



photo by
Fabio Fistarol

HACKNEY ALLOTMENT SOCIETY
www.hackneyallotments.org.uk

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021

Spring adds new life
and new joy to all that is.



HAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

AGREED AT THE 2020 AGM

Late payment fee

The AGM agreed to increase the late payment fee from £1 to £10. Members were alerted to this possible change in the September newsletter, but because this was the first year, a two-week amnesty was allowed and a notice to this effect was sent to all those who had not paid by the time of the AGM. Two further notices were sent out at monthly intervals. The result was for the first time, all plot rental fees were paid by the end of the year and only a few late payment fees were paid. We will make certain that members are reminded about the late payment fee next October when fees are due again.

Concessions

The AGM agreed a clarification to the criterion for concessionary fees. This should now be understood to apply to those who receive low-income related state benefits, and not just over the age of 65. No documentation will be required, we operate an honesty policy. We will ask members to take this into account when paying fees at the October 2021 AGM.

Cultivation of the plots

The AGM agreed that at least three-quarters of a plot must be under cultivation during the main summer months to ensure that plots are being used.

Crop failures, predators, wild life areas, etc are all accepted as signs of use. And we understand that an empty space may indicate that something has been taken out but the next thing to go in isn't yet ready - that also isn't a problem. We can tell the difference between a plot being used and one that has been significantly neglected.

Looking across all the sites shows that people have different ways of approaching the use of their allotments, and that is fine. There is no wish to impose a single standard of how-to members, only to ensure that we are not wasting this precious resource of land in Hackney. The site visits are made towards the end of June into the beginning of July, and if you are concerned about your plot, you can always discuss it with your site representative who will be on the visit.

BASED ON ADVICE FROM GARDENERS WORLD

WHAT TO PLANT IN APRIL

April is a busy time in the veg garden, as lots of seeds can be sown this month.

Aubergines, chillies and tomatoes

This is the last chance to sow aubergines, chillies and tomatoes, which need a long growing season to do well. They need to be sown under glass, either in a greenhouse or on a sunny windowsill.

Courgettes, marrow, squashes, cucumbers and pumpkins

Known as curcubits these can all be sown in individual 5cm pots, under cover. Plant outside once the danger of frost has passed.

Leeks

Leeks can be sown in seed trays under cover in April.

Lettuce

Lettuce is best sown under cover in April. Sow it in seed trays or modules, for transplanting outside later in spring.

Celeriac

Celeriac needs a long growing season for an autumn/winter harvest, so sow now, under cover. Transfer to individual pots when large enough to handle.

Seeds for sewing outside:

Beetroot

An easy crop to grow, beetroot will grow in any fertile, well drained soil and also does well in containers. Follow the spacing on the packet and thin the seedlings when they are around 3cm high. Harvest when the beets have reached golf ball size.

Carrots

Sow carrots on well-prepared soil that is free of stones. At this time of year, it is a good idea to protect against carrot

fly. Your crop should be ready to harvest three to four months after sowing.

Peas

Peas are easy to grow and can be harvested early in summer, making them a welcome early crop. You can sow them direct outside, but they are a favourite snack for mice – if these are a problem, sow them indoors and plant the plants outside when they are 15cm tall. Alternatively, sow in guttering and transplant the whole row of seedlings into a trench when they're ready.

Radish

This fast-growing crop is easy to grow and is a good 'catch crop', growing on empty ground that is waiting for other crops, or between slower growing crops. Sow direct outside, every three to four weeks, for a continuous

supply throughout summer.

Spinach

Spinach can be sown directly outside in April; if it's chilly, cover with fleece. Spinach needs lots of moisture and protection from slugs and snails.

Swiss chard

Swiss chard is a beautiful crop for a sunny or partially shaded spot.

Turnip

Turnips are quick-growing and best harvested when young and golf ball size, or eat the leaves as greens. Keep well watered.

You can also plant out potatoes, as well as onions sets, shallots and garlic and Jerusalem artichokes.

SPRING PLOT INSPECTIONS

It is possible that spring is on its way! Your site reps will be doing a quick look at the plots at the end of March; if there is no sign of activity on your part, you will get an email or phone call to ask what plans you have for starting.

