

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS



HAMPTON
WICK

ROYAL PADDOCKS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

No 36 May 2011

THE PLOTHOLDER

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk

Inside this issue:

Page 2

Committee News
Tackling the
Clubroot Menace
Security
Pump Workshop
Seedy Sunday

Page 3

Picture Gallery –
the Seedling Sale
Recipes

Page 4

Westward Hoe...
How to contact us

Plants and seeds galore at the Seedling Sale!



shelves – memo for next year, more courgettes and squash! We made a grand net total of £293.84. Thanks to all who helped to set up, brought their seedlings etc to sell and stayed to clear away after – a real collaborative and community spirit made it all possible. The café did a roaring trade, the volunteers worked flat out and many thanks to Anne Wingrove and all the café volunteers who kept us all refreshed with drinks and a superb array of delicious cakes – Joanie's gluten free hazel cake to mention just one! These events wouldn't happen without those plotholders who volunteer their time and energy to the socials and the café, so once again – we need more volunteers to keep it all going!

Jenny Bourne

[More pictures from the day on page 3](#)



This year's Seedling Sale on the 15th May saw a bumper turnout and a bumper crop of seedlings – dwarf French beans, tomatoes, Heatwave and Black Pearl chillies and peppers, squash, brassicas all flew off the

Children visit RPA

The average age of people on the allotments dipped sharply on the morning of Wednesday 11th May, when 60 5–6-year olds from Hampton Wick Infant and Nursery School came to see the fruit and veg we're growing. Four plotholders had agreed to show a party of 15 kids round their plots and all enjoyed the experience:

the children were very well behaved and full of questions, having studied how plants grow last term. Particularly popular were the pumps, rhubarb leaves and the compost toilet (apologies to the plotholder who was in the loo at the time). We hope to host future visits and to have some photos for the next edition.



?

FUTURE EVENTS –

PUMP WORKSHOP

15th June

Everything you ever wanted to know about our pumps – how they work, fitting, maintaining and repairing, winter storage. Get involved! See page 2

AUTUMN SOCIAL

11th September

Get pumpkins and sunflowers growing now and win prizes!

Contributions for the next newsletter? – to jenbourne@btinternet.com

News from your Committee

WELCOME TO NEW TENANTS

Philip Motha, plot 41b; Jackie Petherbridge, plot 190;
Jane Hawksley and Cathy Gold, plot 108;
Sarah and Brian Roberts, Plot C; Justin Reid, plot 101f;
Charlotte and Jonathan Megitt, plot 96.

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

THE PLOTHOLDERS' COMMITTEE

Bob Trevillion, Chair, plots 136b, 137
Chris Nix, Deputy Chair, plot 12f
Marguerite Pocock, Secretary, plots 55, 62b
Gavin Collins, Treasurer, plot 163
Jenny Bourne, Social Secretary, plots 27f, 28b
Angus Carswell, Sheds, plot 198f
Chris Pocock, Compost Toilet, plots 55, 62b
David Harnden, plot 152
Alan Buckingham, Website, plot 185
Martin Scotton, plot 59
Scott Hillman, plot 36f

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Council appointees: Tania Mathias (Chair), Jonathan Cardy,
Gareth Evans, Jerry Elloy
Tenants: Bob Trevillion (Deputy Chair), Susan Saunders
(Secretary), Gavin Collins, David Harnden, Chris Pocock

Security on the RPA site

The four incidences of vandalism on the site during winter/spring 2010/2011, have raised the issue of security on the site. Damage was sufficient for the police to attend on three of these occasions. The police have asked us to report all damage and theft on every occasion. Hampton Wick is a low crime area and if there is any increase in reports of crime in and around the Allotments then more attention may be paid to patrolling the area.

There has also been an increase in the number of people that report finding either the pedestrian or vehicle gates left open. Please remember these gates should always be closed and the vehicle gate drop bolts and slide bolt in place. If they are open when you arrive or leave then please close them unless they are attended.

Many people ask to be let in to visit friends or to see a particular person. All plotters have keys, so if you have invited guests to your plot please arrange to meet them at the gate. If people ask you to let them in, and you do not recognise them then you are encouraged to refuse entry. Having gates serves little purpose if they are opened whenever anybody asks.

Allotment sites are generally a safe and secure environment but the majority of sites across the country, not just RPA, have some sort of security to ensure they remain so.

Pump Workshop, 12th June

The dry Spring will have brought home to many of you just how vital water is for successful growing and how important the pumps are to RPA. Some of you were concerned as you watched seedlings gasping for a drink and none of the pumps near your plot had been fitted. Perhaps you would have liked to fit a pump or two but didn't know how to go about it, or you may have just assumed that it was all taken care of by someone else. Sadly the Pump Fairy does not exist.

