

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS



HAMPTON
WICK

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

No 43 February 2015

THE PLOTHOLDER

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

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SEEDY SUNDAY

8th February
11am – 12.30pm

Bring your spare
seeds and buy
ones you need,
and enjoy treats
from the Seed
Store Café!

... and future events

Plant Sale

26th April

Summer Produce Show

28th June

veg, fruit, flowers,
jams, chutneys,
cakes, café

Autumn Social

13th September
pumpkin, sunflower
and scarecrow
competitions, raffle,
BBQ, home produce,
beer tent, café

Volunteers! Work Parties! Pumps! Cakes! Roads! Gates! Café! Your Allotments Need More of You!



**Just a few of the important jobs
done by our volunteers...**

Clockwise from left:
Hazel stakes grown by a
plotholder for harvesting to
construct a wildlife hedge;
the familiar pumps around
the site which need
maintenance, and new ones
sunk; some of the café
team at Christmas, with
their delicious festive fare;
Guess the Weight of the
Cake; the roads around
the site which need
regular maintenance.



... and then the Gent's urinal needs a roof – the list goes on!

If you can offer any expertise, energy, time and enthusiasm to help us keep the site in good order for us all, and for future generations of plotholders, please volunteer. All offers of help gratefully received – please contact us via the website or visit the café on Sundays between 11am and 12.30pm. You will find forms in there, which list the most immediate jobs, and you can add your details to volunteer for the one(s) which suit your skills (or strength). Thanks!

Contributions for the next newsletter to jenbourne@btinternet.com

News from your Committee

WELCOME TO NEW TENANTS

Tim and Jessica Malcolm (plot 202f); Alison and Iain Roberts (plot 79f); Simona Bianchi and Marco Ottonello (plot 86b); Amy Baker and Will McElhinney (plot 189b); Pamela and David Boyd (plot 153f); Chris Roberts (plot 130); Lucy Rowland (plot 123); Julia Bailey and Jake Waldron (plot 180f); Carol and Gerald Haase-Pelzers (plot 44b); Matt Walker and Lisa Gibbons (plot 156f); Kristine Lo (plot 126b); Shane Crawford (plot 115).

THE OFFICE Open every Sunday, 11am – 12 noon.

THE PLOTHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

David Harnden, Chair (plot 152)
Carol Dukes, Treasurer and Website (plot 77)
Jenny Bourne, Social Secretary (plots 27f, 28b)
Ashley Catto, Sheds (plots A,H)
Gill Hiley, Lettings (plot 50)
Nick Baylis (plot 110f)
David Lainchbury (plots 131f, 132b)
Theo Christophers (plot 148)
Gaby Armstrong (plot 33b)
Martin Scotton (plot 59)
Jenny Trevillion (plots 136b, 137)

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Council appointees: Tania Mathias, Mark Boyle, Jerry Elloy (Chair), Gareth Evans (Vice-Chair)
Tenants: Susan Saunders (Secretary), David Harnden, Jenny Bourne, Nick Baylis, Theo Christophers

DISCOUNT for plotholders Adrian Hall Garden Centre in Snakey Lane, Feltham TW13 7NA (www.adrianhall.co.uk) offers people belonging to an allotment society a 10% discount on many items. They have a form in the shop which you need to complete. Tel: 020 8751 7600.

2014 Prizewinners

At the AGM on 13 November 2014, Councillor Dr Tania Mathias, of the RPA Management Committee, presented awards to the winners and runners-up of the Best Plot contest 2014, as follows:



Best Full Plot:

1st: Peter Caughey (Cup winner 2014)
2nd: Liz and Gray Rigge
3rd: Carol Ager

Best Half Plot:

1st: Julie and David Lainchbury (Barbara Wood cup 2014)
2nd: Len Cowking

3rd: Helen Sparrow and Ben Wilkins

Best Newcomer: Paul and Rebecca Sayce

Dr Mathias commented on the very high standard of cultivation evident at our Summer Produce Show, which she found was always much more interesting than the Hampton Court Flower Show.