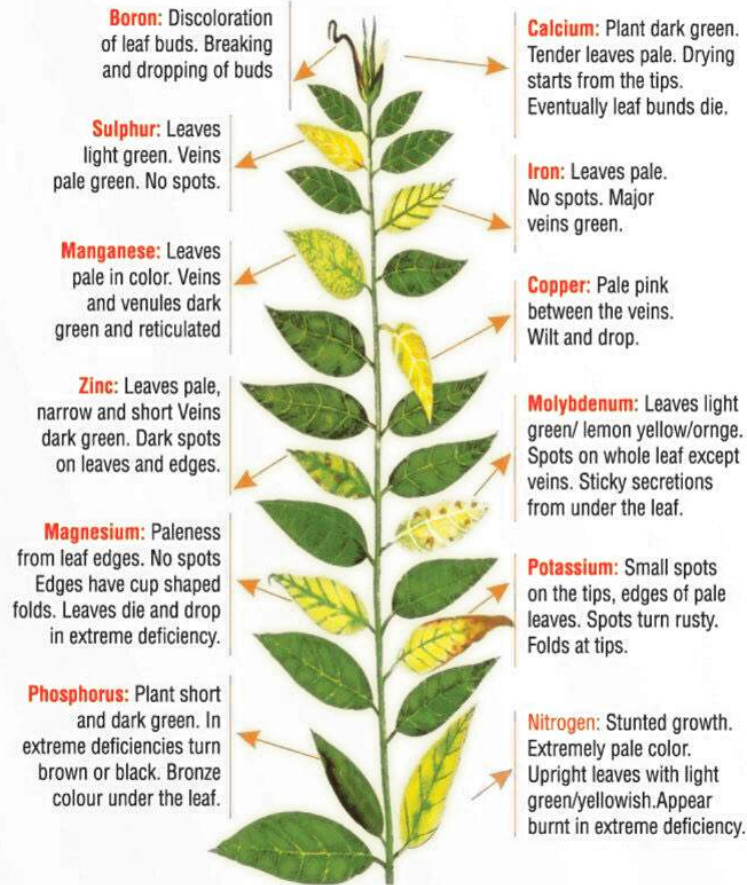
By the end of April, it should have been warm enough to start some early planting and at least clear the plot of last year's debris and get the plot ready for planting. At this time, there will be another viewing, and at this point, if there is still no sign of activity, a dirty plot letter will be on its way to you. An unworked plot shows a lack of intention to use the plot and allows weeds to spread across the whole site.

Happy growing season!
Nancy

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY PLANT?

Originally posted on growrealfood.com

Deficiency Chart of Micronutrients



THE COLOUR REPRESENTED ARE INDICATIVE.
THEY MAY VARY FROM PLANT TO PLANT

Not all plant problems are caused by insects or diseases. Sometimes an unhealthy plant is suffering from a nutrient deficiency or even too much of any one nutrient. Plant nutrient deficiencies often manifest as foliage discoloration or distortion. The chart to the left outlines some possible problems. Unfortunately many problems have similar symptoms and sometimes it is a combination of problems.

Be sure you eliminate the obvious before you kill your plants with kindness.

Check first for signs of insects or disease.

Foliage discoloration and stunted plants can easily be caused by soil that is too wet and drains poorly or soil that is too compacted for good root growth.

Extreme cold or heat will slow plant growth and effect flowering and fruit set.

Too much fertilizer can result in salt injury. Your plants may look scorched or they may wilt, even

when the soil is wet.

Plants require a mix of nutrients to remain healthy. Nutrients that are needed in relatively large amounts are called the macronutrients. Plant macronutrients include: nitrogen, potassium, phosphorus, calcium, sulfur and magnesium.

There are a handful of additional nutrients that are required for plant growth, but in much smaller quantities. These micronutrients include: boron, copper, iron, manganese, molybdenum and zinc.

All of these nutrients are taken in through the roots. Water transfers the nutrients from the soil to the plant roots. So one requirement of sufficient plant nutrition is water. A second requirement is the appropriate soil pH for the plant being grown. Each plant prefers a specific pH range to be able to access the nutrients in the soil. Some plants are fussier than others, but if the soil pH is too acidic or alkaline, the plant will not be able to take in nutrients no matter how rich your soil may be



The liquid feed can be kept in recycled bottles

MAKING COMFREY AND NETTLE LIQUID FEED

Annie, Springdale Road

It's worth growing a comfrey or nettle plants in a corner of your allotment to make an organic liquid plant food. The leaves of perennial comfrey can be used to make green manure – it can provide 3 or 4 cuts a year, which are rich in nitrogen and potassium. Its deep root system extracts minerals from the subsoil.

The cut leaves, left to wilt for a day can be used as a mulch or added to the compost heap. The best way to use comfrey however, is to make a comfrey liquid feed.

Start by adding comfrey leaves and stems to water, using approx. 1 kg of comfrey to 13 litres of water, then leave for 3 to 4 weeks to decompose and its ready for use! During this process it's extremely smelly so it must be kept in a securely sealed lidded container like a food recycling container which can be locked and is very stable. When its



ready to use you will need to strain the mixture - I've found an old colander and sieve is useful to strain the liquid from the sludge which can then go on the compost heap. Be careful not to spill too much as the smell by this time is foul and can attract clouds of flies The liquid can be kept in recycled plastic bottles or glass bottles. I use old milk and water bottles but now store them in a secure dustbin as one year foxes took all the tops off the bottles as they seemed to love the smell, its powerful stuff! The feed must be well diluted before it's used, roughly one part comfrey to 20 parts water. It can be used as a foliar feed on plants and vegetables, or as a high potash liquid feed for tomatoes, applied weekly.

