

A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS
ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY LEISURE GARDENS LTD
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COMMITTEE NEWS

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2021

The Trading Centre We are pleased to announce that the trading centre will re-open on Saturday the 6th of March 2021. Normal Trading Hours Saturday and Sunday 10.30am -12.15pm. Customers must wear a face mask; one customer will be allowed to enter and shop at a time. Card payments only. We still have seed potatoes for sale and plenty of compost and manure, so please come and support us.

Our Green Finger Scheme For those gardeners in our local communities, we encourage you to join our Green Finger Club. The cost is £2 per year and you are able to purchase items/ plants compost etc from our Trading Centre.

The Canteen will remain closed but may open again after March 29th, 2021 but this will depend on the further release of the Lockdown measures.

The AWSLG Polytunnel A team of plot holders have commenced sowing in our polytunnel and therefore we hope that in a few weeks/months we will again have Vegetable and flower plants on sale from the Trading Hut. We are grateful to those who are helping us in the Polytunnel, made difficult as we must maintain the present Government Guidelines.

Rotovator We purchased a rotovator last year, a small team of Volunteers will rotovate your plot for you with the proceeds going towards AWSLG funds. Cost: £60 full plot, £30 half plot. If you feel you would like to volunteer with rotovating please contact a member of the Committee.

The AGM This was cancelled in December 2020 due to Covid-19 Restrictions. To make our Annual Return to the Financial Conduct Authority the Committee have asked a small group of Share Holders to scrutinise our Annual Accounts on behalf of all Shareholders.

Most of the present serving committee members have indicated they are willing to continue to serve on the committee until the 2021 AGM to be held in December. We have several Committee vacancies and therefore we propose to co-opt two or three shareholder members to help us through the coming months until shareholders can formally vote in a new committee.

A small number of copies of the Chairman's Report, Treasures Report and Annual Accounts will be available from the Office from 12th March 2021.

The Committee To spread the workload of the committee we have recently allocated specific roles to some members of the committee : Mike Roche – Plot Lettings Co Ordinator, Paul Sheehan – Planning Application Coordinator working alongside Peter Bashford, our Ground Steward, Kin Tse – Share Coordinator.

Paperless We are trying to go paperless, our Secretary has led the way on this and therefore all application and booking forms, these include : Shed and Polytunnel application, Additional Plot Application, Rotavator Booking Form and Share Application form are available on our website to be downloaded, these can be found under membership.

Bonfires As from March 31st bonfires will be banned across the allotment site until October. This action has been taken to help our local neighbours, we have received complaints about bonfire smoke over their gardens, entering their homes and ash covering their cars.

Twitter Account We have recently set up a Twitter Account so please follow us @AAllotments. We hope this will enable us to make further contact with the communities, advertise our events, Trading Centre etc. to promote gardening and conservation.

Finally We hope to see you soon preparing your plots for the growing season. Let us hope we will be able to celebrate our 100 Years during the August Bank Holiday.

JOBS TO DO IN MARCH

VEGETABLE CARE:

Lime your plot this month if you have acid soil, or have had previous problems with club root and wish to grow brassicas - **do not plant** anything in the ground until May or June as an interval of two months is needed between liming and planting.

Make a crop rotation plan for your plot to ensure that the same crops are not grown in the same beds year after year. This helps to prevent disease build up.

Try to avoid too much digging in wet weather, but if gardening on top of wet soil, work from a plank of wood to avoid treading on the bed and compacting the soil.

Cultivate and prepare seedbeds, covering them with clear polythene, **cloches** or **fleece** to warm the soil before sowing.

If you have lightened your soil over the years and the weather has warmed up, you can sow broad beans, carrots, parsnips, early beetroot, bulb onions, lettuces, radish, peas, spinach and summer cabbage outside under cloches. If the weather is still very cold and wet with our heavy clay soil, it is best to wait until mid March. Seeds can always be sown in pots or modules, under cover, if you are eager to get started.

Prepare new asparagus beds by weeding, digging over thoroughly, incorporating lots of organic matter.

Check and oil lawn mowers, shears and rotavators ready for spring.

Slugs can still pose a threat so continue to use **slug controls** but only in moderation.

From mid-March to mid-April plant out onion sets if the soil is not too wet, heavy clay soils need longer to warm up. Plant 5-10cm (2-4in) apart in rows 25-30cm (10-12in) apart Gently push the **sets** into soft, well-worked soil so that the tip is barely showing, and firm the soil around them.

Feed any spring cabbages that have been standing all winter. Use high nitrogen feeds such as **Growmore**.

Plant Jerusalem artichoke tubers, they can act as a screen for the compost bin or the shed as they grown quite tall.

From mid-month onwards sow greenhouse-grown tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers. Use a heated propagator to encourage germination and then keep them potted on at a lower temperature.

FRUIT CARE:

This is the last month to prune apple and pear trees and also the last opportunity to apply **winter washes** to dormant fruit trees. This helps to control overwintering eggs of aphids, apple suckers and scale insects.

When pruning fruit trees make sure you remove any dead or diseased wood, including spurs with mummified fruits which are the result of brown rot earlier in the season, check for cankers on the branches.

Prune established autumn fruiting raspberries, cutting all canes down to the ground before mulching and top dressing with **fertiliser** over the roots.

Apply a **general-purpose fertiliser** to all tree, bush and cane fruit, at the manufacturer's specified rates. Fertiliser is best applied over the whole root area of the plant (roughly equivalent to the spread of the branches, but on the ground). Extra potassium can be beneficial in addition to the balanced feed.

Net fruit bushes against birds. Protect the blossom of early-flowering apricots, peaches and nectarines from frost damage by covering with **fleece**. As we are not longer allowed to sell the fungal treatments for peach leaf curl, prompt removal of infected leaves before the bloom of white spores appears will help reduce the amount of fungus carried over to the following year. Alternatively keep the emerging shoots dry with a rain shelter of plastic sheeting as this helps to prevent infection.

CONGRATULATIONS 2020 CUP WINNERS

President's Cup for Best Plot: Mr A. Menezes & Mrs M. Menezes - Plot 373

AWSLG Cup for Best Half plot: Mrs N. Roche - Plot 39a

Ground Steward's Cup for Best New Plot Holder: Mr C. Barker - Plot 48

W.J. Bull Memorial Cup for Service to the Society: Mr D. Lay - Plot 109

The Wildlife Garden Cup: Mr D. Lay & Miss B. Williams - Plot 109