

Allotment News



A regular newsletter for allotment holders in Welwyn Hatfield

Spring 2015

Inside this issue

- Page 2 Bugs and Garden Plagues
- Page 2 Hillcrest Allotment
- Page 3 Tilecroft Allotment
- Page 3 Source of Manure
- Page 4 National Allotment Week
- Page 4 Essendon Gardens Open Day
- Page 4 Water Trough Lids
- Page 5 What's On at Mill Green Museum
- Page 5 Tree Orchards
- Page 6 Top Tip & Recipe

“Act Now to Prevent Pests on Your Plot”

At our evening talk in March this year, we had the pleasure having Geoff Hodge come speak to us again, but this time on “Garden Bugs and Plagues”.



Geoff, horticultural writer and TV and radio presenter, explained how we can control pests and diseases on our plots as well as manage other garden and plant problems.

The author of RHS Allotment Handbook recommended using the “organic pest control that we are born with” when it came to dealing with aphids – squishing them between finger and thumb! In fact, one aphid left to its own devices can produce up to

40 tonnes of aphids in a year. So act quickly!

He referred to the principles of Organic Gardening as a preventative method – namely to ensure that we grow healthy plants which are then more likely not to succumb to pests and diseases.

For healthy plants he suggested to be mindful of the soil and the root of the plant and therefore sow

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Allotment News



Bugs and Garden Plagues

seeds in ideal conditions – the soil needs to be warm, ideally 7 degrees and moist.

He recommends adding nutrients to the soil such as Miracle Grow Slow Release which releases nutrients exactly when the plant needs them.

There are other additives that you can use such as those with high potash for fruiting plants and

flowers, granular feeds, which release nutrients over 8 weeks or so such as Grow More, fish, blood and bone and also liquid feeds which are more immediate in the effect.

Another principle Geoff advocated was to encourage natural predators such as ladybirds, hoverflies and lace wings.

Geoff also argued that when it comes to slugs and

snails, the barrier methods do not work. Geoff recommended Slug Clear Ultra, which is treated with bitterex so to deter birds and dogs. Just lightly scatter the pellets about 4-6 inches apart around the plant. Organic Slug Pellets are also available.

Thank you for all the positive feedback about the talk. There is another one booked for 23rd September. Invitations to go out in July.

Report from Hillcrest Allotment

Tristan at Hillcrest Allotment at Hatfield sent us an update of how he was getting on in January, after taking on his plot last year. The plot was totally overgrown so it really is good progress.



“We’ve managed to clear over three quarters of the grass and its extensive root system and taken more rubbish to

the tip. This month and into February we’re finishing the grass job and then beginning work on planting garlic and some others that my mum (who works at a garden centre) has suggested. We need to build a rain collecting system that has not been erected yet, but will be in due course. Enjoy the photos!



Thanks Tristan!

Allotment News



Tilecroft Allotment – Welwyn Garden City

Rita at Tilecroft in Sherrards has had her plot for 2 ½ years and wanted to share some pictures from last years crops.

“Here are some purple beans... 'Blauhilde'.



“..a butternut squash that “volunteered” from previous years’ compost”.



Source of Manure

If you are looking for manure to help improve the condition of the soil on your plot then read on.

Raybrook Riding had a good response from tenants after the last issue of Allotment News and Geoff has written again to us:

“We are committed to providing free ready-bagged manure to Allotment holders, and to the recycling of bags returned.

Usually there is also a “heap” which may be excavated.

There is plenty of parking space available

Greatest thanks to new visitors following the last issue’s announcement, and welcome: more friends!

Donations to Horse Welfare are appreciated but never requested. Special thanks to everyone who has offered.

Anyone who cares to meet a lovely horse or two, or more – the producers of this commodity –will be given every chance of acquaintance”.

If you are interested then contact **Geoff Clarke on 07716 878 894** before you arrive to check on availability.

**Raybrook Riding,
Bluebridge Road,
Brookmans Park,
Herts, AL9 7SX.**

Allotment News



National Allotment Week

National Allotment Week is the idea of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) and this year it is promoting how allotments benefit all ages.

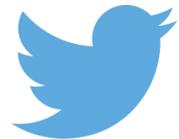
National Allotment Week is from 10th-16th August and to celebrate, we are running a social media campaign to

champion the benefits. The NSALG say "allotments can contribute to community nutrition, emotional resilience and healthy activity" for all ages.

