

Hackney Allotment Society

www.hackneyallotments.org.uk

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2005

What's happening on your allotment in summer? **Soil contamination update**

TASKS IN JULY

- Continue to hoe off weeds in dry weather. Done in wet weather, the weeds are liable to re-root.
- Sow spring cabbage, turnips, oriental vegetables, chicory and fennel.
- Last chance to sow French and runner beans.
- Plant out leeks and brassicas for a winter supply.
- Pick courgettes before they become marrows.
- Lots to harvest in the vegetable patch, including spinach, peas, beets, carrots, salads, potatoes, etc.
- Lift overwintered onions and harvest spring-planted garlic.
- 'Stop' tomatoes by removing the main shoot. Cut off the leaf that's above the fourth truss. This should ensure that all the fruits ripen by the end of the season.
- Watch out for potato and tomato blight. Where early dieback does not seem to be caused by blight, lift the plant and check the roots for tiny nodules. If these are present then potato cyst eelworm is most likely to blame.
- Fruit picking begins - strawberries, raspberries and currants.
- Remove mouldy or damaged strawberries to prevent the spread of *Botrytis* (grey mould).
- After summer-fruiting raspberries have finished cropping promptly cut out the old canes.

TASKS IN AUGUST

- Sow quick maturing salad crops such as summer lettuce, radish, rocket, sorrel, chicory and fennel.
- Continue to sow spring cabbage, turnips, Oriental vegetables and overwintering onions.
- Lift onions, shallots and garlic when ready. Avoid breaking over necks on onions as this can let in disease. Plants should be harvested when the necks start to turn brown and papery.
- Regularly pick fast maturing vegetables such as French beans, runner beans, courgettes, cucumbers and tomatoes, to prevent stringy or tough vegetables and encourage further cropping.
- Keep up with blight control on outdoor tomatoes and potatoes to prevent infection of crop.
- Finish harvesting second early potatoes especially if it turns wet, as slugs will become active.
- Irregular watering can lead to blossom end rot in tomatoes, splitting of root vegetables and flower abortion in peas and beans. Help prevent this by watering well during dry spells.
- Harvest sweetcorn as it ripens.
- Sow green manures such as crimson clover and Italian ryegrass, to be dug in during the winter or spring to prevent autumn weeds establishing and to act as a soil improver. Alternatively, place black plastic over bare areas of ground after clearing old crops to suppress weed growth.
- Cut out fruited canes of summer raspberries and tie in new canes to fruit next year. Select strong, healthy canes and cut out weak, forked or misplaced ones (such as those growing out into the paths).

Source: www.rhs.org.uk

The meeting of 18th May included a disappointing presentation by the Council's Contaminated Land Officer reiterating previous advice in hygiene practices and outlining the Council's intention to carry out further testing using new bio-accessibility methods.

In lay terms, these tests will measure the take up of contaminants through human ingestion by mimicking the gastric conditions of a 0-6 year old infant (the most vulnerable receptor). Further soil samples will be taken and tested by the British Geological Survey using a quantitative risk assessment method. Sampling locations have been indicated with marker canes. Results are expected towards the end of June.

The Council promised further meetings with all members to outline their further findings and agreed to provide a draft timetable by the end of next week with a full proposal for each site by end July 05.

Site visits

Site visits will take place in July this summer. Plots will be judged on creativity, variety of crops, most improved, productivity. All members are invited to attend the site visits which start at 7pm on the following dates

Wednesday 6th July: Spring Hill, Spring Lane, Overbury and Leaside

Thursday 7th July: Aden Terrace, Church Walk, Springdale, St Kilda's

Please contact your site rep for further details. Prizes will be announced at the AGM.

Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will take place on Thursday 6th October at St Mary's Church Hall, Defoe Road. 7.30pm for 8pm start. All subscriptions will be due on this date.

Chair Maggie Wilkinson
Secretary Sue Carling
Treasurer Jackie Breakwell
Site Reps:
Aden Terrace Tim Jordan
Church Walk June Lancaster
Leaside Ian Dick
Overbury Street (Vice Chair & Newsletter) Sarah Mott
Queensbridge Ian James
Spring Hill Eugene Clerkin
Joint reps Fredrica Brooks
Spring Lane Ed Couyet
Joint reps Christine Turner
 Gavin Everall
Springdale Road Annie Wilson
St Kildas **VACANT**
Others Joss Bany
 Mary Connolly
 Guy Dehn

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jossreiverbany@btinternet.com

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Site rep VACANT POST

We currently need a site rep for St Kilda's. All you need to do is keep an eye on the plots on your site and liaise with the committee as necessary. Please help us to enable the work of the allotment society to continue.

National Allotment week

It's National Allotment Week from 8-14 August; this aims to promote the awareness and availability of allotments both locally and nationally and to show the public and the local authorities the strength of support and interest for the heritage of allotment culture. For further information visit the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners website: <http://www.nsalg.org.uk/> Members interested in organising an event on their site should contact secretary@hackneyallotments.org.uk. Last year's open day was very popular with members on the waiting list and it would be of great value if a similar event could be organised this year.

Waste disposal - ALL SITES

Debris from allotment sites is being found both in and outside the sites. Please ensure that compostable waste is correctly disposed of and other waste is taken home or put into refuse bins.

Hackney Council offers quality compost bins at subsidised prices - from £9.99 delivered. Two sizes of composting bin (220 litres and 300 litres) are available for £9.99 each. They also offer a wormery at £17.99. The wormery is smaller, at 90 litres, and is suitable for use inside as well as out. To order an Original Organics compost bin, call: 01884 841 515

Allotment News Via E-mail

This is the last summer newsletter to be mailed out to the whole society!! Unless we have a specific request from someone without internet access, future editions will be available in electronic format only. Please send you email address to: newsletter@hackneyallotments.org.uk

Waiting List Members...

We currently have a waiting list of 110. The average time to wait for a plot is 2½ years. The next lucky recipient is number 903 (depending on choice of site). As the preference for plots in N16 is higher than in E5 sites, let Sue the Secretary know if you wish to change or extend your preferences. secretary@hackneyallotments.org.uk

Plots are very much in demand and if you really don't have the time or commitment to work your plot, please be fair to those on the waiting list.



moon phase planting

Plan your gardens.

"Never plant too soon, consult the moon!"

Plant your crops with knowledge of each day's moon phase

Crops producing edible food above the ground are associated with waxing Moon period.

Crops producing edible food beneath the ground are related to waning Moon periods

Pull out those hard-to-kill weeds in the 3 days before and 3 days after the New Moon

More specifically, certain plants do better in a specific quarter phase of the moon

For further information visit <http://www.times-to-be.com/>