

A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS
ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY LEISURE GARDENS LTD
GLENTHORNE AVENUE, CROYDON. CR0 7EZ.
www.awslg.org.uk

**NEWS FROM OUR
WILDLIFE MEADOW**

Although a wintry blast has returned albeit briefly, there are many signs that Spring is exerting herself in our meadow. The young tadpoles grazing on the algae is but one manifestation of springtime as are the large show of lesser celandines, the clump of pulmonaria and Mike's glorious flowering cherry in his colourful border alongside the asphalt path. The newest of our four Japanese maples is the first into leaf and what a stunning colour it is.

Two meadow residents have recently been seen, the green woodpecker whose numbers have increased over the years as have the anthills. His favourite snack are the Yellow Meadow ants which build the large number of anthills that have arrived in the last decade because of annual cutting and raking. A greater-spotted woodpecker was seen close to the woodland part of our wildlife area. An elusive bird, often heard drumming, but rarely spotted despite its name.

The warm weather of last week gave four of our winter hibernators the chance to grace our meadow, yellow brimstones, peacocks, comma and small tortoiseshell. In addition two species emerged from their pupal cases. The much loved orange tip butterfly, such a special part of springtime with but one generation each year and the less celebrated but more in evidence, the small white butterfly with three generations each year as every gardener will know.

Every day now there are new delights and discoveries and our meadow is now regularly visited by plot holders and their families which is a testament to the effort that has been put in over the past ten years.

My final thanks to Alfred who has mown and restored our paths and lawn areas twice already. Wednesday sessions have resumed, all volunteers are welcome.

Plant Sale

Our first plant sale of the year was held on Sat 3rd and it was delightful to see so many people turnout in very cold weather. We took over £500 in sales so it's a good beginning, more sales will happen soon. A huge thank you to the small team of volunteers who have worked continuously to produce a variety of plants this season.

Newsletter April 2021

Taps on Site - Have your Watering Cans Ready

The taps and water will be restored on Saturday, 10th April. We are asking you only to use watering cans until June - no hoses. We are trying to reduce our water consumption so please speak to the Ground Steward if you have difficulty managing a watering can.

Bonfires Reminder all bonfires are banned across the site as from 1st April until October.

Annual Show We are planning to hold this over the August Bank Holiday during our 100th year Celebrations which will take place on the Saturday, Sunday, and Monday of the Weekend. Various events will happen.

Polytunnel A small group of volunteers have been busy in the polytunnel preparing plants for sale, we still need some help during weekdays so if you have an hour to spare please let a member of the committee know.

Canteen to Open The Canteen will reopen on Saturday 17th April 2021.

Tree planting Thanks to all the volunteers who helped plant the 100 Trees and shrubs donated by The Conservation Volunteers around our site on Saturday 27th March. They planted the following : English Oak, Common Alder, Beech (common), Silver Birch and Hornbeam, the 50 shrubs are a mix of Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Common Dogwood, Dog Rose, and Goat Willow.

Scarecrow -The Reverend Wilkes

To the amazement of some a Scarecrow arrived on the canteen green on Friday.

Please take a look and read the story of the Reverend Wilkes 1843 - 1923 a vicar of Shirley from the late nineteenth century. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society in 1867, and awarded the RHS Victoria Medal of Honour for his horticultural work. He also discovered and cultivated the Shirley Poppy.

We will be having a Plot Scarecrow competition this year so get your thinking caps on, we would like to encourage as many as possible to get involved.

A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY

JOBS TO DO IN APRIL

VEGETABLE CARE:

Control weeds with regular hoeing to keep them down.

Plant out your chitted main-crop potatoes, either in deep drills or individual planting holes, with 5cm of soil mounded over the top. Alternatively, plant them through slits in black polythene and mulch.

Start earthing up your early potatoes, covering the shoots with **fleece** if frosts threaten.

Feed spring cabbage with a **nitrogen feed**; remove any mouldy or yellowed leaves to prevent the spread of fungal diseases.

Growmore is a balanced fertiliser for trees and shrubs, sprinkle round the root area, then hoe in.

Aphids can multiply rapidly during mild spells. Remove early infestations by hand to prevent the problem getting out of hand.

Support pea plants with sticks, twigs, green support mesh, or wire netting.

Prepare runner bean supports for sowing (in May) or planting out (in June).

Sow a seedbed of brassicas to provide transplants of sprouting broccoli, cauliflowers and cabbages for planting out in June or July.

Transplant broad beans grown in pots.

Plant shallots, onion sets and garlic. Cover with either **fleece or environ mesh** to prevent the Allium Leaf Miner beetle. If you suffered from this pest last year do not grow your crop in the same area.

HELPING POLLINATORS

Aim to have plants that are attractive to pollinating insects in early spring to late autumn. **Never** use pesticides on plants in flower. An abundance of pollinators ensures plants continue to reproduce through seed; mixing flowers with vegetables and fruit such as apples, tomatoes and strawberries helps successful fruit cropping. Herbs are extremely beneficial for allotment growing, loved by bees, hoverflies and butterflies, they can also be used for companion planting as well culinary use. Try growing: borage, chives, lavender, hyssop, comfrey, sage, dill, fennel, summer savory, rosemary, parsley and thyme. Mint, best contained within a pot as the roots spread.

FRUIT CARE:

Protect fruit blossom from late frosts by covering the trees with **fleece**. Hand-pollinate the flowers with a fine brush if insects are scarce.

Net your fruit crops to reduce pigeon damage and to keep birds off fruit buds (particularly gooseberries). Remove nets once flowering starts.

It is now safe to prune plum and cherry trees, if pruned in the colder months these trees are vulnerable to silver leaf.

Look out for our bees, avoid using insecticides on crops in flower. When carrying out any spraying operation do be careful to spray early in the morning when fewer pollinating insects are about.

Remove tied on grease bands from fruit trees.

De-blossom strawberries planted after September in their first year to help establishment. Ventilate strawberries under cloches and mulch with straw or mats.

FLOWER/GRASS CARE:

Deadhead pansies, primulas and other spring bedding plants to encourage flowering.

Remove faded daffodil and tulip flowers, nipping off the heads and seed pods at the same time.

Mulch rose and shrub beds with a 5-7.5cm layer of organic matter. This will help retain moisture during dry spells, reduce weeds and improve soil structure. Rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias all benefit from a mulch as flowering is impaired if they are allowed to dry out in late summer.

Sow new lawns and repair bare patches. Apply weed-killer to broad leaved weeds.

TRADING CENTRE UPDATE

A big thank you must go to all the volunteers that manage the trading centre, ordering supplies, waiting around for deliveries, work in the warehouse, pack up the bags of fertiliser, keep the place clean and tidy and serve the customers.

Since the pandemic it has not been easy to obtain all the gardening goods that we have had in the past. At present we have sold out of composted stable manure and are trying our best to obtain more, but have been told that there is a 10 week waiting list.

TRADING CENTRE OPENING TIMES SATURDAY & SUNDAY 10.30AM TO 12.15PM