LBRUT Council Allotment Officer, Pete Lewis, visits our site

Extracted from RPA Chair David Harnden's report to the AGM in November 2014:

... I only fully realised just how important the contribution of volunteers is when Pete Lewis, the Council's Allotments Officer, visited our site last month. It was nice to hear Mr Lewis praise the general standard of cultivation and all the work we have done around the site, such as the pumps and the refurbishment of the two buildings, but what was most interesting was his reply when I asked him what would happen if we were no longer self-managing – if we couldn't get the volunteers to form a committee or to do all the jobs around the site which are essential to keep the allotments running, so that the council had to take over.

He didn't paint an attractive picture. If the council did take over, one of the first things we'd notice would be a substantial rent increase. The Council now charges £67.50 for a half plot and £135 for a full plot and double this if the plotholder lives outside the borough. Also, because of the massive waiting list, new council plotholders are offered half-plots only and the council is considering quarter plots. This

policy, and the fact that people living anywhere in the borough would be eligible for an RPA plot, would mean a big increase in the number of plotholders and cars on the site.

But perhaps the biggest change is that life on the plots would become far less pleasant. Pete warned that there would be an upsurge in antisocial behaviour, ranging from more noise to more thefts and even violence.

I hope life on the council allotments isn't quite as nasty, brutish and short as Pete described. He may have had a bit of an agenda, since the last thing the council wants is to assume responsibility for the RPA. In fact, they are trying to persuade the allotments they run to move in our direction and become self-managing. But I think Pete was genuine in describing the overall trend if we were no longer self-managing. It's not surprising really – he has the almost impossible task of looking after 14 allotments and more than 2,000 tenants, and on a council-run site people assume that it's the council's job to fix any problems. By contrast, we know it's up to us to get things done and to make the allotments work.

Autumn Social and Produce Show

Autumn Social – 21 September 2014

This was a great success, thanks to the Social Committee's 'spot on' planning and organisation – a huge amount of work went into making it run like clockwork – a good number of volunteers and, crucially, yet another fine weather day! This year we invited local organisations to attend, in addition to our usual guests, Management Committee Councillors Tania Mathias and Gareth Evans and NPL's Andrew Hanson.

Representatives from Bushy Parks Allotments, Friends of Bushy and Home Parks, Richmond in Bloom, Hampton Wick Cricket Club, Hampton Wick Association and Tony Arbour, local councillor and London Assembly member, were welcomed in by our young 'meeters and greeters' Bethan Griffiths, and Jack and Tom Croft. We received some very complimentary feedback from our visitors!

Highlights of the day – good standard of entries and squash varieties in the Produce Show, so well organised by Ruth Walker with Sue Croft and the registrars; rigorous competition judging – a cake criteria spread-sheet worthy of the RHS!; fabulously creative scarecrows; quality Raffle prizes handed out by Joanie Fulton and Gaby Armstrong; top quality home produce sold by Marguerite Pocock; Andrew Hanson's entertaining Pumpkin Competition presentation with a worthy young winner; non-stop production line in the café; hot dogs served up by the Crofts, Jenny Trevillion, John Greaves and the BBQ Team; Helga Foss and Carol Dukes dispensing drinks at the Beer Tent; young winners receiving their awards from Tania and Gareth in the tallest sunflowers and scarecrow competitions. A great day of conviviality, sun and sociability!

Thanks to all who contributed to making it such a success, with a net total of £985.24 and £208.40 from the café – our best yet!



Autumn Social 21.09.14 Prizewinners



Pumpkin Competition

- 1 Bethan Griffiths, 47.5kg (plot 84)
- 2 David and Jenny Gilbert, 35.05kg (plot 30)
- 3 Robert Griffiths, 34.0kg (plot 84)
- 4 Gaby Armstrong, 22.5kg (plot 33b)

The People's Pumpkin

Rufus Storey, 19.5kg (plot 95f)

Tallest Sunflower Competition

- 1 Max, 221cm (plot 101)
- 2 Oliver Dawson, 193cm (plot 167)
- 3 Jack Croft, 177cm (plot 73)
- 4 Grace, 154cm (plot 200)

Highly commended

Patrick Neilan, 145cm (plot 190)
Freya, 140cm

Produce Show Winners

Vegetables – same variety

Three Roots

- 1 David & Jenny Gilbert (plot 30)
- 2 Ashley Catto (plot A)
- 3 Adam Gold (plot 108)

