



# WEST WICKHAM ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

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

## Newsletter - September 2018

From our Chairman

As has now become traditional, this report follows an extreme weather event which sadly resulted in the cancellation of our Open Day. The unprecedented temperatures played havoc with the crops this year leaving very little, if any, fruit and veg. available to sell at the Open Day.

The weather did however provide for a very successful BBQ with tickets sold out and a good time enjoyed by all with the possible exception of the poor cooks!

I'm sure you have all at least seen the new Eco Loos, very comfortable they are too! Much fun was had getting them in place, see photos below, and many thanks to those of you who helped getting them to their final resting place. They have recently been painted a very attractive Jade colour. The final landscaping of the area will happen over the coming months.

As a result of losing our Open Day this year we have decided to hold a Coffee and Cake morning on Sunday September 30th with the proceeds going to St. Christopher's. More details to come from Secretary Viv, your help and attendance will be gratefully appreciated.

All the best

**Barry**

I am sure that all plot-holders would like to thank the Committee and all those involved with the research, planning and work involved with the installation of the Eco Loos. This type of project takes a great deal of time so a big 'Thank you' to all concerned. Also thanks to Malcolm Belfield (Plot M6) for taking the photos of this memorable day!

Ed.





## Notes from the Trading Shed

*Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;  
To fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,  
And still more, later flowers for the bees'  
Until they think warm days will never cease,  
For Summer has o'er brimmed their clammy cells.*  
(John Keats, "To Autumn")



Well, it is very nearly Autumn after a tremendous Summer of sunshine and heat. Sadly, this hasn't resulted in huge crops! We now look forward to the next growing year with interest and hope.

In the Trading Shed, we will shortly receive our order of Autumn planting onions, shallots, garlic and broad beans. Our range will be:

Shallot Jumor      Senshu Yellow onion      Garlic Thermidrome      Broad Bean Aquadulce

From **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September** you will be able to pre-order seed potatoes for planting next Spring.

Our range will consist of:

### FIRST EARLY

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Maris Bard       | High yield, white skin                   |
| Pentland Javelin | Eel worm and scab resistant              |
| Home Guard       | Very early, good flavour, scab resistant |

### SECOND EARLY

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Kestrel | Good disease resistance, blue eyes                       |
| Vivaldi | High yield good flavour, good for baking and general use |

### SALAD

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Charlotte | Very reliable, good flavour, long light yellow tubers |
| Nicola    | Excellent flavour, yellow and waxy                    |

### MAINS

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Cara    | Our bestseller, red eyed tough guy, disease resistant |
| Desiree | High yielder, red skin, drought resistant             |
| Setanta | Good resistance to scab and blight, good flavour      |
| Markies | Good drought tolerance, good disease resistance       |

Our price will be £1.10 per kilo with the exception of Vivaldi which will be £1.40 per kilo. As previously, please pay when you order.

We shall be using Fothergills Seeds again to supply your individual orders. Catalogues and order forms will available soon. The cut-off dates for orders will be Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November.

Our discount will depend on the size of the collective order. Last year, the discount given was 40% - this represents a huge saving on seed prices.

For seed orders, you order in advance and then pay when you collect.

We have a good range of ground cover for over-winter use keeping your plot almost weed free or, you could use green manure. This is sown in Autumn as you clear your plot and is then chopped and dug in during Spring to feed your soil well. Several plot holders did this last year with some success. We have it on sale now.

As well as ground-cover, we have fleece, Environmesh and Tendamesh designed to protect any over-wintering crops.



Last year, we had some daffodil bulbs left over from planting the orchard by the main gate. They sold so well that we will be stocking a very limited range consisting of mixed daffodil bulbs, Hawera and Tete-a-Tete. (Both of the latter are small daffodils).

We are pleased to say that we now have honey in stock.

The long range weather report is that we could have another 3 or 4 summers like the one we've just had so maybe next year we'll be stocking olive trees and prickly pears!!

## Keith & Liz

### Topical Tips from Paul

Now's the time to reflect, tidy up and plan for next year . . . . .

After what has been a baking hot summer, it seems we have had mixed success at WWAA. From what I hear, runner beans have been disappointing due to blackfly and the lack of rain, though French beans have done well. I'd be interested to know any runner bean varieties which have worked well or any ideas about how to cope with dry conditions. Early and second early potato yields have been on the low side but the recent rain may help maincrop yields. Walking round the site, I notice we have done well with fruit trees and bushes, brassicas (no whitefly this year?), sweet corn and tomatoes (no blight yet!). Once again, if you have had success with particular varieties please let me know.

