holders have left produce such as carrots and parsnips over the winter months. Waste Not Want Not has expressed thanks to all contributing plot holders.

Please remember not to let your fruit and veg rot and go to waste. If it's of good quality, it will be very welcome in the yellow boxes.

Ian Clarke, Chair, HHAA

And here's the response to Ian after recent Waste not Want Not collections:

“Thanks for the parsnips and carrots over the winter! They were very much appreciated as supermarket waste has dropped off a bit recently. We prep, blanch and freeze and this week made this (vegetable cobbler) for 22 people.”



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - THURSDAY 12TH MARCH

The AGM will be held on **Thursday 12th March at 7.30 p.m.** at the “Green Hut” on Beckwith Avenue adjacent to the allotments. All members of Harlow Hill Allotment Association are welcome to attend, so please come along. There will be reports from our officers, presentation of trophies, and the opportunity for members to ask questions (to be submitted at least 2 weeks beforehand). The speaker will be from **Horticap**. Refreshments provided. Look forward to seeing you.

ALLOTMENT WEBSITE

The allotment website can be found at www.harlowhillaa.org The password for the Members' Area is Beesmakehoney The site gives information on the running of the site, information on past and future events, has copies of the all association's policies, past newsletters and some useful gardening links. Frequent “visits” to it are recommended. If you have any comments or suggestions about the website, please let me know.

Angela Dicken

WORK WEEKEND

The Spring Work Weekend will be on **Saturday, 28th March**, weather permitting. There are probably only enough jobs for one morning's work at the moment. If Saturday is inclement, we'll have it on Sunday 29th March instead. The main jobs will be to prepare the area for the shed on the small site, clear the area behind the toilet and fit the new lino and do some general tidying/ rubbish clearance on the site. Your help and support would be much appreciated. Refreshments provided.

ALLOTMENT WAITING LIST

There were 29 people on the list at the end of January. It now takes approximately two years to reach the top of the list and be offered an allotment.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

Every year I set myself the same allotment challenge, and every year I fail to achieve it, though I've had a few honourable near misses. The challenge is can I have something to eat on my allotment throughout the year. More precisely, if all goes (grows) well, will there be at least one vegetable on my plot throughout the year that will contribute the vegetable portion of a meal? To make the challenge even harder, let's say everything has to be grown from the seeds you set yourself, and potatoes are excluded.

It kicks off with the Seed Order, browsing through the catalogue and deciding what to grow for the following year. Reviewing the existing year is part of the exercise: what has been a success, partial success or a waste of space.

These are some of my selections for my 2020/21 all the year round vegetable challenge:

- Broad bean, Aquadulce Claudia Set in October and should crop late June the following year.
- Broad bean, Witkiem Should crop mid-July and you'll be grateful for Witkiem if the Aquadulce fail to survive the winter.
- Pea, Hurst Greenshaft. Set in April and should crop in July. All peas like plenty of water.
- Calabrese Ironman F1 I'm trying it this year for a July vegetable.



- Courgette Atena Polka F1 These are the yellow ones and provide a nice colour contrast. Should start in July and keep going till early October.

- Beetroot Boltardy Starts cropping in July and keeps going well into the winter.
- Carrot Early Nantes Also keeps going until well into the winter.
- Leek Mussellburgh The basic workhorse for all the year round veg gardening. Hardy, ready to eat from late summer to April, and easy to grow. But don't set leeks too late as they won't make extra growth after early autumn, and, though they'll survive the winter, they'll be thin as pencils.
- Brussels Sprouts, Brigitte Not grown sprouts for years, but I like them around Christmas time.
- They need some nursing, including staking, and they're not objects of beauty.

The really big challenge is something for May and June. Perhaps over-wintering chard and a spring cauliflower. Peasant societies called June the "hungry month"

Keith Wadd

HARROGATE & DISTRICT ALLOTMENT FEDERATION (HDAF)

The HDAF AGM took place on Tuesday 21st January at Oatlands Mount Social Club. 38 members from 10 allotment sites across the district attended. After a short business meeting, Kate Simpson from Henshaws talked about how they had spent the £750 donation from the 2019 Allotment Show on new tools and the development of the garden at the Arts & Crafts Centre in Knaresborough. The Centre is open to the public and has a café and shop.

<https://www.henshaws.org.uk/what-we-offer/arts-crafts/>



Presentation to Henshaws

Catherine Baxter from Ripon Museums Trust, HDAF's 2020 charity, also gave an interesting talk about the Workhouse Museum and the Workhouse Kitchen Garden, which grows a wide range of heritage varieties of vegetables, fruit and herbs. The Workhouse Museum re-opens on 8th February and sounds well-worth a visit. https://riponmuseums.co.uk/museums/workhouse_museum_gardens

On 16th August 2020, HDAF will be holding the 60th Annual Allotment Show in Valley Gardens. To celebrate our Diamond Jubilee, we are giving each allotment site some Diamond Jubilee sweet pea seeds, some Jubilee tomato seeds and a Diamond Jubilee tuber to grow. We hope that a group of people on each site will get together to grow the seeds and tuber and then use the resulting flowers and tomatoes to make an arrangement to display at the Show. The entries will be judged at the Show and the winning site will receive £30 RHS vouchers. If you are interested in helping to grow the sweet peas or tomatoes, please let me know. (Tel: 01423 505748 or email: dicken.angela@hotmail.co.uk)

Harlow Hill will probably be running the tombola stall again this year, so start saving those prizes!

Angela Dicken

Dates for your diary in 2020

ALLOTMENT SHOP RE-OPENS Saturday 1st February

HAAA AGM Thursday 12th March 7.30pm at the 'Green Hut'

WORK WEEKEND Saturday 28th March, weather permitting. If not, Sunday 29th March

OPEN DAY and PLANT SALE Saturday morning 30th May

HARROGATE & DISTRICT ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION 60TH ANNUAL SHOW
Sunday 16th August in the Valley Gardens

PICNIC ON THE PLOT August / September Date tbc

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Formatting by Angela Dicken