Do like our facebook page: www.facebook.com/welwynhatfield@WelhatCouncil and/or follow us on [Twitter@WelhatCouncil](https://twitter.com/WelhatCouncil),

where details will be posted on how you can get involved during the week!

We will also be giving away vouchers for the National Garden Scheme, so look out for your tweets!



Essendon Gardens Open Day

Essendon Village are having a Gardens Open Day on Sunday 14 June 2015, from 11.30am until 5.00pm.

There will be many beautiful private gardens open and lunches and teas. There will

also be church tower trips



with stunning views and various stalls including plant stalls.

The day is in aid of the Friends of St. Mary's Essendon. The entry cost is £6.00 adults and 50p per child.

New Water Trough Lids

Steel lids have recently been installed on our allotment sites with mains water, as recommended by the NSALG.

The lids have been installed at Ingles, Sewells, Blythway, Westmead Organic and Moneyhole Lane in Welwyn Garden City and Briars

Organic and Briars Close in Hatfield.

They have been installed primarily for health and safety reasons as in recent years far more children and toddlers come to many of our 46 sites in borough.

If however there are no

children on the allotment site when you are there then you can just leave the lid open until you leave the site.

The lids are quite easy to use and have a safety catch on them. If you have any questions about them then please contact us.

Allotment News



Other Council News

Mill Green Museum

In addition to the current exhibitions, bread making course and toddler workshops at Mill Green Museum, there are many workshops taking place in May and June which include:

Willow Dragonfly Workshop

Learn to make a beautiful willow dragonfly for your wall or garden. Saturday 23rd May 10am-4pm. Cost £60.

Indian Cookery Class

Learn to balance spices and explore various dishes. Saturday 6th June, 10.30am -2.30pm Cost £65.

Beginners Introduction to Jewellery Making

All materials included, leave with two pieces of jewellery. Sunday 14th June, 2.30pm – 4.30pm. Cost £30.

For all of these workshops booking is essential. Refreshments will be provided as well as all of the equipment and materials. Bring a packed lunch.

For further information about current events and exhibitions contact: **Mill Green Museum & Mill, Mill Green, Hatfield, Herts. AL9 5PD. Tel: 01707 357850. Email: museum@welhat.gov.uk.**

Tree Orchards

The Landscape & Ecology team at the Council have two tree officers, and they, along with the Tree Wardens have initiated the creation of a community orchard.

The community orchard is being planted in the open space adjacent to Twentieth Mile Bridge and Chequers.

The community orchard will be planted in two stages. This year they are planting cherries and apple trees. Next year they will be planting plums and gages.

The Tree Wardens along with the Council will also be planting some micro orchards in Welwyn Garden City and old Welwyn. These micro- orchards consist of at least five fruit trees and will be planted within



or close to residential areas.

All trees planted are local Hertfordshire varieties and it is hoped that we will be able to harvest fruit in 3 years time. The fruit will be available to all the community.



TopTip



Recently the Longcroft Allotment Association signed a Devolved Management Agreement to manage our sites at Digswell Nursery and Broadwater Crescent for another ten years. Why not join the association for £5 and reap the benefits of discounted seeds? Contact the Secretary at hayneskim2@gmail.com or visit "the shed" at Digswell Nursery allotment on Sundays, between 10.30-12 noon.

Contact

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Please contact us if you would like to contribute to the next edition of Allotment News.

Recipe - Rhubarb Spice Cake

Wonderfully moist and reminiscent of an old-fashioned gingerbread. Heat up a thick slice in the microwave and have it for pudding with custard or ice cream.

Ingredients

- 5oz butter
- 300g self-raising flour
- 2 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 100g dark muscovado sugar
- 250g golden syrup
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 300g rhubarb, cut into short lengths
- icing sugar, for dusting



Method

1. Heat oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Butter and line a deep 20cm square cake tin. Sift the flour and spices into a bowl. Beat together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, then beat in the golden syrup. Dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in 200ml boiling water, then gradually pour into the mixture. Mix in the flour, then the eggs and gently stir in the rhubarb.
2. Pour the mixture into the tin and bake for 50-60 mins, until the cake feels firm to the touch and springs back when pressed. Cool in the tin for 5 mins, then turn out and cool on a wire rack. Dust with icing sugar.

(Source: Good Food Magazine, May 2008)

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