

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2010



Annual General Meeting, 6th Oct 2010, 8pm

Committee member elections, announcements of plot awards and membership renewals

The AGM is a chance for members to meet each other and the committee. It is also an opportunity to raise issues of importance to you. If you would like to have an item included in the agenda, please send a brief outline to the secretary. As every year, there will be reports from the Chair and the Treasurer.

SITE VISITS

In July this year our annual site inspections were carried out. Plots were judged on creativity, variety of crops, most improved and productivity.

Other factors included tidiness of verges, reasonable control of weeds and the overall attractiveness of the plot. Winners will be announced on the night.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

No matter when you joined, membership fees and plot rents must be paid by 05/10/10 or in person at the AGM. There will be no rent increase again this year, which means the society still has the lowest rent of all the London boroughs.

Refreshments will be provided.

WHERE&HOW TO GET THERE:

- **VENUE:** St Mary's Community Centre, Defoe Road, Stoke Newington, London N16
- **How to get there by bus:** 73, 476 and 393 run along Stoke Newington Church Street. The hall is in Defoe Road, 25 metres from the junction at Church St.

Jackie Breakwell, the Treasurer, will be taking membership fees and plot rents between 7.30 and 8pm.

NO CASH PLEASE



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - to help develop the Allotment Society

Please contact the secretary if you enjoy spotting opportunities and have TIME to commit to:

- liaise with relevant officers at LB Hackney to find further allotment sites
- keep an eye on growing initiatives and grants which we might be eligible for
- approach suppliers who might donate materials



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP AND PLOT FEES 2010/11

PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE THIS NOTICE - NO REMINDERS WILL BE SENT

Membership subscription and plot rents must be paid by 05/10/10 or in person at the AGM. We have limited administration resources so please pay your fees promptly or risk losing your plot or place on the waiting list.

PLEASE NOTE It doesn't matter when in the year you joined. You need to renew by 05/10/10 or at the AGM.

Complete the slip below and return it to HAS, c/o 50 Milton Grove, London N16 8QY with your postal order or cheque made payable to: 'HACKNEY ALLOTMENT SOCIETY'.

 PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR NAME & ADDRESS ARE WRITTEN ON THE BACK OF THE CHEQUE! 



Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

E-mail: _____

Please send me the HAS newsletters via e-mail:

● I enclose:

£4 membership (waiting list)

£20 membership and rent full plot

£12 membership and rent concessionary rate

£12 membership and rent half plot

£8 membership and rent half plot concs rate

please provide proof of status for concessions

● I would like the following to be discussed at the AGM:

Potato blight

Potato blight is one of the worst disease problems for the potato grower. It can wipe out the plants almost overnight and, worse still, it can infect the tubers causing them to rot in storage.

WHAT CAUSES POTATO BLIGHT?

Potato Blight is caused by a fungus *Phytophthora infestans*. This can also infect other members of the potato family, Solanaceae, such as tomatoes. It spreads through the air and develops when the weather conditions are warm and humid.

SYMPTOMS

The first thing you may notice are brown freckles on the leaves or sections of leaves with brown patches and a sort of yellowish border spreading from the brown patch. In a severe attack you may walk onto your patch to find all the potato foliage a rotting mass.

Tubers (the actual potato) affected by potato blight can be told by dark patches on the skin. Cutting the potato in half will reveal brownish rot spreading down from the skin. Later the entire potato will turn into a soggy, foul smelling mass.

PREVENTION

The blight fungus is generally killed by cold weather, although there are some rare resistant strains that overwinter. Otherwise, the disease reservoir is infected tubers in the ground or your sack. Wherever it comes from, it can travel miles on the wind and there is little you can do if the weather is right (above 10deg C and 75% humidity) and there has been recent rain leaving wet foliage.

Only a limited range of chemical treatments is available to gardeners. The traditional spray was Bordeaux mixture, which isn't such a good idea as it contains copper, although it is

organically approved. Inorganic Dithane 945 is good as long as it is applied before blight has hold.

Your best preventative is to grow a blight-resistant variety of potato.

OTHER ACTIONS TO HELP PREVENT POTATO BLIGHT

- Try to get all the potatoes out from the

ground when you harvest so you don't leave a reservoir on your plot.

- Ensure potatoes are well earthed up to protect tubers even if you get it in the foliage
- Water from the base rather than spraying potatoes. If the weather is right but no rain, your artificial rain will give it a hold. Leaky hoses are a good way to water potatoes, unless you have hosepipe restrictions.

TREATMENT

If you notice a small number of affected leaves with patches, you can try removing those

and disposing of them. Burn if possible. This is a good time to make sure the potatoes are well earthed up to prevent spores getting into the tubers unless you have already done this. Spray with Bordeaux mixture or Dithane 945 may prevent spread if applied early enough.

If you have a more serious infection, then you need to cut off all the haulm and either compost or burn it.

Composting, especially hot heaps, will be safe but burning is 100%.

Removing foliage prevents the disease getting into the tubers, as long as they are well covered with earth. Leave the crop alone for at least two weeks to let the blight spores on the surface die and the potatoes develop a thicker skin.

After harvest, check regularly for signs of blight and remove any suspect tubers at once from your store.

GOOD NEWS

The recent development of Sarpo Hungarian varieties of potato are extremely blight resistant and are coming onto

the market now. Sarpo Mira was the first to be generally available but this is not an all round potato. I've tried the Sarpo Axona variety and found it not as blight resistant as the Mira and little different in taste or type. Still looking for a Sarpo that will make a good chip.

There are other varieties of potato with varying degrees of blight resistance listed above. The Sarpo types are exclusive to Thompson & Morgan.

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