

WAHGA NEWSLETTER SPRING 2010



Welcome to the Spring Edition. As we enjoy our Easter eggs all gardeners are hoping for some warm weather so we can get planting and growing. This edition should whet your appetite for what will hopefully be a productive year on the allotment or in the garden. We really value feedback on the Newsletter and contributions to future editions - see contact details at the bottom of this page.

Annual Show & Fete

The biggest date in WAHGA's year is **SATURDAY 21 AUGUST**. The horticultural show takes place in the Gardeners Hall (WAHGA's HQ). It's worth coming along just to see the variety of great vegetables, fruit and floral displays which are entered for the show. Whilst this is going on, WAHGA hosts the fete where all sorts of family games, entertainment and stalls are laid on. Please put the date in your diaries now and we'll all pray for good weather!

Ready to Show

To help you with sowing and growing your vegetables, fruit and flowers this year, we've arranged a special talk to be given by Graham Talbot. Graham is a lecturer in horticulture at Berkshire College of Agriculture. He has been showing vegetables, fruit and flowers at regional

and national levels for over 30 years. He's also been judging shows for over 25 years. So if you're interested in getting the most out of your allotment or garden this year - maybe you're already starting to think about entering the Show - this is the event for you. Entry to the talk is free.

7.30pm Friday 7 May at Gardeners Hall

SOS

Help is needed for the annual Show & Fete kitchen. Volunteers are needed to help on the evening before and on the morning of the Show & Fete. Please contact **Fran Hartridge** on **01753 855754** if you can give some assistance. The more the merrier. No cooking required just willing hands!

THE WAHGA NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED THREE TIMES A YEAR. CONTACT THE EDITOR, DAVID HICKMAN: davidhickman@waitrose.com

ALLOTMENT ISSUES - DON HARTRIDGE: allotments@wahga.org.uk

Little Green Book?

Diana Topham writes about a charity which she is supporting and how WAHGA members can help

Practical Action is a charity working closely with some of the world's poorest people, using simple technology to improve self-sufficiency and to fight poverty. In Darfur in northern Sudan, the organisation is working on an inspiring project to 'Green Darfur' by developing community forests, building earth dams and turning deserts into fertile farmland.

How you can help: we need ideas from gardeners Your idea could be a well-known tip that you find particularly effective or some technique unique to you and your plot. It might be a favourite crop or cultivar. The tips could be very specific or very general. Whether you are just starting out or have 50 or more years of experience, how do you make (or try to make) the best use of space, time and/or resources on your allotment or in the garden? These will be collected together in a book which will be sold to raise money for the project.

I hope to visit allotment holders in Windsor over the next few weeks to extract as many ideas as possible! In the meantime, if you have tips you would like to share or would like more information, please contact me at diana@dtopham.plus.com or Tel (home, eve): 01753 840135 Mobile: 07973 409780. Alternatively, you can fill in a form at the Trading Sheds at Maidenhead Road and Fairground sites and leave it with the volunteers.

To find out more: If you are online and you'd like to read more about the 'Greening Darfur' project you can find it here: http://practicalaction.org/sudan/region_sudan_aim1_greendarfur Follow the links to see more about Practical Action's work in Sudan.

Allotment Secretary's Report by Don Hartridge

I am pleased to report that allotment interest remains high and our numbers continue to rise. During the winter months, the teams on Clewer Park and Maidenhead Road have worked to recover the remaining pockets of uncultivated land and a number of the plots created have already been let. Work is in progress at Fairground which will create more plots in the coming months. When this exercise is completed we shall have exhausted the land available to us. With this in mind, I must ask allotment holders to consider whether they are likely to utilise the full extent of their plots. We continue to receive applications for plots and some of this demand may be satisfied if unused portions of plots were given up for letting to new tenants.

I have to advise tenants on the Maidenhead Road site that the Council intend to install self-filling tanks on the site in the near future. We have been advised that funding has been made available and they hope to commence work within a few weeks. The tanks will be situated adjacent to the roads/paths and the pipe work will run through the end of the following plots: 1-7, 8-16, 26-34, 53-61 and 72-79. It will be greatly appreciated if those allotment holders affected will clear, as far as possible, the end of their plots to facilitate the work.

I must once again refer to the nuisance caused by bonfires. They should be infrequent, of short duration and of dry material only, excluding plastic, rubber or any other materials which cause toxic fumes. I have received numerous complaints from local residents and other allotment holders and unless proper consideration is shown, it is quite possible that all bonfires will be banned.

Finally, may I request that any allotment holders intending to give up their plots during the current year please inform the association as soon as possible, so that site teams may prepare the plot for a new applicant. The sooner we know, the easier the task.

