

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

**Wildlife Meadow**

**Newsletter**

**JULY 2019**

Although creating a wildlife meadow which looks attractive from spring to autumn has guided much of our activity over the past eight years, the key emphasis remains "wildlife". The explosion of anthills built by Yellow Meadow ants has been a successful consequence of close cutting the three meadow areas in late autumn. Ants, like many insects, are warm loving creatures and thrive in the absence of a cold, wet mattress of decaying, uncut grasses. The two obvious beneficiaries of this ant abundance are the green woodpeckers who open the nest and lap up the inhabitants and Blue and Copper butterflies which enjoy a wholly more equable relationship with the ants.

To ensure that our management of the meadow is beneficial to the most plentiful wildlife, the many insect species, butterfly and, more recently, moth numbers are closely monitored. Over eight years the number of butterfly species in the meadow has increased from 21 species to 24 and the total number of butterflies has increased year on year over a period of good and poor summers. Whereas there are only 60 butterfly species regularly seen in the UK there are very many more moths and to date we have recorded some 140 larger moths and almost 100 smaller (micro) moths. This is well short of the real total which should be at least double, nearer to 300 and even this would understate the moth riches of our allotment and its meadow. The moth known and seen by many plot holders is the colourful Jersey Tiger which flies in August sunshine and plays at being a butterfly. Two quite rare moths, nationally that is, are the Toadflax Brocade and the Small Ranunculus. Both breed within the meadow and their caterpillars are found regularly eating purple toadflax and prickly lettuce respectively. Several moths can be seen flying in the sunshine and are often mistaken as butterflies but, in the main, they are nocturnal and are recorded by moth trapping. A large plastic cylinder topped with a powerful mercury vapour light tempts the moths into the trap where they settle quickly and are found the following morning sleeping on the egg cartons which line the bottom of the trap. They are then recorded and liberated with photos taken of the showier or the difficult to identify species.

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Following our successful recruitment campaign to encourage new Green Finger members, the trading centre has dealt with a lot more customers over the past couple of months. At the same time that we have been experiencing this increase in sales, a few of our long-standing volunteers have had to retire from active duty. So now new volunteers are needed for morning and afternoon sessions in the warehouse (this is particularly urgent), cashiers and helpers for the trading centre. The only commitment we ask from you is one week in three on a regular rota. If you can't manage that then perhaps you would consider adding your details to a reserve list of helpers.

### **ASIAN HORNET**

*Vespa velutina*, is an invasive non-native species from Asia. If you find one you must report it. It arrived in France in 2004 and has spread rapidly. As a highly effective predator of insects, including honey bees and other beneficial species, it can cause significant losses to bee colonies, other native species and potentially ecosystems. It is expected that the places it is most likely to be found in numbers are in southern parts of England (it may be able to cross the channel from France) or in goods among which it could be accidentally imported (such as soil with imported pot plants, cut flowers, fruit and timber). Active between April and November (peak August/September).

The queens are up to 3 cm in length; workers up to 25 mm (slightly smaller than the native European hornet *Vespa crabro*) An entirely dark brown or black velvety body, bordered with a fine yellow band. Only one band on the abdomen: 4th abdominal segment almost entirely yellow/orange. Commonly known as the 'Yellow legged hornet'. Head black with an orange-yellow face. This is a day flying species which, unlike the European hornet, ceases activity at dusk. More information can be found online at [asianhornets.gov.uk](http://asianhornets.gov.uk) or notices around our allotment grounds. If you think you have spotted a nest on **no account** tackle this by yourself but contact Peter Bashford, our ground steward on [peter.beeman2@gmail.com](mailto:peter.beeman2@gmail.com)

**The Trading Centre will open on every Wednesday afternoon at 2.30pm to 4pm until the end of September.**

**The canteen is open Saturday and Sunday mornings 9.30am - 11.30am**

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**JOBS TO DO IN JULY**

**FRUIT CARE:**

When summer-fruiting raspberries have finished cropping promptly cut out the old canes.