Nettles can be used in the same way.

| Type of manure | nitrogen (%) | phosphorus (%) | potassium (%) |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Chicken | 1.5 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Cow | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.9 |
| Farmyard manure | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.5 |
| Horse | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.6 |

What's the best manure to use on my plot?

Each type of manure has varying proportions of elements - nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium as well as proteins, sugars, vitamins, bacteria and humus, all vital for healthy plants and soil.

Nitrogen is used by plants for leaf growth and good green color. Phosphorous helps to form new roots, make seeds, fruit and flowers. It also fights disease. Potassium helps plants make strong stems and keep growing fast.

A photograph of a single yellow daffodil flower with long green leaves, placed in a clear glass filled with a golden liquid. The glass sits on a dark, textured surface against a light-colored, peeling wall. Strong shadows are cast by the flower and glass onto the wall and surface.

LET'S TAKE BACK CONTROL... WITH OUR BLADDERS!

by Bron, Aden Grove

We can be squeamish about something produced by our own bodies but we might be using the same chemical compound in many everyday products or it may come from other animals such as HRT made from the urine of cruelly treated pregnant mares, (Pfizer's Premarin and Prempro).

Creams and cosmetics commonly contain urea as a moisturising agent, though nowadays this is generally chemically produced.

We all have our own URINE, a wonderful golden liquid, sterile, free of bacteria and of high nutritional value. Urine consists of 95% water containing valuable minerals and vitamins. The other 5% is urea which is rich in nitrogen.

Pharmaceutical companies are now producing fertilisers using the same chemical compound of natural urea, patenting it and selling it to farmers at high prices and high profits.

10 parts water to 1 part urine to feed your vegetables and flowers, (I think stronger is fine, but experiment). They'll love it. Or put it onto the compost heap.

There's a link below to a short, informative article which gives more details on the uses of urine in the garden, how it benefits the soil and some positive and reassuring trial results on vegetables.

Urine is something that's regularly there for the using, it's organic, free and one of the simplest earth-friendly things we can do.

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/garden-how-to/soil-fertilizers/feeding-plants-with-urine.htm>



*photo
by Guy*

**Spring
has sprung**
Sylvie,
Spring Hill



**Would you be willing to
be interviewed about your
allotment or a related
topic?**

**The Allotment Society
is often approached by
students, gardening groups
and the media who want to
speak to people who have
allotments. We would like
to draw up a list of people
who would be happy to be
interviewed.**

**Please contact Nancy if
you would be willing to
be on the list with your
contact details.**

FROM OUR SITES

**This year we were caught out
by the severity of the frosts in
February. Pipes burst and led
to spectacular ice sculptures
from the taps at Springdale and
Leeside Allotments.**

**Next year we must remember
to turn off the water at the mains
if any severe frosts are forecast.**





**View of
Aden Terrace,**
Chris

Shades of purple,
Annie, Springdale Road

FROM OUR SITES



Dawn on Leaside,
Christmas day,
Guy



**Rhubarb,
rhubarb,
rhubarb**



MARTIN'S BERG ROAST VEGETABLES

This recipe is a favourite - it is called 'Martin's Berg' in honour of the friend who made it for us first.

You chuck all your veg on the tray, tossing them in a bit of olive oil and through herbs you have in - roast is for about 35 - 4 min on 150 degrees and during the last couple of minutes put some feta on top.

Henrike Donner, Spring Lane



RANSOM PESTO

Ransoms will be coming thro' soon - time to make pesto! This is last year's still on the go! Top with oil to keep moist.

Sue Kaye,
Aden Terrace

FROM OUR SITES

Cabbages, Jeff and Betty



Foxy's visit

Chris, Aden Terrace



SAVOURY RHUBARB DISH

Andrea, Springhill

At this time of year, some people are lucky enough to be getting forced rhubarb but many of us have the glut of rhubarb later in the season. I always freeze some as chunks for easy use in crumbles and cakes but I came across this Guardian recipe by Anna Jones, which is the first time I've thought of using it in a savoury dish, and we love it! The combination of the tart rhubarb, creamy cheese and starchy potatoes and then the interesting flavouring and crunch on top work brilliantly and it has become a regular dish for us. I add some whole unpeeled garlic cloves to roast along with the potatoes.