Three Brassicas

- 1 Nick & Janet Baylis (plot 110f)
- 2 Sue Croft (plot 73)
- 3 David & Jenny Gilbert (plot 30)

Three Alliums

- 1 Boula Rice (plot G)
- 2 Steve Todd (plot 80)
- 3 David & Jenny Gilbert (plot 30)

Five Legumes

- 1 Ben & Max (plot 101)
- 2 Janet & Nick Baylis (plot 110f)
- 3 Adam Gold (plot 108)

Three Squash

- 1 Ruth Walker (plot 21f)
- 2 Steve Todd (plot 80)
- 3 Hilary Griffiths (plots 84/85)

Three Cucumbers

- 1 Ashley Catto (plot A)
- 2 Boula Rice (plot 34)
- 3 Phil Alexander (plot 18)

Five Tomatoes

- 1 Ashley Catto (plot A)
- 2 Trish McLellan (plot 105)
- 3 P. Smoothy (plot 199)

Five Chilli Peppers

- 1 Boula Rice (plot 47)
- 2 Hilary Griffiths (plots 84/85)
- 3 Steve Todd (plot 80)

Three Tubers

- 1 P. Smoothy (plot 199)
- 2 Ashley Catto (plot A)
- 3 Luke Gold (plot 108)

Three Other

- 1 Gaby Armstrong (plot 33b)
- 2 Alison Roberts (plot 79f)

Fruit

Three Apples

- 1 Hilary Griffiths (plots 84/85)
(Good colour, even size, blemish free)
- 2 Amy Sims (plot 51)
- 3 Berty Clayton (plot 141)

Three Pears/Melons

- 1 Jean Blanc (plot 29)
(Unusual. Well done for growing melons on the allotment)

Small Plate, Soft fruit

- 1 Phil Alexander (plot 18)
(Even sized, clean, firm fruit)
- 2 David & Jenny Gilbert (plot 30)
- 3 Ashley Catto (plot A)

Flowers – arrangement grown on the plot in a small vase (up to 20cm)

- 1 Kathy Gold (plot 108)
(Nice use of herbs and flowers – cow parsley, teasels, gladioli)
- 2 Boula Rice (plot 44)
(Amazing selection of flowers!)
- 3 Chris Knight (plot 82)

Jams – 2 different jams to be made primarily from produce grown on the plot

- 1 Laura Newbould (plot 88f)
Jams: Strawberry/redcurrant
(Delicious. Good consistency)

- 2 Dan Read (plot 155)
Jams: Blackcurrant/Pink
Gooseberry and elderflower

- 3 Nick Baylis (plot 110f)
Jams: Raspberry/Blackcurrant

Chutneys – 2 different chutneys made primarily from produce grown on the plot

- 1 Hilary Griffiths (plots 84/85)
(The tomato chutney has very good colour and flavour)
- 2 Laura Newbould (plot 88f)
(Very different jars – good colour and presentation)
- 3 Jackie Petherbridge (plot 190)

Cakes – made primarily from produce grown on the plot

- 1 Gaby Armstrong (plot 33b)
- 2 Freya Read (plot 155)
- 3 Caroline Warner (plot 80)

Children and Young Plotholders

Veggie Monsters

Up to 9 yrs old

- 1 Bella Read, age 4 (plot 155)
- 2 Patrick Neilan, age 7 (plot 190)

Ages 10 – 15

- 1 Robert Griffiths, age 11 (plots 84/85)
- 2 Bethan Griffiths, age 13 (plots 84/85)

Mixed bunch of flowers – in a recycled container or jam jar

Age 10 – 15

- 1 Ciara Newbould, age 11 (plot 88f)
- 2 Jack Croft, age 13 (plot 73)
- 3 Tom Croft, age 10 (plot 73)



Scarecrow Competition

Up to 9 yrs

- 1 Robyn and Dylan Boynton-Lavelle, age 7 (plot 131b)
'The Pumpkin Stealer'
(Impressive scarecrow with lots of interesting detail, particularly on the face with green

slime coming out of the mouth. The Darkness t-shirt is a very clever addition)

- 2 Patrick Neilan, age 7 (plot 190)
'Irish Footballer'
(Fantastic Irish footballing scarecrow who scares the birds with his dangling football)

- 3 Joshua Millington-Jones, age 4 (plot 37f)
'Pink Hair Scarecrow'
(Very dramatic scarecrow with a fabulous pink wig.