I wish you enjoyable and successful gardening.

Don

Purchasing Report by John Filmer

After some confusion the potatoes arrived safely at the trading sheds. If you have not collected your order please do so as soon as possible - Easter is usually considered the best time for planting your spuds, at least the early varieties. We have further supplies of potatoes in the trading sheds for those of you who did not order – come and see if we can help to fill the gaps.

The seeds are selling well and at 50 pence a packet across the board they're a real bargain. If we do not have your particular requirements please let us know and we will do what we can to help. Rumour has it that further restrictions on chemicals used in insecticides and herbicides are expected in the summer. So for those of you who use these products, have a look at your shelves.

Wishing you happy sowing and growing for the year.

John

Revamped Show Schedule

Have you picked up your copy of the Show Schedule yet? They are available from our Trading Depots or a copy can be downloaded from the WAHGA website – www.wahga.org.uk Show and Fete. If you're a regular entrant to the Show, don't make the mistake of thinking you know the Schedule! We've made a number of changes to the Schedule this year to take account of feedback from some of last year's entrants and judges. There are too many changes to list here, so please get hold of your own copy and find out for yourself. ***Pamela Bailey, Show Secretary***



Show

Left, produce at the 2009 WAHGA

Windsor Allotment Watch

PCSO Oli Woodland is our new Allotment Watch Co-ordinator. Here are some notes Oli wants to pass on as regards security issues affecting allotment sites.

Fencing

The boundary fence surrounding the allotment is the first line of defence against thieves and vandals. Members of the Allotment Watch need to check the fence near their plot for:-

- holes in the fence
- top of the mesh bent over
- climbing aids placed against the fence.

Incidents should be reported to Oli (on 08458 505505) or to a WAHGA Committee member as soon as possible. If you see a crime being committed, phone 999.

Good Neighbours

Get to know all the other allotment holders, not just the ones who border your plot, that way you will know who should have 'lawful' access to the area. Always challenge strangers found within the site, a simple request of 'can I help you?' will often deter the dishonest. Report suspicious looking people to Oli, if a vehicle is involved try and take down the registration number. If you notice that a shed has been left insecure and unattended inform the owner or report it to Oli. Your actions may save them returning to a shed emptied of all its contents.

Shed Security

It is not advisable to keep valuable tools or equipment in sheds. However there are a number of measures that can be taken to improve shed security.

- Ensure that your shed is in good condition and can stand up to a security test, if not improve it or don't leave valuable items inside.
- Fit a good lock on the shed door. If a mortice deadlock is fitted ensure that it conforms to BS3621/80. If a padlock is used the fittings should be bolted through the door of the shed with coach bolts and reinforced at the back with a steel plate. Make sure the locking bar is designed to flap over and cover the heads of the fixing bolts
- The padlock should be at least 55mm (2in) in width and be of hardened steel. If you have a small flimsy padlock already fitted change it now.
- Fit windows with either a metal grill or metal security bars fixed to steel plates within the shed.
- If your shed is constructed of larch lap wood or similar, chicken wire can be fitted to the inside walls in order to reinforce them and make it more resistant to physical attack.
- When you have satisfied yourself that your shed is secure then remember to use the locks at all times.

Property

Gardening tools and furniture are not cheap, what's more they are easily disposed of by a thief. Don't make it easy for them to be stolen and remember that tools taken from your shed could be used to break into other allotment sheds. Is it necessary for these tools to be stored in your allotment shed or can they be taken home ?

Mark your property with your home postcode and house number, this can be done in a number of ways: ultra violet marker pen, engraving, stamping or even paint. Postcode property such as rotavators, spades, forks and garden furniture. Property marking may dissuade the thief from taking the items, but if they are stolen it improves the chances of the police in tracing the item and perhaps catching the thief. If possible chain items such as rotavators, trimmers, garden tools etc. to the inside structure of the building, padlocking the chain to a secure anchor point.

STOP PRESS

COME TO WISLEY WITH WAHGA: We'll be making our annual pilgrimage by coach on 16 June, departing from Gardeners' Hall at 10am and returning at around 4pm. Please contact Karin Lohr (Tel 01753 840651) for more details

QUIZMASTERS

Congratulations to the WAHGA team who won the Hospicecare fundraising quiz in Datchet in March. The team, known as “WAHGAmamas” includes Lesley and John Spence, Fran and Don Hartridge, Fenella and David Munt and Lesley and Peter Cheeseman. The WAHGAmamas have been taking part in the quiz for several years and have threatened before to win it but this is the first time they’ve pulled it off!