

A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS
ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY LEISURE GARDENS LTD
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**Notes from the
committee**

Newsletter

May 2021

The Polytunnel

The AWSLG polytunnels are full of plants ready to be sold on Saturday and Sunday mornings when the trading hut is open.

In the past few weeks, we have been reluctant to put many of the plants out for sale because of the likelihood of frost but providing the weather improves we will be soon selling most of our range which include vegetables: tomatoes, aubergines, peppers, squash, runner beans and dwarf beans. We do still have a few cabbages left. We also have a small range of bedding plants in stock, marigolds, geraniums etc. Our plants are reasonably priced, and all the proceeds are used for the benefit of the society.

A Head Nurseryman Emerges during Lockdown

Following the brief period of snow during this last lockdown Jen knocked on Danny's door and told him she was going to start sowing in the polytunnel and asked for his help; since that day Danny has arrived at 10am every day and has been working in our various polytunnels, pricking out the seeds, tending to the young plants, watering, and offering his gentle advice. He is now known as our 'Chief Nurseryman'. Danny's work in the polytunnel has enabled the overall success of our Polytunnel Team. Thank you so much Danny.

Spring Tidy Up Day

The Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the spring tidy up day- what a hive of activity there was around the site; roads were swept, hedges trimmed, buildings painted, rubble removed and the wildlife field and fairly plot tidied as well as seeds sown. Thank you all. More of these days will be arranged as we prepare for our summer activities and events.

Ground Stewards Workboard.

We recognise that some plot holders cannot volunteer at the weekends but could spare some time during weekdays, we have now installed a Whiteboard on Peter's workshop (painted in a Sandstone colour). Each week there will be list of jobs that we would like to be done so do look and give an hour or so of your time to help complete these. Thank you.

Help in Organising our 100-year Celebration.

We feel we are now in the position to bring together our plans for our 100 Year Celebration on the weekend of the August Bank Holiday – we need a small team of volunteers to help us now to finalise our programme, advertising and encourage participation with our community. If you would like to help us with this, please speak with Jen Tapping, Chairperson ASAP (Available in or outside the Office on Saturdays 10.30am -11.30am)

Are you or do you know someone who is a Performing Artist? Plays or Sings in a music group? Are you a skilled Crafter or Cook, please contact Jen.

Life at the allotment – Photographs

If you have any photographs taken at the allotment during the past years that you would like to lend us for our August celebration, please bring to the office on Saturdays 10.30am- 11.30am. As we have all learnt during Covid memories are important.

TRADING CENTRE OPENING TIMES
SATURDAY & SUNDAY 10.30AM TO 12.15PM
CANTEEN OPEN FROM 10AM TO 11.30AM

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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 ALLOWED

All plot holders must not have bonfires or use incinerators from now 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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