If possible water tree, bush and cane fruit thoroughly once every 7 to 10 days during dry spells. Mulching will help them retain water. Keep large-fruited apples, such as 'Bramley's Seedling' particularly well watered to help to avoid problems with bitter pit.

Side-shoots that form on pinched-out grape laterals can be stopped at one leaf. Leaves that are shading grape bunches can be removed, to speed ripening of the clusters.

Thin apples after the June drop if still overcrowded. Remove blemished and central fruits from the clusters first. Branches that are still heavily laden can be supported with a V-shaped stake.

Watch out for apple and pear scab, this shows up as large blackish spots on both the leaves and fruit.

Check **Codling & plum moth traps** and replace if need be. Codling moth damage shows up on apples as a single brown hole in the skin.

Coarse leaves, slightly enlarged buds, and reduced yield on blackcurrant bushes can be a sign of big bud mite or reversion virus. Unfortunately, the only cure is to dig them up and replace. There is a mite-resistant cultivar available, "Ben Hope".

Propagate blackberries and cane fruits with long, lax stems with tip layering.

**FLOWER/LAWN CARE:**

Deadhead roses and apply a small handful of **Rose Fertiliser as** this encourages further flowering. We sell economy 3kg bags. Alternately feed every fortnight with a high-potassium liquid fertiliser, such as tomato feed.

Apply summer lawn fertiliser. If the weather is hot, set the mower at a slightly higher level than normal for early summer.

**SOW NOW OUTDOORS :** Chicory, Carrot, Endive, Lettuce, Turnips Spinach, Parsley, Radish, Fennel, Oriental vegetables, Spring Cabbage at the end of the month. **PLANT:** Winter Cabbage, Cauliflower, Savoys, Purple Sprouting Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts.

**VEGETABLE CARE:**

Carrots can still be sown, but beware carrot fly when thinning existing seedlings. Use **enviromesh** to cover, only removing when weeding.

Last chance to plant out your leeks, dibbing them separately into a hole, an old broken spade handle is ideal for this job.

Beware of potato blight, it helps to keep your crop earthed as much as possible. Quick preventive action is the best method, if you are unfortunate enough to get blight, first cut off all growth above soil level and remove it from your plot, sealing any debris in a plastic bag. If the above ground growth has been removed early enough it is likely that the potatoes below ground will not have been affected by the potato blight, especially if you have previously earthed up your potato plants. Test the potato tubers by removing one from the ground. and cut it in half. If it is infected with potato blight the flesh will be stained brown and it will have started to rot.

Research from America claims that 250 to 500mg of Salicylic acid (aspirin) in 4.5 litres of water gives some protection against microbial or insect attack for plants in the nightshade family, including potatoes and tomatoes. Spray 2 to 3 times a month especially when periods of high humidity are forecast. It may well be worth a try, after all, aspirin are very cheap.

Don't forget to stop cordon tomatoes by removing the main shoot. Look for the leaf that's above the fourth truss and cut it off there. This should ensure that the fruits ripen by the end of the season. Leave bush varieties to their own devices. Keep an eye out for sunken brown patches of blossom end rot, this is caused by irregular watering.

Climbing beans may also need stopping to maximize cropping on the existing side-shoots. Stop them at the top of their supports. Try and pick beans and peas, small and tender as this prolongs cropping and stops them becoming tough and stringy later in the summer. Beans also need sufficient water to help the pod set. Mulching is essential to retain moisture.

**\*\*\*\*\* REMINDER OF THE ANNUAL SHOW DATE SUNDAY 18TH AUGUST 2019 \*\*\*\*\***

**HOURS OF OPENING**

**Saturday 10.30am -12.15pm. 2.30pm - 4.15pm.**  
**Sunday 10.30am - 12.15pm.**  
**Wednesday 2.30pm - 4.00pm April—September only**