



photo by  
Brent

HACKNEY ALLOTMENT SOCIETY  
[www.hackneyallotments.org.uk](http://www.hackneyallotments.org.uk)

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## **AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2021**

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Just living is not enough...  
one must have sunshine,  
freedom, and a little flower.

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

# BATTLING WITH BLIGHT

by Annie, Springdale

Blight can ruin a whole tomato crop in days and I was devastated when this happened to me this year. A friend in Stoke Newington had discovered the tell-tale signs of blight on her tomato plants in July and I was determined to save the tomato plants on my allotment.

I tried to reduce the humidity around my plants by removing all the leaves below the lowest trusses of flowers and fruit and thinning out the leaves so that air could circulate around the plants. I sacrificed some of the plants too so there was enough space between them. The rain and warm humid conditions of August were perfect for blight to spread and by the end of the month my tomatoes had succumbed too. I noticed that the blight was worse on the beefsteak varieties of tomatoes while the cherry tomatoes seemed less infected so I picked off all the tomatoes and have tried to ripen them indoors but I suspect most will become green tomato chutney..

What went wrong? Last year I grew tomatoes in abundance which started ripening in June. This year due to the cold spring I planted out my plants late and the tomatoes were still green at the end of August when blight is more likely. Weather conditions mostly determine the likelihood of getting blight but here are some tips to stop blight spreading:

## **Space out tomato plants**

Plant them about 45 cms apart to ensure there is good air circulation around each plant.

## **Remove weeds**

Members of the nightshade such as potatoes and tomatoes serve as hosts for blight so make sure you remove any weeds in the nightshade family.

**Mulch around the base** of the plant with straw, wood chips or other natural mulch to prevent fungal spores in the soil from splashing on the plant. Add three or four inches of organic mulch around the base of plants three to five weeks after planting.

## **Water at ground level**

Watering your plants from above can invite infection, and don't sprinkle water onto the leaves. If your plants are growing in containers, make sure you water at the soil line, not from above.

## **Avoid wet conditions**

Since all of these diseases are spread by water, try not to work with your tomato plants in any way if they are moist. This includes moisture from rain, dew, and irrigation.







On wet days, it's best to skip checking your plants for pests or picking pests from leaves. Do not prune when plants are wet, and wait to stake or train plants that require additional support or adjustment until they are dry.

### **Remove infected plants**

Be vigilant about removing infected plants. In the case of late blight, all plants, including

those that are not showing symptoms, should be removed and destroyed.

If you had a blight infection at some point during the growing season, bag up all the tomato plants and remove them from the allotment.

Do not add any parts of the plant material to your compost bin, and be sure to remove all parts, including the roots and any fallen debris.

### **Rotate your crops**

Our plots are small so its hard to rotate crops but its good practice to rotate nightshade crops every year. It will prevent pathogens building up in the soils. And if you absolutely cannot rotate your tomato plants, consider growing them in containers instead.

from <https://gardenerspath.com/how-to/disease-and-pests/tomato-blight>

## **NON CHEMICAL SPRAY FOR BLIGHT**

by Bron, Aden Terrace

Baking soda has fungicidal properties that can stop or reduce the spread of early and late tomato blight. My tomatoes are doing well since I sprayed them with this mixture. I did it twice in all but it was after the blight had started and it seems to have stopped it - brilliant!

I'll try and do it early next year. I didn't know before now how well it would work.

Baking soda sprays typically contain about 1 teaspoon baking soda dissolved into 1 quart of warm water. Adding a drop of liquid dish soap or 2 1/2 tablespoons vegetable oil helps the solution stick to your plant.

**Step 1:** Mix 3 tablespoons baking soda with 1 gallon of water.

**Step 2:** Mix in 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, or cooking oil of your choice. This helps the spray to stick to the leaves.

**Step 3:** Mix in 2 drops of washing up liquid (like ecover) to help emulsify (mix) everything.

**Tip:** Begin with 3 tablespoons, and apply that amount one time each week for 3 weeks. Then switch to 3 1/2 Tablespoons if fungus is still growing, or spreading.

**WARNING:** Start spraying in the morning or evening – Spraying in the heat of the day can harm your leaves.



## SLUGS AND SNAILS

The rain and humid conditions this summer have created the perfect conditions for slugs and snails to thrive. Here are some tips on how to deal with them

### Slugs

Many slug species are harmless and do little damage in the garden but a few cause huge problems. The following will help keep them at bay:

Slugs dislike dry ground so water your plants early in the morning rather than the evening when they will be most active. Damp foliage left overnight is also a breeding ground for fungi – another good reason for morning watering. When planting, water seeds when they're at the bottom of the drill, then cover them with dry earth. Plant only sturdy seedlings and protect them with cloches or tall collars (at least 15 cm high) made from old plastic bottles. Do not mulch young plants. Hoe the ground between your crops to disturb existing slime trails – there's evidence that other slugs use these tracks as guides to food. Dig over the ground in the winter to expose adult slugs and their eggs. Set baited traps. Use old plastic containers buried in the soil and partly filled with beer, milk or grape juice. Slugs will be attracted by the smell, crawl into the containers and drown. Ensure that the lip of the trap is raised 2 to 3 cm above the ground surface to avoid trapping beetles and other useful insects. A stick placed in the trap will help trapped beetles escape. Leave decoy foods such as comfrey and lettuce leaves near young crops. Put the leaves under a slate or piece of wood to keep them moist. Any slugs that gather to feed on the leaves can

then be collected by hand. Plant tasty sacrificial plants such as French marigolds near vulnerable plants, and provide pinhead oatmeal as another sacrificial food. An added advantage of the latter is that birds are equally fond of oatmeal and may polish off your slugs for dessert! Create barriers. Many materials have been suggested as slug barriers, including gravel and broken egg shells. Unfortunately this method relies on the barrier being dry and, even when it is, many slugs can burrow underneath. Laying copper strips or old copper pipes around raised beds can help as these generate a weak electric current that slugs find unpleasant. Encourage slug predators, such as frogs, hedgehogs, beetles, centipedes and birds. If all else fails – grow plants that slugs don't like! Never use slug pellets – birds and hedgehogs may die if they feed on poisoned slugs.

### Snails

What goes for slugs generally goes for their shelled cousins. However, having a bulky shell means that snails have fewer hiding places than slugs. Try creating tempting refuges by leaving upturned flower-pots lying around. Leave a gap for snails to squeeze in and they will soon find their way inside. When it's convenient these lodgers can be collected and disposed of.

*'Wildlife on Allotments' One of a range of wildlife gardening booklets published by Natural England.*



## NAG, NAG, NAG

Here is this year's nag based on the site visits made in July. Interestingly, it is almost exactly like the nags of last year, the year before, and possibly the year before that, but I've lost count.

### PATHS

In many instances, we found that the paths between plots are not being maintained. They should be 18 ins wide, 9 ins coming from each neighbour's plot. This may seem like a waste of space, but it isn't really if you are trying to make your way to the back of a plot, or even just trying to figure out where one plot ends and the next one begins. It is also a concern for your safety. You should be able to walk around your plot without having to balance on one foot, climb over prostrate plants or worse, trip on someone else's bind weed. This winter, when the vegetation has died back and you can see what you are doing, would you please try to make paths clearly visible.

Most sites have a main path, and it would not be a waste of time to clear these more. You need to watch out that any plants growing along the border of the pathway do not restrict movement along the path - ploholders should be able to walk a wheelbarrow down the main pathway with no difficulty or deviation required.

### AND THE GOOD NEWS

The sites, as a whole, looked really good this year so that the big improvements made last year due to the lockdown creating time for work on the allotments has been maintained. In particular, Queensbridge Road is looking better than ever and Spring Lane also is outstanding.



**Most improved plot 2021,  
Spring Hill**

Photo Kay Kante

## FROM OUR SITES



**Best plot 2021  
Spring Hill**

Photo Kay Kante



**Best plot  
2021 Aden  
Terrace,  
Jeff and Betty  
Manning**





**flashes of colour  
on Overbury Street**  
photo by Julia Clarke



**harvest from  
Kerry's plot,  
Overbury Street**  
photo by Yvonne



**Chris and friends**  
Bron, Aden Terrace



# FROM OUR SITES

**Dahlias,  
Overbury Street**  
photo by Yvonne



**produce at  
Springdale Road**  
photo by Annie





**drawing  
by Chris Coe**  
Aden Terrace



**successful  
crop**  
Overbury  
Street

## FROM OUR SITES



**Deborah's  
plot on  
Church  
walk**



**onions drying at Aden Terrace**  
Jeff and Betty Manning



**giant carrot**  
Bron, Aden Terrace



# FROM OUR SITES

flowers on Bron Jones allotment, Aden Terrace  
photo by Sue Kaye



Mairin from Springdale Road donated beautiful hampers of fruit and vegetables from her plot to raise funds for Afghan refugees. Neighbours on Springdale Road donated money for the hamper to a charity that supports new arrivals from Afghanistan.



one of many Dahlias, Overbury Street  
photo by Yvonne

painting by Chris Coe  
Aden Terrace



Photos of night visitor at Spring Hill  
Brent uses an Apeman H55 camera to photograph any unusual visitors to his allotment, which have so far included wood peckers, foxes and hedgehogs.





## CRUNCHY PUMPKIN LEAF BALLS

by Narmin Atia

Has your pumpkin or squash produced lots of leaves but hardly any fruit? Here's a traditional Bangladeshi recipe from Narmin Atia that uses the leaves for a delicious side dish with a curry.

### Ingredients

- Half an onion
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 3 tablespoons of flour
- 2 tablespoons of coarse rice flour
- 2 tablespoons of gram flour
- salt
- oil

### Method:

Wash 10 pumpkin leaves thoroughly, put them on top of each other, fold them in half then and slice them finely. Add some salt and massage the leaves so they lose their texture. Finely chop half an onion and four cloves of garlic and mix them with three tablespoons of all purpose flour, salt to taste, two tablespoon of coarse rice flour and two tablespoons of gram flour, using your hands. Shape them into balls and fry them in enough oil to cover them. They should be fried on a medium heat so the inside is cooked.