Regarding next year, it's time to refer to your crop rotation schedule to plan how the plot is to be used. The typical Rota is: Potatoes, Onions and Roots, Peas/Beans, Brassicas. Other crops, like courgettes, squashes, salads and sweet corn, can fit in around this. Here is some information: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=124>

As this year's crops die off, attempt to clear away the dying plants as soon as possible. Leaving vegetation in place can lead to transference of diseases into the soil. Almost all the green vegetation can be composted but I take foliage from the following plants to the dump because of the potential risks: tomatoes/potatoes (blight risk), courgettes (mildew risk) and leeks (rust risk). Don't compost perennial weeds such as mares tail and bindweed. The compost accelerator sold in the Hut is effective and cheap.

As the beds are cleared, I sow green manure. This will grow and provide ground cover throughout the autumn and winter. It is dug in from February until late April and it both improves the soil and supplies plant nutrients. My favourite is Phacelia Tanacetifolia (a member of the Borage family) as it germinates readily and is very easy to dig in. It is quite expensive in garden centres but amazingly cheap in our Trading Shed! Here is some information: [https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/green-manures?qclid=CjwKCAjwq57cBRBYEiwAdpx0vbfzT9vuXuYSJ7pkVR4YzzFnFyngFXICoB0tH8zyGCjgMVN4\\_NiEMBoCwBsQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/green-manures?qclid=CjwKCAjwq57cBRBYEiwAdpx0vbfzT9vuXuYSJ7pkVR4YzzFnFyngFXICoB0tH8zyGCjgMVN4_NiEMBoCwBsQAvD_BwE)

### Raspberries

If you remove the canes that have just borne fruit, then you should get stronger growth on next years' fruiting canes. These should be tied into supports.

### Things to sow now

Weather forecasters have been suggesting a warm September and October, so it is worth sowing seeds such as salad leaves, rocket, radishes, mizuna, turnips plus overwintering crops like broad beans, hardy peas, spring cabbages, spinach, garlic and winter onion sets. I have found Winter Density lettuces to be very hardy and reliable, leading to a bumper crop in the Spring (you will need some cloche protection). If you have a greenhouse you might want to try sowing salad leaves in tubs for use throughout the winter e.g. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/gardening/2010/12/salad-growing-in-winter-1.shtml>

If you are an Italian food fan, you can sow basil indoors throughout the year - the red/purple leaved varieties work particularly well.

### Leaf mould

It won't be that long before deciduous trees drop their leaves. Collecting them up takes some effort especially when they are wet. But the reward is that they can be easily made into leaf mould. Just rake them up and use leaf boards (two squares of plywood) to put them into black bin liners along with some water and compost accelerator. Tie the tops of the bags, pierce to make a few air holes and leave for a couple of years. Here is some information:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=478>

Happy plotting!

**Paul**

## From the Secretary's desk



Dates for your diary:

**COFFEE MORNING** in aid of St Christopher's Hospice -  
Sunday 30th September

**WORKING PARTY:** Sunday, 7th October  
**AGM:** Thursday the 22nd November.

On a lighter note, we all take worms for granted as they spend most of their time hidden under our feet. On our allotments they are vital by recycling and enriching the soil and allowing the earth to breathe. For your entertainment here are some facts about worms.

- The UK has 29 different species of worms.
- A worm does not have eyes, ears or teeth, but does have five hearts. They do not have lungs, they breathe through their skin.
- Worms hatch from cocoons smaller than a grain of rice.
- The secretory slime of worms contains the nutrient nitrogen and also holds the clusters of earth particles together.
- The average life span of a worm is 4 to 5 years.

### Types of Worms:

**Anecic worms** - reddish brown, burrow vertically into the soil and eat dead leaves. They often leave worm casts on the soil surface especially our newly mown grass.

**Endogenic worms** - Pale coloured, barrow horizontally through the soil eating any decaying matter.

**Epigenic worms** - reddish-brown, sometimes stripey, live on or near the soil surface and eat leaf litter and compost.

**Slow worms** -not worms at all but legless lizards. Shiny with smooth grey or brown bodies. Slow worms eat slugs, snails, insects and spiders. They hide under rocks or in your compost heap and emerge at dusk or after rain to hunt. They are a protected species and it is illegal to kill or injure a slow worm.



Regards

**Viv**

**Any amusing/interesting photos, tales from the site etc would be very welcome for the Newsletter. Please send them to: [editor@wwallotments.org.uk](mailto:editor@wwallotments.org.uk)**