



# WEST WICKHAM ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

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

Newsletter - June 2017

From our Acting Chairman

I have to report that Matt Gamm has stepped down from his position as Chairman of the Association Committee. Matt and his wife have moved down to the south coast so staying on as Chairman was not practical. I'd like to place on record our thanks to Matt and the terrific work he did during his time in the Chair. Matt has kept his plot so you may see him from time to time. However, we will pay special attention to his plot at the next plot inspection!

In the short term I will be acting as Chairman until the next AGM.

As I write the weather is smiling on us growers with a week of rain and then a week of sun. The site is looking in very good shape at the moment - many thanks to the team of unsung heroes who keep it that way.

We have entered the site together with several plots into the Bromley Allotments Association Cups this year. Judging will take place between June 28th-30th and July 5th-7th so if you see people around the site at that time please be nice to them!



As we continue to improve the site and encourage its use as a community space the need for more Committee members has resulted. No special qualities are required apart from a small commitment to help us take the site forward for the benefit of all plot holders and the local community. If this is of interest please contact us at [wwallotmentsec@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:wwallotmentsec@hotmail.co.uk). You will be made most welcome.

The next social event will be the increasingly popular BBQ on July 30th.

Cheers

**Barry**

## Notes from the Trading Shed

Here we are, summer days with high temperatures or dull days with lots of clouds and the threat of rain. The ground is really dry and we could use any amount of rainfall.

We've been selling canes by the dozen for the past few weeks and have more coming into stock very soon. The 8' canes have been very popular.

This is our second summer selling Tendamesh which is marketed as an insecticide replacement. People who tried it last year have given us some very positive comments about it and its ease of use (it drapes easily and simply). We also sell Environmesh which looks tougher but I've been told that it isn't quite as effective as Tendamesh. By the way, Tendamesh is the manufacturer's spelling, not mine.

It's now the time to feed your tomato plants. We have a choice of feeds in stock.

Remember that we cannot sell Bordeaux Mixture any more but we do have an alternative which is an aid against blight. It too contains copper.



If you have a surplus of plants, we can take them in and sell them in aid of St Christopher's Hospice. We did a brisk trade in tomato plants last Sunday.

If you feel that there is anything missing from our range in the Trading Shed, please talk to Liz or to me and we will consider stocking it if we can.

Here's hoping we have a great season on our plots.

**Keith & Liz**

## Topical Tips from Paul

Some tips for the next few weeks . . . .

Using dead weeds to form a mulch Thorough weeding now will remove annual weeds and make things easier later into the summer on your plot and those nearby. If you don't like weeding, grow crops that don't need delicate weeding, e.g. tomatoes, potatoes, brassicas, sweet corn. With these lengthy dry spells, we need to do everything we can to retain moisture in the soil. Black weed control fabric will do this and prevent weeds forming - some members seem to be using this very effectively on strawberry beds. This year I am trying out dead weeds as a mulch round water sensitive plants. I am only using green leaves, not roots nor any weeds which have set seeds.

Tomatoes Some tips to improve your chances of a good yield: (i) plant marigolds between tomatoes as they deter blackfly and may have a fungicidal effect, (ii) remove lower leaves as the plants grow, especially if there is any sign of blight (don't compost), (iii) water at the roots, trying not to splash soil on lower leaves and (iv) if you are not an organic gardener spray with a copper based fertiliser available from the Trading Shed.

Last year, I read an article which suggested allowing two main stems to develop for indeterminate tomatoes (check the seed pack). I did this, supporting two stems with canes, and obtained an improved yield, especially with the mild-Autumn extending the season. I also sprayed my tomatoes with aspirin! See: <http://www.jameswong.co.uk/tomatoes/4588088979>

Epsom Salts. If leaves start to develop yellow tips/patches, you might find an application of Epsom salts helps. Available from the Trading Hut at a very reasonable price.

Sweet corn. Home-grown sweet corn tastes superb compared to shop bought. It seldom causes problems but plants can blow over in strong wind and you might wish to support them. I find that protecting the developing cobs from mice and birds with plastic milk bottles that have small holes at the top end to let moisture escape works well. Also try to stick to a planting distance of 45cm and feed regularly. Heard on Gardener's Question Time the other day not to worry about mixing sweet corn varieties - they will still set corn but you may find the odd kernel is a different colour from the rest. Apparently, it's more about supermarkets wanting to sell 'perfect' crops.

Swedes Not the easiest crop to grow but their flavour is superb when picked and cooked straightaway. Thin the plants early and make sure that the ground around the plants is firm - note that they are brassicas. Whitefly infestations are a pain - control by spraying with a mild soap solution. This year I am planting dwarf French marigolds between the plants (and my cabbages) to see if it puts the whiteflies off. Reddish yellow patches on leaves (and other brassicas) could be due to boron deficiency. I have found that rose fertiliser is useful here - it's available from the Trading Shed.

Happy plotting!

**Paul**

From the Secretary's desk



Thank you to all plot holders who made such an effort to get their plots ready for the spring inspection. There are some really productive looking plots on the site.

Also thanks to those letting me enter their plots in the Balgf competition; I have also entered the whole site this year.

Another thank you to all those plot holders who volunteer to help in the Trading Hut shop. It has been quite busy in the past few weeks and while I know that everyone is eager to be getting on with planting and managing their plots please be patient if there is a queue. Any more volunteers would be very welcome. The shop is open from 10.30am to 12.30pm on most Sundays.

The BBQ is Sunday 30th July. Tickets will be on sale soon.

New notices have been displayed reminding us that the roads around the entrance are one way. The new car park on the exit road is working well so there is no need to park on the verges.

WWAA again had a site at "Village Day" which was held in Blake Park on a rather damp Bank Holiday Monday organised by The Friends of Blake Park.

This was a success for both them and us. We were allocated enough space to erect a gazebo and plenty of room to display our site map and our new photos. We had a number of donated tomato plants, fruit bushes, and flower and veg plants. We also sold some seed potatoes, string, gloves and seeds which was really part of our display.

Interest was shown by families and younger people this time. Thanks to all who donated plants and gave their time.



Regards

Viv