

The Newhall Plotter

Newsletter of the Newhall Allotments Association

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Message from the Editor

One can understand why the British are well known for their main topic of conversation - the weather. This year has been no exception as we had summer in March, then April and May were cold and windy with June not much better. Early July saw the temperature exceeding the French Riviera but it was then downhill from there with heavy rain, cold winds and low night temperatures. All this plays havoc with some veg but others have thrived and done very well. I only hope that most (if not all of you) feel that all the hard work you put in has given you enough produce and health benefits to have made all your efforts worthwhile.

This year we have 18 new plot holders on site, a warm welcome to you all. It was good to see many of you at Keith's inaugural and very successful Newcomers Open Day. Around £100 was raised for the Association funds. Looking at some of these new plots, especially the starter ones, there is a fantastic improvement in such a short time. And so many of the other plots are looking good this year - keep up the good work!

Rita

BDAC Best Plot Competition



Many congratulations to David Richardson of plot 45 on taking third place in this year's competition. The Cliff Jones Memorial Trophy is organised by the BDAC to find the best plots on Birmingham and surrounding allotments. A just reward for David for all the hard work and skill he puts into his plot.

Looking at the standard of several other plots on site this year maybe this will encourage other plot holders to enter next year. There is also the Florence Pickering Trophy for the best newcomer. This is open to any plot holder who has not previously entered a BDAC competition. If we can sort out some of the duff plots and untidy frontages we could even look at the Best Site Competition.

Well done David!

Annual Show

This year's show will soon be upon us - Sunday August 23rd! Have you got your entries worked out yet? The full schedule is on the notice board or you can [click here](#) to see it. As usual we have a wide range of classes covering vegetables, fruit, flowers, cakes, jams, wine and pickles so there should be something for everyone to enter. Don't forget there are prizes of shop vouchers for the first three in each class and entry is free. For tips on presenting your entries take a look at the show page on the web site or [click here](#).

This year we will also be making it an Open Day and invite local residents to come and have a look at what we do. If you have friends or neighbours who would like to come along they will be very welcome. We will be having a raffle, tombola and bring and buy stall, barbecue as well as the usual cakes and refreshments. If you have any donations for the stalls please drop them off at the shop or social hut. All contributions gratefully received. Tickets for the raffle will be on sale at the shop and on the day.

Volunteers to help during the day will also be needed. If you can help at any time during the day please see Bernard or Keith. If you would like to donate a cake for sale on the refreshment stall please bring it along on the day.



27 Classes for vegetables, fruit, flowers and Home Produce

Open to Newhall Plotters no entry fee.

Raffle - Tombola Stall
Bring and Buy - Barbecue
Teas and Cakes - Games



Visitors and
Public
Welcome



NEWHALL IN SUMMER



Social Hut Extension

As part of the development of the site and improving facilities for plot holders we will be extending the Social Hut. The plan is to take out the polytunnel between the two containers. The Social Hut will then be moved backwards to create more space at the front. A verandah type awning, as in the photo, will be erected over the front to provide a sheltered seating area and the floor will be decked. This will create more space for social functions and for taking a break if it rains.

Stuart has once again done a magnificent job with fund raising and grants from Sutton Charitable Trust and the Grimmit Trust will cover the costs.

The polytunnel will be moved onto plot 17A and the plot will then become a community plot. The polytunnel can be used by any plot holder as a greenhouse for bringing on plants etc and the sheds will be available for storage for those without sheds. Three starter plots are also planned.



Other Site Projects

As well as the Social Hut extension there are several other projects being looked at to improve the site.

Parking – A continual problem at busy times is the lack of parking space. Several ideas are being considered to create more parking up at the top gate area and the possible conversion of one of the poorer plots for parking.

Road by Shop – It is planned to widen the road on the bend in front of the shop. This will make it easier to use the top car park and safer access for larger vehicle son site.

Security – The provision of security lighting is being looked at for the bottom gate area. This may deter the occasional break in at that gate.

Drainage – Another old problem on site. We have not been able to find the source of the water coming into the site by the pylon. We have managed to take some of that water away but much more work needs to be done. Drainage of individual plots has been more successful locally. We still have a lot of drainage piping available and if anyone would like to improve drainage on their plot please see Keith or Clive.

Many of these projects will require your help through work parties. We hope to organise the next ones in September an October. Your help will be much appreciated. Look out for the notices.

Starter Plots

The introduction of starter plots by Clive and Keith in the last two years has proven very successful. Some plots were split down into effectively 1/8th plots and offered to newcomers. It has been a problem in the past that newcomers have not been able to get on top of larger plots and several have given up, contributing to the number of

run down plots. It has also helped to cut down the waiting list and given more people the chance to enjoy allotment gardening. If they are successful and enjoy it they could move on to a larger plot when available.