Us plotters are responsible for the fitting, maintenance and winter removal and storage of the pumps. Not to mention the installation of any new pumps that we might want in the future.

In an effort to get more people involved we are running a pump workshop on 12th June. *Ray Hulm*

Tackling the Clubroot Menace

Clubroot is a massively destructive disease of the cabbage family and can be a scourge of the brassica grower, particularly the one who wants to cultivate varieties, such as Brussels sprouts and spring cauliflowers, which are in the ground for more than six months. An affected root system initially develops swellings and then can literally disintegrate – all of which tends to hinder healthy growth in the rest of the plant. The disease is caused by a slime mould that prefers acidic and poorly-drained soils, is easily spread from plot to plot, and produces persistent spores that survive long enough for normal 3- and 4-year crop-rotation schemes to be ineffective in eradicating its evil presence. And the really bad news is that some of our RPA plots are infected – including mine, to my eternal shame.

Since I wrote my last *Plotholder* article on the subject of cauliflowers and Brussels sprouts (in September 2005), there has been exciting news concerning clubroot disease: there now exist varieties that show very good resistance. These are:

- 'Clapton' (summer cauliflower)
- 'Crispus' (early Brussels sprout)
- 'Cronus' (mid-season Brussels sprout)
- 'Kilaxy' (late-summer cabbage)

All the above are available from Unwins or, individually, from various other suppliers. It is to be hoped that resistant strains of broccoli and calabrese, etc. will soon appear. I have tested the cauliflower and both sprouts varieties on infected parts of my plot over the past two years. I found absolutely no traces of the disease when the plants were unearthed after cropping. In addition, 'Cronus' gave the most impressive sprouts that I have grown at the RPA in more than twenty years of trying – the 'Cronus bonus', you could call it.

Which is all very encouraging... but what should one do if one desires enormous cauliflowers in the spring of 2012 and has clubroot-ridden ground? My answer to this question is the April cauliflower 'Jerome' (seeds from Marshalls) in conjunction with the disinfectant Armillatox. Armillatox resembles Jeyes Fluid and consists of a complex mixture of phenolic compounds derived from coal tar. I hasten to add that Armillatox is not licensed for use as a plant pesticide – they say at www.armillatox.com that they can't afford the £3 million it would cost to apply for a licence – so all I can tell you here is that in my experience it seems to do the job.

By way of example, the photo shows a 10lb 'Longships' cauliflower (seeds also from Marshalls), sown in May 2009, planted out in spore-infested RPA soil using powdered limestone and 10ml of Armillatox, harvested in May 2010.

If you are interested in further cultivational details, please contact me on Plot 59 or via the Plotters' Committee.

Martin Scotton



'My pride and joy': a monster cauliflower 30cm in diameter.

Seedy Sunday



This year's Seedy Sunday saw a good turn-out and a brisk trade in surplus seeds exchanging hands. Giant pumpkin and sunflower seeds were taken up by several of the younger plotters to enter in competition for the Autumn Social – let's hope for a good growing season to swell those monsters! The usual delicious cakes were on offer in the Café and a grand total of over £85 in donations was raised towards RPA site improvements.

Jenny Bourne

Picture gallery

The Seedling Sale, 15 May 2011



Recipes

Fancy a Cuppa?

Collect herbs in bunches and hang them in a warm place to dry. This usually takes two weeks. Use the leaves as you would loose tea-leaves. Allow a tablespoon of dried leaves for a medium teapot.

Nettle tea

Nettle leaves can be dried in the same way to make nettle tea. Nettle has strong anti-histamine qualities, making it a good tea for people who suffer from hay-fever.

Verbena or Vervain

Meant to aid relaxation or help with insomnia

Blackcurrant leaf tea

Dried blackcurrant leaves can be added to a pot of Indian tea. The taste is similar to green tea.

Gooseberry and Elderflower Fool

400g gooseberries, topped and tailed
100g granulated sugar
2 tbsps elderflower cordial
150ml thick cream

Place gooseberries in a pan with a little water and add the sugar. Simmer gently until the fruits burst. Remove and cool. Mash up the fruits with the cordial, taste and add a little more sugar if too tart. Whip the cream and add to the gooseberry mash. Chill the fool until it is very cold.