Ages 10 – 15

- 1 Robert Griffiths, age 11 (plot 84/85)
'Vote No'

This scarecrow is using a vote 'No' poster to scare off the birds. Very imaginative and contemporary scarecrow.)

- 2 Ciara Newbould, age 11 (plot 88f)

'Red Spotty Jennifer'
(Fabulous rainbow wig and retro handbag. Very good design on the face)

- 3 Bethan Griffiths, age 13 (plot 84/85)
'Tartan Skirt'
(Another political scarecrow, this time voting 'Yes'. The tartan kilt will scare the birds! Again, very imaginative)



Hedge laying project

Andrew Saunders writes: Ten years ago allotment tenants commenced planting a hedge of native species starting from the St John's Church end. The hedge was completed three years later and extended almost the length of 'The Avenue'. The justification for the hedge was firstly to



screen off the backs of the plots which tend to be scruffy and unsightly when viewed from the park, and secondly as a wildlife resource particularly for birds which contribute to pest control.

The St John's end of the hedge is now quite tall and needs to be neatened up by subjecting it to laying using the rural craft once commonplace for securing farm

animals. The technique is to cut the stems at the base of the young trees, leaving a small segment of the encircling bark intact. The tree is then laid almost horizontal.



This procedure continues along the length of the hedge. Side branches are cut and tucked in. To secure this rather vulnerable arrangement the horizontal components are woven around stout 2m hazel stakes hammered into the ground. To further strengthen the whole structure thinner, longer hazel stems called binders are woven in and out along the tops of the stakes. In spring there will be new growth arising from the base of each tree leading to a thicker, neater hedge.

There is a national shortage of stakes and binders, but fortunately there are some clumps of mature hazel on site and plottolders have kindly donated their 'crop'.



Ashley Catto helped the Richmond TCV group on the day. He says: 'There were about 20 of us in all and the day started with a torrential downpour. After signing a form to say we understood the dangers, Ray Hulm, Steve Todd, Martin Johnson and myself were the allotment 'team'. TCV group supplied tea and biscuits and after a break for lunch, we finished about 30 metres before calling it a day'.

Royal Parks Ecology Officers' visit, October 2014

David Harnden reports from his meeting with Samantha Wilkinson, Ecology Officer, plus Julia, her boss:

- Julia and Samantha approved of the idea of managing the bramble wildlife area at the back of plots 10f – 14f. They said that now until the end of February was the ideal time to do it, since there would be no nesting birds. They said that hedgehogs would not hibernate under brambles.

- If we are using strimmers to cut down the brambles, they advised an initial cut to around 30cm from the ground and then a second cut to the ground, the idea being to give animals (both vertebrate and invertebrate) time to scarper. However, if we are using loppers they said it would be fine to cut to the ground immediately – just keep an eye open for any animals.

- They said a path cut through the tall (uncut) brambles would help wildlife, and they liked the idea of a structure at the end of the wildlife area for ivy to climb up.

- They were very enthusiastic about the log pile near the bee area. More piles would be very useful; burying some logs would benefit stag beetles etc.

- They said they would consult their colleague about the two small oaks growing near 15b. They are too close, so one needs to come out anyway.

- They would be keen to see bird and bat boxes around the site: around the wildlife area would be suitable, and we could also put a bat box high on the northern gable end of the café building.

- Areas of high grass are good for hedgehogs.

- They would be interested in conducting a reptile and hedgehog survey on our allotments.

- They promised to email various materials, including information on log-piles and eco-friendly methods of controlling slugs.

Heritage Horticulture Workshop – Jam Yesterday Jam Tomorrow

Planting and initial training of young fruit trees, Thursday 15 January 2015

'Jam Yesterday, Jam Tomorrow' (1) ran a workshop on fruit tree planting and pruning at their market garden in Marble Hill Park. Head gardener, Kate Robinson led the workshop, attended by a good crowd, including ten RPA plottolders! Kate provided a brief background history, how fruit trees had originally been planted as orchards in Twickenham and Hampton where market gardens had abounded – originally the 'Garden of England'.