There are currently 12 starter plots on site with a few more planned. As well as providing a start they could also be useful for anyone wishing to downsize. If you are finding less time or energy to work your current plot and are struggling a move to a smaller plot could help bring back your enjoyment of growing with less effort. If you are interested have a word with Keith or Clive.

As a recognition of the success that these starters have achieved we will introduce a new award this year for the Best Starter Plot. Have a look at the plots at the back of 11A, front of 21, 24 and 26 and back of 46. You will be surprised at what has been achieved on previously run down plots in such a short time. A winner has been decided but come along to the Show to find out if you agree with the judges when the decision is announced.



Have you seen our website lately? [Click here](#) or [Google Newhall Allotments](#)

Rita's Veg and Chorizo Chili

A great way to use that surplus veg. Freezes well.

- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- ½ chorizo link cut into small chunks
- 1 jar Dolmio Bolognese sauce
- 1 red pepper, diced
- Whatever veg you have, french beans, carrots, runner beans, peas, broad beans, courgettes etc. chopped coarsely
- 1 -3 tsp chili powder (depending on how hot you like it!)
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- For extra flavour can add Oxo cube and/or soy sauce



Lightly fry chopped chorizo in a pan to remove most of the oil. Drain off the oil.

In a separate pan saute onion and garlic in the oil over medium/low heat until they begin to soften.

Add chili and cumin fry for one min. Next add the Dolmio sauce and a little Oxo stock. Simmer over low heat and add veg at intervals in order of what needs cooking longest, carrots first, courgette last. Stir regularly to stop sauce burning. All veg should be cooked but not overcooked and soggy.

Add chorizo and simmer for 2 minutes more. Serve with ciabatta or a coarse bread.

Your Shop

Don't forget to have a look into our shop and see what we can offer. There are bags of compost, growbags and fertilisers available to save you carrying them onto site. We can offer smaller quantities of goods as well

if you have just run out, with a no interest "Get it On Tick" system if you do not have the cash available. Take a look at our full range and prices on the noticeboard or [click here](#). Kings Seed catalogues will be available soon and we will be starting the list to preorder your seed potatoes for next year. Look out for the notices.

The shop is open on Sunday mornings from 10.00 to 12.00 and often longer. At other times a committee member may open up and serve you if you ask them.

In Memoria

This year we have sadly lost three allotmenters that many of the longer serving plholders will remember - Richard Stacey, Ray Cooper and most recently Michael Moyles. Condolences were sent to the families on behalf of Newhall Allotments. They will be sadly missed.

Do you remember Michael's favourite joke? Best delivered in his wonderful Co. Mayo accent.

A labourer complained to his foreman, "My wheelbarrow goes squeak----squeak----squeak----squeak".

"I know" says the foreman "I've heard it and you're fired!"

"That's unfair, gaffer" he says "Why?"

"Because it should be going squeaksqueaksqueaksqueak!"

Contributions If you have any comments, ideas or contributions for future issues you can email them to newhallallotments@gmail.com hand them in at the shop or drop them through the letterbox on plot 3B shed door.

Your New Workshop

The new work shop is now open for use. It is sited behind the storage container at the bottom. The benches and vices are ready for any jobs you need to do. There is a very wide range of basic tools available. There also steps, ladders, shovels and sprayers available. Unfortunately for security we need to keep these in the locked container. If you need to use any of these items please ask a key holder if they will open up for you. They are Keith - plot 30a, Clive - plot 31a, Stuart - plot 40B, Bernard - plot 3B, John Whatley- plot 10 and John McCormack - plot 43A.

You're Never Too Old to Learn

They say you are never too old to learn and that is certainly true about gardening. The latest bit of new knowledge, well new to me anyway, is regarding the "Old Enemy". If you are a cricket enthusiast then this will be Australia. If you work a plot at Newhall then of course it refers - you've guessed it - to the weed Mares Tail. Can you or can you not eradicate it from your plot? I'm still fighting that one. Whether I am winning or not only time will tell. I think I am.

I have four compost bins, partly because I am a firm believer in lots of good homemade compost and partly because it means less walking if you are always near to at least one of them. Over the years I have carefully taken out Mares Tail, top or roots, from any freshly gathered compostable material. And only put it one designated compost bin along with other stuff. I make a lot of compost and bring some material from home such as grass or hedge clippings etc. Some of this makes its way back to my flower beds at home but I do NOT risk taking any home from the Mares Tail bin - no fear! That is until now.

Today I started to take material from the Mares Tail bin which had gently been working its magic for about eighteen months, and was amazed and delighted to find that it was top quality fibrous peat like compost and there wasn't a trace of Mares Tail in it. YOU CAN COMPOST MARES TAIL!

There, you see, there is good in everything if you look for it!

David Richardson