

# Waiting list closure

## Booming interest in allotments leads to waiting list freeze

As the waiting list is about to hit 300, the Committee have decided to take the unprecedented step of closing the waiting list.

Sue Carling, Secretary said: "Recent media interest in allotments has led to a huge number of applications being received by the Society. The decision to close the list has been taken with regret as we simply cannot keep up with this level of demand. We are also concerned that we are continuing to accept membership fees from residents who have little hope of renting an allotment for many years to come. The Committee plan to review the waiting list following

the membership renewal in the Autumn. An announcement of our decision will then be put on the website. In the meantime we will be encouraging all those seeking an allotment in Hackney to lobby their local Councillor for more provision in the borough".

As the waiting time is impossible to predict, the Secretary asks not to be emailed for details. Actual offers are, of course, dependent on your stated site preferences.

The next lucky recipient is number 1029 (depending on choice of site). The top 25 waiting list numbers are listed on the website.



# HOW TO COOK GLOBE ARTICHOKE

Artichokes make a starter for a few, or a light, fun meal for one. The two parts of an artichoke that are edible are the flesh inside the leaves and the heart - the bits that aren't are the choke and the stem. Follow these tips and have a good time!

- 1) Wash the artichoke, then cut off the stem and remove any tough lower outer leaves.
- 2) Give it a bit of a haircut to remove the thorns. Then trim the tips of the leaves to make eating them less painful!
- 3) Place the artichokes in one layer in a saucepan or steamer, and sprinkle over some salt and lemon juice. If you are boiling them, pour in enough

water to come halfway up the artichokes. If you're steaming them, make sure that there is enough water in the base of the steamer to last for three quarters of an hour. Cover and simmer or steam for 45 minutes. When it's done it is easy to pull the leaves from the outside. Drain and eat them warm, or leave them to cool to room temperature.

4) Eat with your sauce of choice (melted butter, vinaigrette or mayonnaise are great) or reserve the heart for use in salads, or cut up on a pizza.



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# SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2008



LEFT: Church Walk allotments in bloom

## SITE VISITS & PLOT AWARDS

On July xx, site visits will take place in order to award prizes for best plots. The criteria are creativity, variety of crops, most improved, and productivity. Other factors include tidiness of verges, reasonable control of weeds and the overall attractiveness of the plot. As well as deciding on the award, failing plots will also be taken note of. These visits are a chance too, for plot holders to meet the committee members. The results will be announced at the AGM in October.

*As judges, committee members are out of the running for the awards*



# Allotment Open Days

## Look out for HAS open days in National Allotment Week

This year, National Allotment Week is 11th to 17th August.

It is a week to:

- promote the awareness and availability of allotments both locally and nationally,
- to show both the public and local authorities the strength of support for and interest in the heritage of allotment culture,
- highlight the social benefits of allotment gardening, which include benefits to health, education and community well-being, to all - including councils who are at present not providing this

invaluable community resource.

The Hackney Allotment Society will open its sites for visits - dates will be publicised on the website.

It is a great chance to have a look at plots, to get ideas and maybe some advice from those who may have more experience than you, and to meet other members.

Keep your fingers crossed that the sun will be out, and we look forward to seeing you.

*We welcome as many plot holders on site as possible to meet visitors - please let your site rep know your availability*



## Proposal on plot 39

**Allotments are hard work, but one Spring Hill plot holder saw the romance in them...**

We got the allotment in late January after many years on (and off) the waiting list. Seemed a bit daunting with the boys being so little - Milo is 2 and Sonny just 1 - but we felt we had to go for it... Howie and I

have been together for 6 years and always thought we would get around to getting engaged but he had not popped the question.. (He did once a few weeks after we met but it was bit early to take too seriously!)

And then I remembered this year was a leap year and that I could turn the tables on him. I wanted to propose somewhere special, somewhere outside... The trouble was the plot was looking pretty bare at that stage - we had the shed up and had dug the earth over but little else. So I went up a couple of times during the week to put up some decorations and carve a Howie 4 Rachel heart on the shed! The plan was that the boys would play a drumroll and I would ask the question. Now the only problem was how to get him there on a Friday morning without giving the game away...

I decided to tell him a garden bench was going to be delivered that morning and we both needed to be there to carry it onto the site. Howie didn't suspect a thing, even when he half saw the decorations. He thought I'd put up some bird scarers! Sonny had fallen asleep so we only had half a drumroll but as soon as we got onto the plot I got down on one knee and brought out a ring and champagne... followed by croissants for brekkie. Howie was very surprised but when he did find his voice again he said yes! ...and thought it was brilliant.

And naturally our allotment has become a very special little space for us all.



### VACANT POST - Committee chair

It is with great regret that we have to announce that Maggie Wilkinson won't be standing as Chair for 2008-09. We do hope however that members will consider putting themselves forward for election at the next AGM in October. The role involves chairing the committee meetings, and helping to make decisions in liaison with the Secretary, Treasurer and other committee members when issues occur between meetings that need attention.

## GARDENER'S CALENDAR -

### July

- Harvest spinach, peas, beets, carrots, salads, potatoes and globe artichokes; shallots and spring-planted garlic may be ready as well.
- Pick courgettes before they become marrows.
- Overwintered onions can be lifted and used.
- Plant out leeks and brassicas for a winter supply, if not yet done.
- Sow spring cabbage, fennel, turnips, Oriental vegetables, chicory, and autumn/winter salads such as lamb's lettuce.
- Remember to pick your bean and pea pods as they mature, to stop them becoming tough and stringy.
- Carrots can still be sown, but beware carrot fly when thinning existing seedlings
- Climbing beans may need stopping, to maximise cropping on existing sideshoots. Stop them when they reach the tops of their supports.
- Climbing or cordon-grown vegetables may need checking to ensure they are

tied in sufficiently to supports. Branches can easily snap off as the fruits mature. Leaves shading larger fruits can be removed to maximise sun exposure for ripening.

● Don't forget to stop cordon tomatoes by removing the main shoot. Look for the leaf that's above the fourth truss and cut it off here. This should ensure that all the fruits ripen by the end of the season. Bush tomatoes can be left to their own devices.

● Any non self-blanching celery cultivars will need earthing up (with a protective collar of paper between the stems and the soil). Endive cultivars can be blanched by covering with an up-turned pot (with the drainage holes blocked off) filled with straw. Blanching makes these vegetables sweeter and tender.

● Summer cauliflowers may need shading to prevent the curds scorching in bright sun.

● Herbs can be harvested to keep the young shoots coming throughout the summer.

● Ensure all vegetables get a regular, consistent supply of water, using rainwater or recycled grey water wherever possible. This will aid healthy development, and help to avoid diseases, disorders and bolting.

● Continue to hoe off weeds in dry weather. Done in wet weather, the weeds are liable to re-root.

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



## NOTE TO ALL PLOT-HOLDERS:

### UNRULY UNDERGROWTH

Please help the Society avoid the expense of tree surgeons by keeping invasive plants such as ivy, self-seeded saplings and trees etc. in check around all your plot and site boundaries. There has been a recent complaint from the manager of an adjoining estate of ivy spreading from one of the sites into their garden.



### COMPOST STORIES

New Leaside plotholders Vincent & Rita organised a delivery of 14 tonnes of compost in January.

The compost, collected from seven north London boroughs, is produced by London Waste in Edmonton and was free of charge.

In May, Aden Terrace and other N16 site plot holders benefited from a delivery made to Clissold Park. Though this compost was supposed to be available for collection only, a smaller truck load was delivered straight to the Aden Terrace site by helpful Clissold park staff.