



# WEST WICKHAM ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

[www.wallotments.org.uk](http://www.wallotments.org.uk)

**Newsletter - June 2016**

From our Chairman

Hi all

Our site is looking particularly good at the moment, the working party earlier in the year did a great job and our orchard at the main entrance is being to establish itself and the grass is just about keeping the weeds at bay. Our buildings, thanks to Ron and Dave with their hard work, have been smartened up and hopefully we are heading into a great growing summer.

For the last two years we have seen a deer on the site at this time of year, up to now we have been lucky and it has not eaten too much, but we still have no eye deer how it gets in.

**Open Day - Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August 10.30am - 2.30pm**

There will be more information going out about this including a poster, but I thought you would like some information now, especially as we will be looking for some extra help not only on the day but on Saturday with the setting up, please keep the dates free if you can.

We are also hoping for your usual generosity in providing us with Jams and Chutneys, Cakes, and produce for the Sunday. These are always a big hit with our visitors.



This year there will be the return of a favourite event - the Scarecrow competition which will be judged on the day. So now is the time to start thinking about making one for your allotment. We will be supporting St Christopher's with not only a raffle, but also with an entrance donation at the gate.

**Matt**

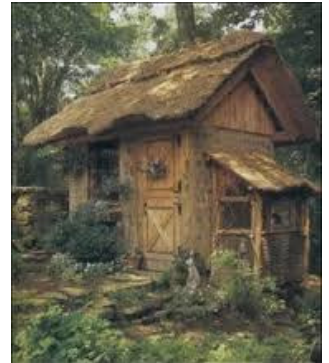
## Notes from the Trading Shed

We've had a run on canes in the shed over the last two weeks and sold out of 8' canes.

We will have more in soon...

In the meantime, we do have 10' canes which become about 9' high when positioned. Have you seen the virtually indestructible range of garden stakes? They're green and strengthened with metal, about three times the price of bamboo but they will last a lot longer.

Our other big sellers are nettings; we have a range including the new "Tendamesh" which is marketed as being a replacement for insecticides. More and more chemicals are becoming unavailable so it is worth considering.



We've jazzed up our range of watering cans too, not just red and green but orange, pink and purple!! **Only £5 each.**

Since we introduced bird seed, we've been pleased with the resulting sales. These will stay as part of our offering.

If you feel you've left it too late for potatoes, we still have a few left and we have reduced them to clear. We've done the same with onions hoping to sell out. Because this year's Spring seemed to go on and on, lots of things are late but the recent warmth and rain has meant everything will soon catch up.

If you see something that you think other might be interested in and you feel we should try stocking it, please talk to Liz or me and we may be able to source it and sell it.

Have a great summer season.

**Keith & Liz**

## Topical Tips from Paul

Some tips for the next few weeks . . . .

Planting and thinning out. Members are now very busy planting out tomatoes, sweet corn, courgettes and cucumbers. Whilst we all want to get the best yield from our plots, it is a false economy to set out plants closer than the recommended planting distances as stated on the back of the seed packets. If you do, plants will compete for both light and soil nutrients. Also, air will not be able to pass freely between plants and this could result in fungal diseases - this extremely important when keeping tomatoes free from blight.

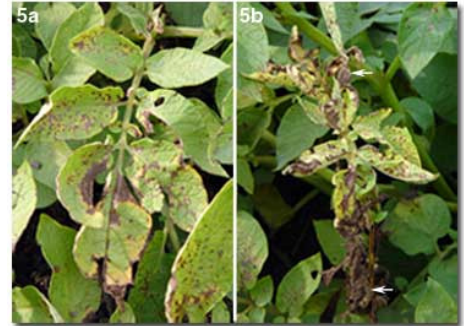
### Potato and tomato blight

These crops can be a target for blight from mid-July onwards. You will recognise this as yellow patches turning brown on leaves. Stems will be affected next and, if not controlled, the crop can be lost almost completely. Bordeaux mixture and Bayer's Fruit and Vegetable Disease Control are now **banned**. There is no chemical fungicide available to home gardeners. So, to give yourself the best chance of getting a crop, space the plants out and immediately remove any diseased foliage. You should remove lower leaves as they naturally discolour. To get blight alert you could sign up to Blightwatch (see below). You might also want to try spraying **in the evening** with a solution of aspirin or baking soda (see below) and which, apparently, also work against powdery mildew:

<http://www.blightwatch.co.uk/>

<http://www.countryliving.co.uk/news/a233/aspirin-treatment-for-tomato-blight/>

<http://miegardener.com/prevent-kill-blight-powdery-mildew-baking-soda/>



Plant foods For those of you who use plant foods, it is worth remembering that the Trading Shed offers a variety of bespoke products, both organic and synthetic, at a fraction of garden centre prices. For me, Phostrogen takes some beating as a general plant food – it has been around years and can be used for foliar feeding (not in bright sun), soil-drenching and as a powder. It contains a wide range of trace elements, especially magnesium which prevents healthy leaves yellowing.

Brussels Sprouts Not the easiest crop to grow. Remember that all brassicas like to be planted in firm soil, preferably with a little bit of shade. Literally stamp down on the soil around the plants. Make sure that the plants are 60-75 cm apart. Also some varieties of Brussels and Broccoli can grow to 4ft high, so bear this in mind when you are put up your netting. It is also worth staking the taller varieties to give them some support. Have a look, perhaps, at the green plastic canes sold at the Trading Shed – these are about half the price of similar online!

### Carrots

Hopefully your carrots have germinated and are growing well. Remember to thin them to about 4-5cm apart. Also to be sure of avoiding carrot fly, cover with Enviromesh (available from the Trading Shed). For superb carrots which can be pulled right through the winter sow 'Eskimo' in early July.

Tips from the press! Maybe try an experiment? Runner bean yields can be increased by pinching out the growing tip above the first leaves so that a lateral shoot is sent out. Allowing two shoots to develop on cordon tomatoes can also increase the yield. Sticking a blob of blutak on the end of garden canes makes them more visible and safer. Plastic bottles with the bottoms cut off can be placed over ripening sweet corn to keep away mice and birds. Watering tomatoes with hand-hot water can make the fruits sweeter. When watering courgettes and cucumbers soak the ground, not the leaves, and remove diseased leaves straight away.

Happy plotting!

**Paul**



From the Secretary's Desk

Here are some dates for your diaries:

**Plot Inspection:** Monday 6th June - please make it easy for the plot inspectors by having your edges tidy and cut back and your plots in good order. Some plots are looking a little uncared for with the weeds already setting seed. Please cover and/or weed kill the parts of your plot that are in disorder. If you have any issues please let us know in advance at [wwallotmentsec@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:wwallotmentsec@hotmail.co.uk)

**Working Party day:** Sunday 26th June - Many plot holders felt that they would like to help with tidying the site but were unavailable during the week due to work commitments. We have therefore arranged the next working party on a Sunday (before the Council Inspections) so that as many plot holders as possible will be available to help tidy the site. If you are willing to help please let me know on [wwallotmentsec@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:wwallotmentsec@hotmail.co.uk). Thank you in advance as it takes all of us to keep the allotments in good order.

**Plot A1** has been planted out with 5 fruit trees and the area has been sown with grass seed that is growing well. This is a commemorative space for all plot holders that have moved on to a greater place. Please can we respect this and not park on the plot.

**School visits:** "Farmer" Brian has school children's visits to the Site booked as below. If you are available on those days I think that he would be most glad of your support. Imagine that you may inspire a young person to grow their own in the future!

Busy Bees 20th & 21st June

Green Hayes 28th June

Linden Leas 5th & 7th July

**BBQ:** Sunday 17th July - **See Poster below**

**Allotment Open Day** - Sunday 21st August. As well as the usual produce and cake stalls, there will be a Vegetable Search Competition for children and a Scarecrow Competition for plot holders.



Regards

Viv



**WWAA  
BARBECUE  
SUNDAY 17 JULY  
1.00 – 3.30 PM  
TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE  
FROM THE TRADING SHED  
ADULTS £7.50 CHILD £4.00**