Prep 15 min | Cook 45 min | Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 750g waxy potatoes
- A few sprigs rosemary
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tbsp fennel seeds
- 2 tbsp cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp runny honey
- Salt and black pepper
- Olive oil
- 200g feta, cut into rough cubes
- 300g rhubarb, cut into 5mm slices
- 30g butter or olive oil
- 50g rolled oats
- 25g almonds, toasted and roughly chopped

Method:

1. Heat the oven to 220C/425F/gas 7. Cut any large potatoes into halves or quarters, and tumble them into your largest roasting tray. Add a good pinch of salt and pepper, most of the rosemary, the bay and fennel seeds. Mix the vinegar, honey and three tablespoons of oil, and pour half of it over the potatoes, saving the rest for later. Toss everything together to coat the potatoes, then roast for 25 minutes, until they are beginning to turn golden.
2. Once the potatoes have had their time, take them out of the oven, add the feta and

rhubarb, gently toss to mix, and roast for another 15-20 minutes.

3. While this cooks, heat the butter in a frying pan with the remaining rosemary and add the oats, chopped almonds and a good pinch of salt. Move everything around the pan until the flakes are golden and smell buttery and toasty, then transfer to a bowl to cool.

4. The bake is ready when the rhubarb has softened but is still holding its shape and the potatoes are burnished and crisp. Pour the rest of the honey dressing over the tray and toss to

coat everything. Sprinkle the oats over the top and serve in the middle of the table with some greens from the allotment!





SOUR LENTIL SOUP WITH CHARD

Annie, Springdale Road

Ingredients:

- 200 g brown or green lentils
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 5 garlic gloves, peeled and crushed
- the juice and zest of 3 lemons
- 3 potatoes, cut into chunks
- 400 g swiss or rainbow chard, (leaves and stalks separated). roughly chopped
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp coriander leaves, chopped

Method:

1. Simmer lentils for 25 minutes. Fry onions, garlic,, lemon zest, cumin in oil with salt and pepper. Cook for about 15 mins, until soft and golden.
2. Stir in the potatoes, lentils and chard leaves, pour in the stock and 800ml of water. Simmer for 20 minutes until the potatoes are soft.
3. Turn off the heat, stir in the lemon juice and chard leaves and leave them to cook in the heat. Garnish with Coriander leaves.

PAM'S PICCALILLI RIVER COTTAGE

Jo, Leaside

Makes 3 x 340g jars

Ingredients

- 1kg washed, peeled vegetables – select 5 or 6 from the following: cauliflower or romanesco cauliflower; green beans; cucumbers; courgettes; green or yellow tomatoes; tomatilloes; carrots; small silver-skinned onions or shallots; peppers; nasturtium seed pods
- 50g fine salt
- 30g cornflour
- 10g ground turmeric
- 10g English mustard powder
- 15g yellow mustard seeds
- 1 tsp crushed cumin seeds
- 1 tsp crushed coriander seeds
- 600ml cider vinegar
- 150g granulated sugar
- 50g honey

Method:

1. Cut the vegetables into small, even bite-sized pieces. Place in a large bowl and sprinkle

with the salt. Mix well, cover the bowl with a tea towel and leave in a cool place for 24 hours, then rinse the veg with ice-cold water and drain thoroughly.

2. Blend the cornflour, turmeric, mustard powder, mustard seeds, cumin and coriander to a smooth paste with a little of the vinegar. Put the rest of the vinegar into a saucepan with the sugar and honey and bring to the boil.

Pour a little of the hot vinegar over the blended spice paste, stir well and return to the pan. Bring gently to the boil. Boil for 3–4 minutes to allow the spices to release their flavours into the thickening sauce.

3. Remove the pan from the heat and carefully fold the well-drained vegetables into the hot, spicy sauce. Pack the pickle into warm, sterilised jars and seal immediately with vinegar-proof lids. Leave (if you can) for 4–6 weeks before opening. Use within a year.





LEASIDE
Best plot
Amy Miller

Most Improved
Lorna Hayes

SPRING HILL
Best plot
Sophie Mathias



ADEN TERRACE
Best plot
**Sue Carling and
John Hudson**



CHURCH WALK
Best small plot
John Clarke



SPRING HILL
Best Newcomer
Katharine Arnold

Some of you may know that Katharine sadly died towards the end of the summer and we will pass this award on to her brother.



SPRING LANE
Best plot
**Sally Weale and
Henrike Donner**

AWARDS FOR 2020

Congratulations to all winners, their efforts were truly remarkable! And two special awards: this year, the newsletters have been really outstanding, and the committee would like to recognise the work done producing these by Annie Wilson and Amanda Scope. Amanda in particular has been doing the layout and design of the newsletter for years, and we are truly grateful to her for such a commitment.

We would also like to recognize and give thanks to Bob Geater and Sarah Kissack for their work for Hackney Allotment Society. Bob has been designing and updating the HAS website for years, despite not even having an allotment, and Sarah has been ordering organic seeds for allotment members every year.

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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