

A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS
ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY LEISURE GARDENS LTD
GLENTHORNE AVENUE, CROYDON. CR0 7EZ.
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Watering Wisely

Newsletter

May 2020

Can you help us to save water? The monthly water bill for this site is £1000 per month at the moment and we'd like to reduce it. Please think first before you spend time watering your plot. Hoses must be hand held. There is no need to water all of your crops, here are some helpful tips :

Water is the vital ingredient for us all – to grow fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers. It is a scarce resource so you all can help to use it responsibly:

When to water? In the evening or **very** early morning or it will evaporate away

Where to water? Aim your water at the roots and not the leaves

How often to water? Weekly giving a good soak rather than little and often*

Hose or watering can? The choice is yours, if you've got a greenhouse or polytunnel your demand for water will be greater. A hosepipe can use the same amount of water in one hour that a household uses in one day. Watering cans, while labour intensive can direct the water to where it's needed – at the roots.

How you can reduce the need to water:

- Dig in or mulch with plenty of organic matter; this will help to retain moisture in the soil.
- Apply mulches when the soil is warm and moist, this will reduce water loss due to evaporation and also suppress weeds.
- Weeds compete for moisture and nutrients in the soil so weed regularly or cover soil with a weed suppressing geo-textile. The weeds, roots and all can be composted if processed correctly by drowning in water or put in a black plastic bag in the sun until they decompose. Weed seeds will only be destroyed in the hot compost process.
- Grow crops that suit your local conditions. A greenhouse or poly-tunnel can increase the need for water significantly so water harvesting with water butts from these structures is important.

GUIDE TO WHAT FRUIT AND VEGETABLES NEED...

Cucurbits & Squash can survive and produce fruits from minimal watering but courgette plants need to be kept constantly moist.

Fruiting crops Aubergines, cucumbers, sweet corn and tomatoes need constant water throughout their growing period.

Leafy vegetables Crops such as cabbages, chard and spinach along with salad crops need water at and salad crops every stage of growth.

Legumes: Avoid watering peas and broad beans when young but they will need water at flowering time and about 2 weeks later. Runner beans need constant moisture but French beans can cope with dryer conditions.

Onions etc Water to establish and then only in dry spells. Potatoes Water regularly from 6-10 weeks after planting when they start to produce tubers.

Root crops Carrots and parsnips will split if watered irregularly, water before dry conditions develop. Stem vegetables Celery, celeriac and Florence Fennel need copious amounts of water to develop and will be damaged by drought conditions.

The above guidance is a summary of the leaflet produced by the National Allotment Society.

Calling all budding artists to make posters for the notice boards for WATERING WISELY.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Following government guidelines for garden centres, measures have been put in place to open the trading centre, however we can only do this with your help. If you feel comfortable either serving on the till (card payments are now acceptable) or in the warehouse please contact us on telephone 07598283689 or email on the contact form via our website on www.awslg.org.uk.

At present we can only offer opening hours for plot holders only and for only two mornings, see the times below. We would prefer card transactions if at all possible.

TRADING CENTRE OPENING TIMES FOR PLOT HOLDERS ONLY
SATURDAY & SUNDAY 10.30AM TO 12.15PM

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

JOBS TO DO IN MAY

VEGETABLE CARE:

Watch out for late frosts, Protect tender plants with a covering of horticultural *fleece*.

Continue earthing up potatoes, and promptly plant any still remaining. Earthing up is the drawing up of soil around the stems, leaving just 5cm of shoot uncovered so that the plant has enough foliage to continue growth.

Regularly hoe off weeds to prevent them from competing for moisture and nutrients. Try hoeing on dry days between the rows to make sure the weeds dry up and die.

Pinch out the tips of broad beans once they start to flower as this helps to discourage blackfly. This is the most effective method, far better than using sprays.

Move plants to cold frame for hardening off before planting outside. Ensure adequate ventilation in greenhouses to prevent the risk of powdery mildew and Botrytis.

Sow direct into prepared beds: French & runner beans, squash, outdoor cucumbers and pumpkin, however if this month is cold, wait until the end of the month or start crops off under cover. Sow cauliflowers and purple sprouting broccoli for harvesting next winter. Courgettes and ridge cucumbers are best started off in the greenhouse or on a windowsill for planting out in June.

Sow leeks in rows when they reach 10cm in height, use a large dibber, an old spade handle is ideal to make a hole 7cm deep, drop the leek into the hole then fill with water. The use of a fine cover such as *environ mesh* is recommended to help prevent the infestation of pests such as leek moth and the allium leaf miner.

Use the gaps between the rows of autumn plants such as brussels sprouts for short-term crops like radishes or little gem lettuces.

Sow sweetcorn in planters such as root trainers, this helps the long roots to grow without a check.

Plant out your hardened off tomatoes once the risk of frost has gone, I find that by using old glass frames or an equivalent wind break protection from the north east wind works wonders for a good crop.

FRUIT CARE:

Fix *pheromone traps* in apple and plum trees to help reduce the codling moth numbers. This is the month they start to mate, so trapping them will reduce the numbers of eggs. Allow one trap for every 5 trees.

Spray plum trees against aphids and spray apples & gooseberries against powdery mildew.

Dead shoots on tree fruit may indicate a number of disease problems. Check for signs of canker, bacterial canker and blossom wilt.

Tie-in new shoots of fan-trained fruit such as peaches, cherries, plums and gages.

Remove strawberry runners to conserve energy from the existing plant. If you want plants for the next year, pinch off flowers from a selective plant, this encourages them to produce green shoots and runners, save and pot up separately.

FLOWER/GRASS CARE:

Mow lawns regularly but do not cut too short as this can damage the grass. Apply selective weed-killer if necessary. Apply a light dressing of a nitrogenous fertilizer in late May. The trading centre has good quality grass seed for front and back lawns and a variety of lawn treatments.

Lift and divide overcrowded clumps of daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs.

RECOMMENDED Vitax Copper Mixture 175g. A blend of 3 vital trace elements, (Copper, Zinc & Manganese), for use on crops suffering from trace element deficiencies. Protects potatoes, beans, peas, beets, brassicas, carrots, celery, fruit and onions.

NO BONFIRES FROM 1st MAY

All plot holders must not have bonfires or use incinerators from 1st May until further notice

We have already received a few complaints this year from the neighbouring households and because of this we risk a permanent ban from the Council (or a large fine, which would be paid by the plot holder whose bonfire incurred the complaint).

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