

A.W.S.L.G. TRADING CENTRE NEWS
ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY LEISURE GARDENS LTD
GLENTHORNE AVENUE, CROYDON. CR0 7EZ.
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**WILDLIFE MEADOW
NEWS**

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2020

The wildlife meadow has survived an extraordinary year and has provided joy and solace to the several people, meadow volunteers and plot holders, who have discovered its charm. 2020 began in the worst possible way with the sad news of the death of David (Warner), a great contributor to the work of creating and maintaining our lovely island beds. This loss was then followed by the arrival of Covid 19 and lockdown which made our Wednesday work parties impossible and they have not yet resumed.

That the meadow, paths, pond and island beds have looked glorious throughout a decent to good summer is a tribute to the meadow volunteers who have turned out regularly, working on their own and doing whatever job seemed to be the most important. Such loyalty and understanding of the collective vision of our wildlife meadow/garden is the great strength which underpins this project soon to enter its eleventh year.

The single outstanding achievement is the completion of the Bug Hotel, first mooted in 2014. Mike Steward, having completed his scheme to collect rain water from the hall roof to feed the pond during the hot summer (it worked a treat) now turned his attention to the Bug Hotel. He has created a structure (next to the painted shed in the far corner) which is complex, inventive and aesthetically very attractive. His off beat sense of humour can be enjoyed on closer scrutiny of the various units of this extraordinary creation.

The butterflies have enjoyed the summer heat although their flight period was shorter in consequence. They were able to mate, lay eggs and enjoy their short lives without pause during the hot, dry spell. Once again the meadow was blessed with a new arrival, the Chalkhill Blue.

This brings the total of species to 25 which is remarkable for a suburban allotment. The visitor was a male so there is no promise of offspring in 2021 but next year, perhaps, a female might turn up in our meadow.

For me and a growing number of you, the wildlife meadow has been an escape for a precious hour

or so from the events of a year to forget, if we are allowed to. My thanks to all of you who have contributed in some way or other - working in the meadow, donating plants or strolling around - and making the meadow an important chapter in the story of AW&S.

Editor's note. It has been Malcolm's vision and expert knowledge that has made the meadow such a successful project; it is an exceptional area that we are all so fortunate to either work in or simply enjoy the diverse abundance of wildlife. Thank you so much Malcolm.

COMMITTEE NEWS

AGM. This is usually held in December but due to the Covid 19 restrictions, the Committee have agreed that it should be **delayed** until February 2021- members of the present committee have agreed to continue in their roles until then. If the Covid 19 restrictions are still in place in February then alternative arrangements will be made. However, to reassure you, the End of Year Accounts are now with the Accountant and these will be made available for comment when they are returned to us.

Autumn Tidy Up. We would like to thank all those who helped us with the Autumn Tidy Up, it is good to see so many of you participating and certainly we could see the impact of your efforts across the site. Many commented on how lovely it was to meet others and the great atmosphere, others asked if we could have more days like it.

Special thanks to Peter Bashford our Ground Steward for organising and supervising the day's work, Victoria Steward in the Canteen, and Maria, Blythe Williams and Patricia Pelican for the wonderful lunch they prepared and served.

Christmas Event. Following the success of the lunch outside last week which has proven our ability to deliver this within the present Covid 19 restrictions we have turned our thoughts to a Christmas event, naturally this will be dependent on any change in the present restrictions - If we can, we will be holding an event outside the canteen, the date will be announced.

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CANTEEN 10AM TO 12 NOON

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JOBS TO DO IN NOVEMBER

VEGETABLE CARE:

Harvest cauliflowers or leave in situ with the leaves snapped and folded down over the curds to protect them.

Celeriac can also be left in the ground for a bit longer but protect them from the cold with a thick mulch of straw or other suitable material.

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

Dig up chicory roots to be forced. Pot them up after removing foliage and position them in a dark warm place. The tasty chicons will appear in three to six weeks.

Garlic can still be planted in free-draining soil but be careful if the weather has turned too wet. Otherwise it can be started in containers or modules, and planted out when more mature.

Continue winter digging as the approaching cold weather may help to improve the soil structure by breaking down large clumps into crumbly particles. If plenty of well-rotted organic matter is incorporated in the soil then you will be off to a flying start next year. Cover with **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.

See to those maintenance jobs such as cleaning your bamboo canes and storing in the shed or other dry place to ensure they're still in good condition for next year.

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

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

It is not too late to sow overwintering Broad beans, **Aquadulce** are the best for this time of year. We are selling a bag of loose seeds, 50 for a £1.

FRUIT CARE:

Plant any cane, bush and tree fruit ordered last month. Do not plant if the ground is frozen or waterlogged. If the planting site is not ready when plants arrive, then heel in the bare-root ones in a spare piece of ground, and leave containerised ones standing - but water them when needed.

Strawberry runners that have been potted up for forcing in February and March next year, should now be turned on their sides, or placed in a well-ventilated cold frame. Beware of excess moisture or warmth as this could cause rot or precipitate premature growth.

Hardwood cuttings can be taken this month, this is a great way to propagate blackcurrants, redcurrants, white currants, gooseberries and grape vines - providing they are disease (especially virus) free.

Begin your winter pruning of established, open-grown, apple and pear trees (not cordons, espaliers, pyramids or fans) at the end of the month, inspecting the trees carefully. Any sign of canker or staining within the wood (a possible sign of infection) can be investigated and dealt with appropriately.

Clear up fallen apples and pears from the base of trees as this can be a source of infection for next year. Remove any mummified fruit from the branches and burn, do not compost.

Trap winter moths by placing **grease bands** around fruit trees, don't forget to band tree stakes as well if they provide a route up into the branches.

Mulch fruit trees and bushes around the base as this helps to keep the weeds down and can stop the damage when strimming.

Buy while stocks last, we still have some shallots and a few spring bulbs left.

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.

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