## QUICK RUNNER BEAN AND POTATO CURRY

by Narmin Atia

Another recipe from Narmin that uses seasonal ingredients to make a quick, flavoursome curry.

### Method:

Fry half an onion in oil with a teaspoon of salt. Soften onion, then add little bit of turmeric and coriander powder. Finely chop a handful of beans and potatoes, add to the onion, turn down the heat and cook very slowly on a low heat for 20- 30 mins. The moisture from the vegetables will be released so no water will need to be added- you will have a moist mild curry and taste all the flavours of the vegetables.



## HONEY AND BALSAMIC ROASTED BEETROOTS

by Annie, Springdale

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds fresh beetroots
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp chopped fresh thyme, optional

### Method:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Peel the beets and cut them into roughly 1 to 1 1/2 inch cubes.

Toss the beets in the salt, pepper and olive oil, then roast in a single layer, tossing occasionally.

After 45 minutes toss the partially roasted beets in the honey and balsamic vinegar and add the thyme too if you are using it. Return to the oven and roast for an additional 15 minutes or so, tossing occasionally until the beets are fork tender.







## NEW POTATO, CHARD AND COCONUT CURRY

by Meera Sodha

This dish started life in Karnataka, on the west coast of India. It's a spin on saguu, a curry of whatever vegetables are in season, cooked gently in a soothing, spiced coconut sauce: filling enough to be restorative, quick enough to cook midweek, and light enough to be a good companion on a summer's night. Note: if you don't have a blender, chop the garlic, ginger and chillies as finely as your fingers will allow, and cook for an extra five minutes.

**Serves 4 as a main**

### Ingredients:

- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 2.5cm ginger, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 green finger chillies, roughly chopped
- 30g desiccated coconut
- 1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk
- 3 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 large onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 600g new potatoes, halved lengthways
- 1 1/2 tsp garam masala
- 1/2 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp salt
- 200g rainbow chard, stems chopped, leaves shredded
- 250g frozen peas, defrosted

### Method:

1. Put the cumin, garlic, ginger, chillies and

desiccated coconut into a blender with just enough of the coconut milk to blitz everything to a smooth paste. Add the rest of the coconut milk and lightly pulse (over-mixing might split it) to a sauce-like consistency.

2. In a wide frying pan for which you have a lid, heat the oil over a medium flame and fry the onion for 5 minutes, until translucent. Add the potatoes cut side down and fry for around 10 minutes, until they are lightly golden brown and the onions are soft, dark and sticky.

3. Stir in the turmeric, garam masala and salt, then add the coconut sauce and bring to a gentle bubble. Add the chard stems, cover, and cook for five minutes. Add the leaves and the peas, cover again, and simmer for a final five minutes, until the chard stems, peas and potatoes are tender and the leaves have wilted. Serve with basmati rice, chapattis and fiery pickle on the side.



## RED CURRANT RELISH

by Annie, Springdale

### Ingredients

- 2 medium red onions, peeled and cut into thin wedges
- 1 small red pepper, seeded and cut into small chunks
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 plump red chilli, seeded and chopped
- 2 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 small knob fresh ginger, chopped
- 200ml red wine vinegar
- 140g light muscovado sugar
- 1 tsp five spice powder
- 200g redcurrants, stripped from stalks

### Method:

Toss the onions with the red pepper and the oil, then fry in a frying pan for 5-8 mins over a high heat until lightly charred and softened. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Put the chilli, garlic and ginger in the pan with half the vinegar. Bring to the boil then simmer for 2-3 mins. Add the onions and pepper plus the remaining vinegar, all the sugar, spice and 1 tsp salt.

Bring to the boil then bubble away for about 5 mins until thickened. Add redcurrants and simmer for about 5 mins more, or until they have burst, but still have some shape and the liquid is syrupy.

Remove and pour into a large heatproof jar. Cover and seal while hot. Keeps in the fridge for up to 3 weeks.



**PLEASE**  
**be sensible and think of**  
**others when going to**  
**your allotment:**

Wear gloves or apply hand  
sanitiser before and after touching  
**ANY** hard surfaces: ie padlock, chain,  
fence rails, watering cans and taps.

Covid19 can stay on metal,  
glass & plastic for as long as 9 days.

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## HAS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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### CHAIR

Penny Miller - pmsrink@yahoo.com

### VICE CHAIR

Ruth Gladwin

### SECRETARY

Nancy Korman -  
hackneyallotments@gmail.com

### TREASURER

Hugh Naylor

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## SITE REPRESENTATIVES

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### ADEN TERRACE

Sue Sharples

### CHURCH WALK

Marian Shaughnessy, Val Shepherd

### LEASIDE ROAD

Jack Eldon, Guy Dehn

### OVERBURY STREET

Julia Clarke

### QUEENSBRIDGE ROAD

Phillip Turner

### SPRING HILL

Kay Kante, Andrea Sinclair, Ginny  
Strawson

### SPRING LANE

Helen Bishop, Elsa Hamaz

### SPRINGDALE ROAD

Annie Wilson

### ST KILDA'S ROAD

Henrietta Soames

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