

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2017



AGM 2016

The 2016 AGM took place on 6 November

The Waiting List

One of the main items discussed at the AGM was the waiting list. There are still about 20 people on the waiting list, which represents a two-four year wait. A vote was taken and the outcome was that the waiting list would not be immediately re-opened. There was concern about how to open it without becoming overwhelmed by demand, and how to attract people who reflect the ethnic diversity of Hackney. Nancy will contact Hackney Today to see if we can publish an article in it. Nancy would also contact the equalities unit in Hackney Council to see if they had any advice.

The meeting agreed to the setting up of a small working group, drawn from those on the waiting list, to try to promote allotments in general in Hackney and to champion getting new sites. Steve Newcombe, who is a waiting list member, has been co-opted to the Managing Committee to ensure that this issue is kept in mind throughout the year. The group is open to all members, and anyone wanting to get involved, please email Steve Newcome at : newstokeysteve@yahoo.co.uk

Site Inspections

Site reps will be looking at all plots at the end of March, expecting to see signs that you are getting ready for spring and the new planting year. If there is no activity, the site rep will be contacting you to

encourage that you get started. After this, any plot still showing no sign of life by the end of April will be reported to the April Committee Meeting and neglected plot letter may follow. Land is a precious and scarce commodity in Hackney; we are lucky to have as many plots as we have and the committee is keen to ensure that they are used to maximum

benefit. The growing season can be quite short, depending on weather, and it is best to get started as soon possible. We take our responsibilities to those on the waiting list seriously.

Talk by Margaret Willes

Margaret Willes gave a fascinating illustrated talk on her book "The Gardens of the British Working Class" which is a celebration of the history of gardening from medieval times to the present day. Margaret's talk focused on Hackney which was famous for growing turnips in the 17th Century up to the establishment of communal estate gardens in the 20th century.

The book was an enjoyable introduction to her book which is well worth buying or borrowing, my favourite chapter being about the development of flower shows and how the first Chrysanthemum show in Britain was held in the Rochester Castle on Stoke Newington High Street- a tradition which we should maybe follow!

The new Constitution and Bylaws were approved. These are largely a re-write of the existing documents, but better organised and expressed in general terms to that any new concerns can be subsumed under broader clauses.

The new Constitution, Bylaws and AGM minutes can all now be found on the Hackney Allotment Society website.

Plot Awards 2016

ADEN TERRACE

Best Plot: Betty and Jeff Manning,
Angela Wadlington

Most improved: Rae Harrison

LEASIDE

Best newcomer: Wayne Minter
Best plot: Hilary Kerr and Jack Eldon

SPRING HILL

Best newcomers: Michelle Tate,
Victoria Moseley and Debbie Allright

SPRING LANE

Brigid Lowe

SMALL SITES

Best Plot:

Caroline Gilchrist and Robb
(Church Walk)

Most Improved:

Kate Lawson (St Kildas)

HAS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR - Penny Miller -
pmsrink@yahoo.com

VICE CHAIR - Ruth Gladwin

SECRETARY -

Nancy Korman - secretary@hackneyallotments.org.uk

TREASURER - Hugh Naylor

SITE REPS

ADEN TERRACE -
Sue Sharples

CHURCH WALK -
John Clarke and
Maggie Wilkinson

OVERBURY STREET -
Jane Hough and Amanda Scope

QUEENSBRIDGE ROAD -
Phillip Turner

SPRING HILL - Philip Pearson,
Jon Fuller, Beth Webber and
Frederica Brooks

SPRING LANE - Helen Bishop

SPRINGDALE ROAD -
Mairin Power and Annie Wilson

LEASIDE ROAD -
MJ and Helene Gulleksan

ST KILDA'S ROAD -
Henrietta Soames

GETTING READY FOR SPRING

Top vegetable and flowers recommended by plot holders:

Pumpkin 'Munchkin' (climbing); Courgette, 'Trieste White Cousa' (very sweet). Occasional watering but both pretty easy to grow, no special needs

Recipe: Hollow out the mini pumpkins and fill with single cream and tiny pieces of chopped chorizo, bake in the oven. Delicious!

MJ and Helene, Leaside

Rocket does very well, good for cut & come again leaves; **'Greek Cress'** an alternative to parsley; quite a peppery herb to mix into a salad; **Tomato 'Gardener's Delight'**, sweet and crops reliably outdoors; **Nasturtiums** planted alongside runner beans, to ward off black fly - collect the seeds, when green, in late summer & pickle them like capers.

Sue, Aden Terrace

'Invicta' Gooseberry, so sweet can happily be eaten raw.

Purple sprouting broccoli, better than asparagus, again can be eaten raw off the plant.

Guy, Leaside

I grow **'Misticanza Miscuglio'**, a mix of chicories and the **Chinese mustard 'Green in Snow'**, the **Mustard 'Giant Red'**, **'Mizuna'** and also the **Mustard 'Golden Streaks'** in raised trays that have their feet in water to deter slugs and snails.



Broad bean 'Aquadulce Claudia' and **Borecole 'Nero di Toscana'** produce well on our particular allotment soil.

Chris, Aden Terrace

Purple climbing French bean 'Blauhilde' gave months of delicious beans. They grow very tall and need the tops cutting but they go on and on, highly recommended.

