



WELLINGTON FIELDS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER October 2023



Forward from the Chairman

Welcome everyone to the latest edition of our newsletter. Well, an awful lot has happened since our last edition, not least the construction of our composting toilet and storage shed. I'm not sure many will be using the loo during this inclement weather, but I'm sure it will prove to be massively beneficial next spring/summer. Some massive thank yous go to Mark Connell for securing the lottery funding for the projects and to Pete Appleton for his tireless work with the construction of both structures.

It's been a bit of a strange growing season this year, which I think has been largely due to the contrasting weather periods. In May/June, we had the really hot and dry period, followed by a really wet July and August and it was like the plants literally didn't know what season they were in and I have heard mixed reviews as to successes and failures this year. At the bottom end, I had the usual prolific courgette harvest, yet a plot holder at the top of the site told me theirs' completely failed. I still have a freezer full of tomatoes from last year, but not a single one this year...

Dare I wish for a more equitable climate next year, or is climate change here to stay for the near future? Maybe we just need to be more innovative with how we grow things. One thing is for sure, we'll continue to provide you with as many hints and tips as we can.

Simon Ellin

Notices / Key Dates from the Committee

- We now have ground cover for sale at £3.95 a metre. (5m wide)- Please contact Karen Appleton
- Thank you for supporting our recent Summer Quiz and the September plant sale we raised enough funds to continue our work on the site.
- Please follow the guidance when using the composting toilet.
- Please ensure that when you put beans and courgette plants in the compost bin that you remove any strings or tags. Any woody stalks should be put in the bucket thank you.

Health and Safety tips taken from our guidance

- It is recommended that, particularly at quiet times, plot-holders inform someone where they are, and their likely return time.

- Plot-holders should ensure that their plot and associated accesses are free from hazard: hazards may include sharp edges, exposed nails, improperly stored tools, and hazards hidden within undergrowth such as forgotten discarded tools.
- Please remember that we are legally responsible for the safety of anybody who may enter our plots.
- Thank you for all who are reverse parking, this makes a massive difference to the safety of people on the car park and when leaving the facility.



October/ November Jobs for the allotment

October

- Early leeks can be lifted now because they are less hardy than the later cultivars.
- Main crop potatoes must be got out of the ground before the end of the month using a potato or garden fork to lift them to prevent damaging the tubers.
- Harvest the last of the peas and runner bean crop for this year, and keep harvesting chard, spinach, carrots, celeriac, lettuce and the oriental vegetables.
- Lift and store any florence fennel bulbs before they are damaged by frost.

Sowing and Planting

- Sow winter lettuce and a couple of short rows of winter hardy peas and broad beans towards the end of the month to provide you with an early crop next Spring.
- Plant out spring cabbage and overwintering types of onion and garlic. It is also a good time to plant rhubarb crowns.

November

- Start to harvest winter cabbage, Brussels sprouts, leeks and parsnips, wait until after a frost for the parsnips because the chilling effect turns the starches into sugars and this gives them their natural sweetness.
- Pick the Brussels sprouts working from the bottom of the stalk upwards to make sure that all of the sprouts get a chance to swell.

Sowing and Planting

- Sow a crop of your favourite variety round seeded hardy peas. They can be sown either in the open ground if the weather conditions are favourable or three to 3"/9 cm pot and transplanted later when the roots have reached the bottom of the pot.

- Transplant any pot raised broad beans sown earlier somewhere sheltered and protected from cold, icy blasts. It not too late to take a chance on a sowing of broads beans if it is done early in the month. Transplant October sown lettuces to grow on under cloches or frames space them 6".15cms square.

Summer Garden visit – Really interesting place to visit

Winterbourne House and Garden - University of Birmingham

The house was built for John Nettlefold, a pioneer of early housing reform in Birmingham at a time when the city had a serious lack of decent homes for working people. John and his wife Margaret were from prestigious local families who had made their living in industry. Choosing their house to be designed in the Arts and Crafts style reflected their modern outlook.

The botanical garden is Grade II listed and offers colour and interest throughout the year. The restored walled garden is a multitude of rainbow shades from May until October. The lawns are fringed with wonderful colour themed borders, and beyond this lies an original sandstone rock garden and woodland walk through Gunnera leaves and Rhododendron displays. The botanical garden contains plants from around the world with many of plants from China, North and South America and the Alpine areas of the globe.

The garden has:

- A walled garden containing flowers and vegetables
- Glasshouses with Alpines and tropical plants
- Japanese Bridge with a rock garden
- Woodland walks
- Herb gardens
- Wildlife areas and many other interesting garden areas.

I found it useful having a chat with one of the gardeners to discover how you should really grow celeriac, something that I have really struggled with.

Following a good look around the gardens and a brilliant afternoon tea we had a tour of the house. This was really interesting to learn about the Nettlefold family and how they lived their lives. It's really worth a visit. If you want to study gardening further there are a range of RHS courses on offer.

Courses on offer include:

- RHS Level 2 courses in gardening
- Advanced courses in plant growth
- Allotment gardening
- The principles of gardening and many more! (checkout the website)



Recipe Spicy Pumpkin Soup- Use up those Pumpkins not used for Halloween

Serves 4

Cooking time 30 minutes and preparation time 15 minutes

Ingredients

- Ingredients
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tsp red curry paste
- 1 litre chicken stock
- 1 butternut pumpkin, peeled and diced
- ½ cup cream cheese
- ¼ cup chopped coriander
- Vegetable oil



How to Make Spicy Pumpkin Soup

Method

Heat a little vegetable oil in a large saucepan, add onions and cook until soft. Stir in curry paste, then add stock and pumpkin. Simmer until pumpkin is tender.

Use a stick blender to blend in batches until pureed, then return all of the mixture to the pan. Stir in cream cheese and coriander, and serve with extra cream cheese and coriander on top.

Enjoy!

The Current Project Update

We have now completed most of the toilet and shed. The toilet is open for use, but please follows carefully the guidance. Our next phase is to complete the ground works and the wildlife area.



Committee Members

Chairperson - Simon Ellin.
Treasurer - Karen Appleton.
Secretary - Jane Garner.

Committee Members: -
Mark Connell;
Alan Hartley;
Nick Brookes;
Julie Hilton

Contact Details for Jane Garner,
 Secretary - fjanegarner@hotmail.com

Don't forget we have our own Facebook page and group that we would like to see more people using! You can post anything you want within reason about the allotments.

www.facebook.com/WellingtonFieldsHixon



Please Visit Our Website @ www.wellingtonfieldsallotments.org/ and our Facebook Page www.facebook.com/WellingtonFieldsHixon

Useful Links

<https://www.allaboutallotments.co.uk/general-interest>

<https://www.allotment-garden.org/>

<https://www.nsalq.org.uk/news/covid19-information/>

<https://www.winterbourne.org.uk/rhs/>

.....*Happy Gardening*