Rhubarb and Custard Tart

Serves 4

1 pack of flaky pastry

Filling:

300g rhubarb stalks

1 tbsp caster sugar

1 tsp finely grated ginger

Custard:

1 egg

1 egg yolk

3 tbsps caster sugar

2 tbsps plain flour

4 tbsps crème fraiche

Line the tart tin with the flaky pastry and bake in the oven at gas mark 4 or 180C. Put the rhubarb in a bowl and sprinkle over the sugar and grated ginger. Leave for at least 30 minutes to macerate. Meanwhile, whisk the egg, egg yolk and sugar together then add the flour and the crème fraiche whisking them all together well to get a very smooth custard. Drain the rhubarb in a sieve.

When the pastry is a golden brown colour, take the tart out of the oven. Spread the rhubarb mixture over the bottom of the tart, turning the rhubarb flat side down. Bake for 15 minutes, then take the tart out of the oven and pour the custard over the mixture. Then bake for another 30 minutes at the same temperature. Allow the tart to cool.



Westward Hoe ... an interview with Barbara Wood

Barbara Wood is one of our longest-serving and best-loved plotholders. She has been a tenant of the Royal Paddocks for 29 years, and at one time (when demand for allotments was low) single-handedly cultivated a grand total of five-and-a-half plots. For years she has set the standard for excellence, winning the cup for best plot many times. And she has been an ever-present source of practical help and advice – the person we all turn to when we need to know about everything from potato blight to fruit pruning and from getting the pumps working to ordering a delivery of stable manure.

Sadly, she has now given up her tenancy and is moving – to a house in Wiltshire with a garden of half an acre, where she can finally grow fruit and veg on her own doorstep. We will all miss her, and we wish her and her husband Pete all our very best.

On the eve of her departure, she tells us about her time at the Royal Paddocks.

How long have you been a plotholder?

I got my first plot in 1982, and over the following years I expanded onto four adjacent plots (181–184). In 1995 I reluctantly had to give them up for business reasons. But I was able to return in 2000, re-occupying plots 182 and 183 once again. Because of lack of demand and the condition of the plots, over the next couple of years I also

took on and cleared 184, 201, 195 and 187b. Since then, I've given up all but two of them (getting old!).

What main differences do you see between then and now?

The Royal Paddocks used to be a male domain; very few women worked plots regularly, and children were not encouraged. That said, there were always plenty of tenants on site in the mornings all through the year, especially at weekends, whatever the

weather.

The reasons for taking a plot today are more diverse, and a wider variety of crops are now grown.

These days, thank goodness, the site is not so littered with old household rubbish that 'might be useful', such as old bathroom suites and wardrobes. Although there are more cars, of course.

Sheds have appeared. Gone are the 3ft high 'coffins' which was all we were allowed for storing tools.

Did you know about fruit and vegetable growing when you started, or did you learn as you went along?

I knew a little about growing staple vegetables, but nothing about fruit. I learnt by reading and by trial and error.

Which of the crops you grow are you most proud of?

I have always been proud of all the crops I have produced, but in recent years my brassicas have done particularly well.

Any tips on how to grow them as well as you do?

I have my favourite varieties. I always grow plants in modules and never plant them in soil that has been dug after November the previous year. I use a small amount of ground natural lime in the planting hole and keep crops well watered in dry weather.

Are there any crops you've always found it difficult to grow successfully?

About three years ago, I gave up growing onions and garlic because of the dreaded white onion rot. Leeks and shallots seemed not to be so affected.

What crops would you advise beginners to start with?

Early potatoes. Carrots, because they taste so much better. Some sort of squash (I like butternut) because, apart

from watering, they are easy. French beans are easy and don't need staking. Runner beans are worth the effort of putting up canes because you won't have to suffer the hard stringy rubbish



A familiar sight – no doubt who was in residence!

from the supermarket. Lettuce, beetroot, leaf beet, and courgettes are all easy. I would recommend a blackcurrant (the new variety 'Ebony' is sweet) as it only requires the minimum amount of pruning. Autumn-fruiting raspberries are a good choice as they will produce a crop in the first year after planting.

What have you have enjoyed most about your time at the Royal Paddocks?

Walking through the gates in the very early mornings, especially in the summer, when the Paddocks are so peaceful.

If you were staying, is there anything you'd like to see change?

The attitude of those tenants who think they have a right to act and do as they please on the little bit of land they have rented.

What are you most looking forward to when you move to Wiltshire?

After about 30 years, being able to step outside my back door straight into a garden again.

And one for Barbara's album...



Jenny Bourne



How to contact us:

You can leave mail for the Committee in the postbox in the shed by the gate.

www.paddocks-allotments.org.uk