Kate then gave us a practical demonstration in preparing the ground, planting and staking and tying in bare root cordons, espaliers and fans, using heritage varieties of apples and pears. These included a 'Royal Jubilee' apple raised in Hounslow in 1887. Pear varieties included Williams' 'Bon Cretien', developed in Turnham Green in the 1870s.

After Kate's demonstration with detailed, informative instructions, several of us volunteered to dig holes, put in stakes and plant and tie in some of the young trees. Kate recommended local nurseries and has kindly provided her extensive notes (2). We've also been invited to go along any time to see how the cordons, espaliers and fans are doing! *Jenny Bourne*

(1) JYJT is a Heritage Lottery Funded community project run by the Environment Trust for Richmond upon Thames:

www.jamyesterdayjamtomorrow.com

Twitter:@JYJTProject

(2) Kate's notes are available on our website with hard copies in the Seed Store.



A Plot in the Dark:

A Mrs Maple Detective Story

by Helen Nix

Chapter Three: to the outhouse.

Ten o'clock on Sunday morning found Mrs Maple in front of Renee's tardis like shed. On the outside was the normal six by four amount of wood the Little Bramble allotment committee allowed. The inside looked like an explosion in a soft furnishing factory. There was a banquette, drop-down writing desk, floral curtains, camping stove, kettle and grill, and cushions on any surface that would hold still long enough to hold them.

"Welcome to my sanctuary!" said Renee, flinging open the door with a cushioned crash. "Would you like a cup of tea, Mrs M?"

"Ooh yes, dear, lovely." Renee lit the camping stove and gestured for her guest to sit down. Mrs Maple took a moment to consider her seating options, before delicately perching atop a large peony cushion on the banquette. Mrs Maple reflected briefly on how the great detectives started with their questioning, looked round, and asked the only question she could. "So Renee, what was your inspiration for the shed decoration?"

Renee laughed, "Yes, it's a bit full, isn't it? To be honest, my husband Ron won't let me put anything gardening related in the house, so it all goes in here. I love it. I read in here, write in here, eat in here. If I ever leave him, here's where I'm going."

"He won't let you put anything garden related in the house?"

"No, he can't abide it. Won't come down the plot or anything." She lowered her voice. "He never discusses it, but he comes from gardening stock, and I get the impression it all got a bit competitive. So he left home as quick as he could, and took up with me. We moved here about five years ago. He was a bit gutted when I got the gardening bug, but he just leaves me to it and I try not to talk to him about it."

Mrs Maple nodded thoughtfully. "So tell me about the robbery. What happened?"

"Well, I think I was the third crime, and I think you'll find they were all pretty similar. I was here on Wednesday evening, and left my bag in my shed as I was doing some weeding. I must have been about my business for about an hour, with the radio on to keep me company. I caught a sudden movement out of the corner of my eye,

and looked up. I went to the shed and found the bag was missing, and the shed door was banging in the breeze. I rang the police and bank straight away."

"So when was the bag returned to you?"

"Well that's the curious thing. It came back much the same way it went. I came back on Thursday, and the bag was left on the middle of the shed floor, the door left open again."

"Do you lock the shed door?" Mrs Maple asked.

"No, no point. I don't really have anything of value in here, and I found the local youth used to break in if I locked it. So I shut the door. The latch holds it closed, but you can open it easily enough."

Mrs Maple popped outside the florid shed, and looked at the shed door. The faux bronze handle turned smoothly in her hand.

"Interesting," she murmured. She looked up. "So, you said your bookmark was taken. Was there anything special about it?"

"Well, no, not really. It was an old card about gardening I found in a

drawer somewhere. I thought it was quaint. I'd used it for years. I was sorry to lose it. I had to flick through 50 Shades of Grey for ages to find my place again..."

"Well indeed," said Mrs Maple, taking a sip from the delicate tea cup she'd been handed. "Now. Who was the victim of the first crime?"

"That would have been Louis and his missing boule," replied Renee. She lowered her voice again. "I think you might find him a weenie bit less welcoming. Do pop back if you want another cup of tea."



