

A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS

ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY LEISURE GARDENS LTD
GLENTHORNE AVENUE, CROYDON. CR0 7EZ.
www.awslg.org.uk

KEEP OUR SITE SAFE

We are constantly reviewing our security measures especially when the nights are drawing in. Now that the trading centre is closed on Saturday afternoons for the next couple of months there are very few people present on our site on weekend afternoons. We would therefore ask your cooperation in keeping the main gates locked from 12.30pm onwards on a Saturday and Sunday. This extra security measure to deter any intruders will be in place until February.

There will be exceptions of course such as the AGM meeting on Saturday 16th December and for deliveries but these tend to be mainly on a weekday. A notice is always placed by the open gate saying that a delivery is due.

Many thanks to the volunteers who have been recently tidying and planting our memorial area by the side of the canteen. Spring flowering daffodils and other bulbs have been dug in along with some foxgloves, perfect for growing under a canopy of trees, these should naturalise, reseeding every year. Over wintering pansies and a rose bush have also been planted. Come the spring this communal area will look lovely for all to admire.

This leads me on to talking about the need for more volunteers to come forward as we approach our AGM. It is vital that we have a strong committee to take us forward for the next few years. In order to survive we need the input of as much help as we can get. This is a wonderful site, unique not only for its size but also for being privately owned by all our allotment shareholders. The more people who offer their support, the easier the outstanding tasks become. Even if you can only do a few hours on a Saturday to help our ground steward or working in the canteen (a nice warm job) on a rota for a couple of hours once a month, we need whatever help you can give us. So do come to our Annual General Meeting and be prepared to offer whatever support you can manage, we have a wide variety of jobs that we need volunteers for desperately.

Beth & Victoria who organised the last Macmillan fundraising coffee event would like to thank the donor/donors who used the QR code for their gift of £120, this brings the total up to £523.57.

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023

Reminder of our Annual General Meeting.

Saturday 16th December at 2.30pm in the Hall.

The hall will be open from 2pm. Please do allow plenty of time for signing in as your name has to be checked against the register first.

Trading Centre will be closed from close of business Sunday 10th December and reopen on Saturday 13th January.

Canteen will be closed from close of business Sunday 17th December and reopen on Saturday 13th January.

A huge thank you to all our volunteers who help in the canteen and the trading centre, we would not be able to open either service without you.

MULLED WINE & MINCE PIES

SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER 12.30



We are holding our traditional festive treat for all our ploholders so please join us in the canteen for a warm-up round our log burning stove.

We wish you a very merry Christmas & a happy new year.

DONATIONS NEEDED TO HELP OUR LOCAL FOOD BANK

We shall be making a collection of non-perishable items to help the vulnerable users at the Shrublands Food Bank this Christmas. Tins and packets with at least 6 months shelf life are welcome, also toiletries and seasonal treats. Donate these to the canteen/ trading centre during opening hours and when we have the mulled wine event on Saturday 9th December or the hall when we have our AGM on the 16th December.

The Food Bank will particularly need help on the run-up to Christmas to pack and/or distribute items. If anyone can assist please ring Beverly Warner on 0203 441 7887.

If you are unsure of what to buy or can't get to the shops then you can make a monetary donation through the Shrublands Food Bank website www.shrublandstrust.org

The Trading Centre will close after the morning session on Sunday 10th December and will remain closed until we reopen at 10.30am on Saturday 13th January (weather permitting) 2024.

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

JOBS TO DO IN DECEMBER

VEGETABLE CARE:

Parsnips can be left in the ground until needed, or lifted and then buried in a shallow trench for easy access. They taste better when frosted. Make sure to mark the trench as you need to remember where they are and cover it with a protective layer of cardboard if hard frosts are forecast.

If you have Brussels sprouts ready for harvesting, pick the largest sprouts from the bottom of the stalk first. Earth up any Brussels sprouts stalks that look leggy and vulnerable to wind rock.

Continue winter digging as this exposes soil pests to frost and bird predators. Frost will help to improve the condition of your soil by breaking down larger clods. You can incorporate soil improvers into vacant areas of your plot. However try to avoid disturbing the soil too deeply as this can leech valuable nutrients. Ration supplies by manuring selected sites rather than the whole plot. Try a crop rotation plan as different crops have different nutrient requirements. Changing crops annually reduces the chance of particular soil deficiencies developing as the balance of nutrients removed from the soil tends to even out over time.

Clear polythene or **fleece** increases the soil temperature which will help to have earlier spring sowings. Use **Black polythene ground cover** to prevent re-colonisation by weeds and save yourself a back-breaking task in the spring.

Remove yellowing leaves on Brussels sprouts and cabbages to prevent grey mould from becoming troublesome.

Observe good, basic hygiene rules by removing all plant debris from your plots to reduce the spread and the overwintering of disease and pests.

Place **mouse controls** near stored vegetables and fruit.

Now is the time to make a manure hotbed by combining a mixture of manure, straw and leaves into a square, empty compost bin. Cover with a layer of **John Innes no 3**. Place a cold frame on top and then you are all set to benefit from the heat generated by the rotting manure as this will aid the germination of crops that can be started in January. prior planting out in February.

FRUIT CARE:

New fruit trees and bushes can still be planted providing the ground is not frozen or waterlogged. If the planting site is not ready when they arrive, then heel in the bare-root ones in a spare piece of ground, and leave containerised ones standing - but water them when needed.

Check tree stakes and **ties** while doing your winter pruning. They may need loosening, replacing, or removing.

Grape vines can also be propagated using eye cuttings. These are shorter than standard hardwood cuttings (having only one bud, or 'eye'), and are used commercially to produce a large number of plants. Only attempt these if you are confident, as longer cuttings have more buds to rely on for rooting.

Divide and plant rhubarb. Clumps can be lifted and prepared for forcing in early spring.

Net crops to reduce pigeon/parakeet damage.

Apply fatty acid-based winter washes to dormant fruit trees in order to control pests, making sure you treat all the nooks and crannies.

Insulate the greenhouse from frost, we have a good quality **bubble wrap** which works very well.

We have a few Christmas wreaths, some winter flowering pansies and red cyclamen for the festive season.

Don't forget our feathered friends this cold weather. We have a good supply of mixed bird seed, peanuts and fat balls. Once you start feeding during the winter it is important that you carry on as birds will waste valuable energy searching for alternative food. So stock up now.

Be guided by the weather and only sow, plant or prune if conditions are suitable.

All items written in **bold italic** are available from the Trading Centre. Please support your Allotment Society as it brings in much needed funds for improvements.

The canteen (normal opening hours 10am to 12 noon) will close after the morning session on Sunday 17th December and will remain closed until we reopen at 10am on Saturday 13th January 2024. The Office will be closed from Saturday 16th December and reopen on Saturday 13th January 2024