Rudbekia, yellow daisy flower perennial do well and good for cutting they last a long time and come every year.

Bron, Aden Terrace

In praise of Gladioli

I am a firm believer that one must have some flowers on the allotment and I would recommend Gladioli. They are easy to plant and grow and quite cheap to buy and are hardy and are easily divided

Gladioli flower late summer and are great to cut and take home or give out to friends. I prefer dark crimsons and mixed with lime colours, they can look very striking. In tiny London gardens, their leaves are not very attractive and they take up quite a lot of space, but planted in a couple of rows on an allotment they can fit into the end of vegetable sections.

Ruth, Aden Terrace

Growing Broad Beans

I have been growing broad beans for years now, with varying degrees of success depending partly on how I have gone about it.

The variety I grow at the moment is **De Monica**, recommended by *Gardening Which*, although I think any well known variety will grow well.

Broad beans are best sown early. I used to start them off in November, but always had some losses to damping off, frost and animals, even when protected by cloches. Now I sow them in pots early January. This can be anywhere indoors, they do not need much light to germinate, and can go outside as soon as the green leaves poke up above the soil.

I plant them out when they are big enough to handle, mid to late January. I do have cloches to put over them, but I am sure they would be fine without unless the weather is particularly severe. Plant them 6-9 inches apart in rows 9 inches apart.

Broad beans always need support, planting them 6-9 inches apart helps them to support each other, but they need extra support. I have used string stretched between poles, branching sticks, and heavy-duty netting successfully to support my broad beans.

When the bottom truss of flowers has formed small beans pinch off the top leaves to prevent blackfly aphids (or as soon as you see any blackfly on your beans). The tops can be eaten after steaming.

The pods can be eaten whole when small, or left until beans form. Small beans are said to taste best, although I prefer the stronger taste of the bigger beans.

Jon, Spring Hill site

TOP TIPS

USING WOODCHIP

I've used woodchip for mulching courgettes and runner beans to conserve water and deter slugs. It can also be used for mulching other things and earthing up potatoes (I usually use the brown waste compost that can be collected from pile near the Queen Elisabeth Walk entrance to Clissold Park for this), and some use it for paths.

Try sourcing from local tree surgeons.

Sarah, Aden Terrace

GROWING UNDER TREES

Because I have so many trees, not only blocking the sun, but also their roots taking water I find the usual (easy) things like courgettes and climbing beans struggle on my plot. However for some inexplicable reason herbs seem to thrive. I always have a good crop of oregano, thyme, lovage, tarragon and sage.

Because of the trees I am growing more edible plants that thrive in woodland conditions. It's a bit of a challenge but fruits like raspberries and strawberries do quite well. About 4 years ago I



Happy plot holders with woodchip

planted some wild garlic and now that it has got established itself I get a good crop in late spring. It's terrific in salads, soups, etc., and last year I had enough to make wild garlic pesto.

Since I took over the plot I have been battling with Ground Elder and desperately trying to keep it at bay. In areas where I had dug it up I immediately planted Sweet Woodruff which is more than a match for the Elder and has really suppressed it. Having done that I read recently that Ground Elder, if picked when young, makes a very nice addition to salads (Apparently it was first brought here by the

Romans for culinary use). As I haven't completely eradicated it I am going to try eating it this year!

My motto for 2017 is "Eat those weeds!"

Pat, Aden Terrace

CROP ROTATION

I have found that my best veg on Aden Grove allotments are beans and brassicas, in rotation.

I manure the ground thoroughly and add sand and compost before planting first potatoes, and then progressively dig the spuds and sow and plant beans - French, runner and dwarf as long as the season will let me.

I then lime the ground and plant out my brassicas the following season.

Onions and garlic are a problem for all of us on this rather clayey and stony ground. I pick and take away all the stones that I can and I stop rotting in onions and garlic by planting them on the top of banked up soil, with trenches either side for more drainage. I have not had rotting onions since doing that.

Tim, Aden Terrace

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this newsletter. If you have any top tips or recommendations for favourite vegetables, fruit or flowers please email butterfieldgreen@google.mail.com

Annie, Springdale Road

Two recipes for chard

Almost everyone grows chard - it is practically foolproof! Here are two ways of using it, both from *The Kitchen Garden Companion*, an Australian cookbook.

Chard stems "chips"

10-12 chard stems
2 oz/50g plain flour
1 lemon
3 oz/80ml extra virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons thyme leaves
Salt and pepper

♦ Pull away any strings from the stems. Slice lengthwise

into 1/2 inch strips and then widthwise into 2-2 1/2 inch lengths. Drop into some simmering water with lemon juice added, cook for about 10 minutes, then drain, run under cold water and dry on tea/paper towels.

♦ Mix thyme leaves and flour together and tip in chard stems.

♦ Pour oil into a non-stick frying pan or wok, about 1.2 inch deep. Drop in the stems in batches, not crowding. When stems are a light golden brown, remove and keep warm on a plate in an oven heated to about 100 C. Serve with sprinkling of salt and lemon juice.

Chard sauteed with garlic

Wash and shred both leaves and stems from about 6 leaves of chard. Put into a frying pan with 1 teaspoon oil and 1 sliced clove of garlic. Cover and cook over medium heat for about 3 minutes. Uncover, increase the heat if there is any liquid left, salt and pepper and serve.