How Growmore Grows More: N, P, K and your Veg

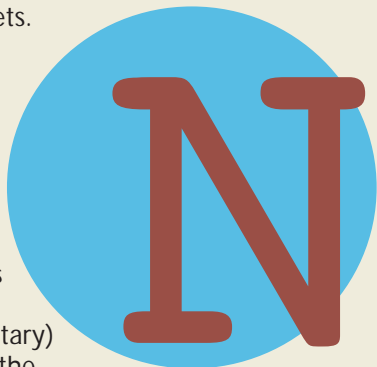
Part 1

By Martin Scotton, plot 59

The popular garden fertiliser 'Growmore' is advertised as containing 7% nitrogen, 7% phosphorus pentoxide and 7% potassium oxide by weight. A little chemical arithmetic shows that when 1lb of this fertiliser is sprinkled around your cabbage patch, the soil becomes enriched by 14, 2.7 and 4.1 hundred thousand billion billion atoms of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) respectively. Here the symbols representing the three elements, a convenient chemical shorthand, are written in brackets.

But why do plants need N, P and K anyway? How are they utilised and what purposes do they serve? This is a brief introduction to a series of articles (requested by your beloved Social Secretary) containing some of the

answers to these questions that I was able to unearth in my superficial foray into the literature of biochemistry (the study of small biological molecules) and molecular biology (big biological molecules). It is only a relatively short time since plant science was little more than drawing wild flowers; today the subject is huge and highly sophisticated, and modern technology allows living things, their structure, metabolism and evolutionary history to be analysed at a fundamental level. The 21st century will truly be a 'Century of Biology'.



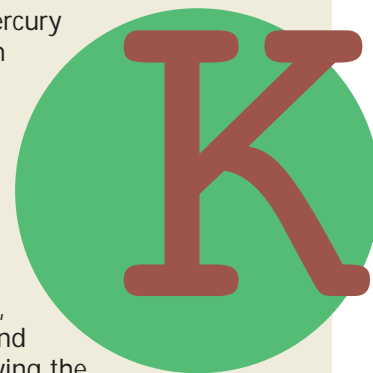
chlorine (Cl), potassium (K), calcium (Ca) and magnesium (Mg).

In dried plant material these 'macronutrients' occur at concentrations of >1000 parts per million (ppm) by weight. The 20th century added various 'micronutrients' to this list: i.e. iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), boron (B), zinc (Zn), copper (Cu), molybdenum (Mo) and nickel (Ni). These elements are absolutely required by a plant, but only in very small amounts, and dried plant material generally contains <100 ppm of each.

A few plants have special needs and put other elements to work in addition to the above, e.g. sodium (Na), cobalt (Co) and silicon (Si). Also, a small number of useful elements are taken up from the soils that, although unnecessary to plants, are essential to the animals that eat the plants.

Selenium (Se) and iodine (I) are in this category. Then there are the elements that the living world has no use for and which when present above certain levels are toxic to both plants and animals. These include lead (Pb), mercury (Hg), arsenic (As), cadmium (Cd) etc.

In coming editions of The Plotholder I will be presenting overviews of N, P and K. We will begin in the next issue with K, including an explanation of how potassium got to be K, its vital role in plant cells, and the part K played in destroying the town of Pompeii.



● Useful websites for mineral and PH testing kits – www.bosmere.com/products/soil-testing-kit
www.lancrop.com



Photoautotrophs is the fancy name devised by biologists to describe green plants – those organisms that use the energy of sunlight, together with carbon dioxide from the air, and water and simple inorganic substances from the soil, to build the tens of thousands of complex biological molecules required to construct a living cell, to maintain its organisation, and to enable its growth and cell division.

In the 19th century it was found by experiment that certain chemical elements were essential for healthy plants, namely: carbon (C), hydrogen (H), oxygen (O), nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), sulphur (S),

Jenny Bourne's Nature blog

Don't forget to keep logging on to our website to keep track of Jenny Bourne's Nature blog, to find out what's happening to the wildlife on our allotments. Jenny regularly updates her blog with news of any visitors (like the sparrow-hawk, right), and documents the changes through the seasons. And if you have seen and photographed anything unusual on the RPA site please let Jenny know.

jenbourne@btinternet.com



How to contact us:

You can leave mail for the Committee in the letterbox in the shed by the gate, or email us via our website

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk