

ROEHAMPTON GARDEN SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1873

MONTHLY BULLETIN

May 2018

www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk



Jenny Cobb's beautiful tulips, photographed by Peter Knight



Rikke's magnificent pea frame

CHAIR'S REPORT

Events

Thanks to Brenna for organising the interesting talk by London Wild Life on hedgehogs. About 30 people attended and there is a report later in this bulletin.

Carol and the Show sub-committee are preparing for our **Summer Show on Saturday 16 June**. We will put the schedule on the website shortly so you can start to planning entries. It will be interesting to see the entries as we have had such a strange growing season so far!

We are hosting a Q & A session with a team of **RHS experts on Friday 22 June from 7.30 to 9.30pm** (please let us know if you would like to reserve a place).

Store Openings

The store was opened on Saturday mornings in March and April. We hope you found it useful and would welcome feedback from members, so we can decide whether to repeat it next year. For the rest of this year we will return to the normal opening hours of Sundays from 10 – 12.

Shredder

If you want to use the shredder (kept on Site 2 where we have electricity) you need to have attended a demonstration and paid a one-off fee of £1 before you are given the pass code.

Charity/Lease renewal

Disappointingly, we have not progressed any further with this aim. Everything is on hold until after the Council Elections.

Jackie Savage

07508 559134

rqs.sw15@gmail.com

PLOT JOBS FOR MAY

Hand weed and hoe regularly to keep on top of weeds. (Chickweed will produce 2,000 seeds per plant per season if left untouched!) Keep the soil in good condition. Add garden compost or well-rotted manure to maintain soil structure and retain moisture and nutrients.

Sow fast-growing green manure where there are areas of bare soil where summer or autumn vegetables are to be planted out. Dug in before July it will fix nitrogen in the soil.

Plant comfrey. The leaves can be used as a compost activator, as well as a making an excellent liquid feed.

Keep adding to the compost heap, making sure to mix 'greens' (lawn cuttings etc) with 'browns' (ripped cardboard, straw etc)

Continue to mow grass paths. (Strimmer is available to borrow in store. Charge £1.00. Contact root@roehamptonallotments.co.uk to book. Lawnmowers, free to borrow, are stored in the toilets on both sites.)

Earth up potatoes when shoots are approx. 9 inches to prevent green tubers, pulling the earth up with a rake to form peaked rows. Remove any cold-damaged foliage.

Watch out for early summer dryness. Recently planted trees, shrubs and fruit need regular watering for the first two growing seasons.

Remove raspberry suckers encroaching onto paths or between rows.

Sow salad crops successionaly, including radishes, spinach and beetroot and herbs such as basil, coriander and parsley.

Sow cauliflowers, sprouting broccoli, Brussels sprouts and leeks for harvesting next winter.

Sow sweet corn, French and runner beans direct into the soil.

Sow carrots. Use insect mesh to protect from carrot fly.

Make late sowings of peas by the end of the month.

Prepare a fine seedbed and sow flowering annuals to attract pollinating insects.

Plant out tomatoes towards the end of the month watching out for drops in nighttime temperatures below 12 degrees C. Be ready to put protection such as fleece or cloches around plants on cold nights.

Sow pumpkins, squashes and outdoor cucumbers under cover now or outdoors towards the end of the month. Watch for cold nights.

Start hardening off tender plants for planting out at the end of the month.

Ventilate greenhouses on warm days and cover vulnerable plants with fleece if cold nights are forecast. Apply shading to prevent scorching of plants.

Place straw under strawberries to keep fruit clean and deter slug damage. Feed with tomato fertiliser every week.

Support broad beans with string attached to stakes. Watch out for blackfly on broad beans and rub off

or wash off with squirted water. Pinch off the tips with blackfly above the flowers and bury in the compost heap.

Net cherry trees against birds.

Harvest stems of established rhubarb when the stalk reaches 9-12 in. Pull (do not cut) stalks, taking no more than half at any one time.

Inspect gooseberries for signs of sawfly damage. Pick off by hand.

Start harvesting established asparagus.

All seeds are available in the Store.

STORE REPORT

There are several items for sale at the Store to help with jobs on your plot in May.

There is a choice of composts: Clover Multi-Purpose Compost with Peat (£4.50) and New Horizon Peat-Free Multi-Purpose Compost (£6.00) will provide essential nutrients. There are also several John Innes loam based composts to choose from (£4.00) as well as Ericaceous Compost (£4.00 for a 40 litre bag) for acid loving plants such as blueberries. Country Natural (£3.00) is composted, peat-free stable manure that undergoes a process to make it usable straight away to improve the structure of the soil or as mulch. This is particularly popular with our members and it is a challenge this time of year to keep up with demand. It would be extremely helpful to have prior notice of large purchases (10 bags or more) so that deliveries can be planned to

ensure there is enough left for other members.

For your Compost Heaps, Garotta Compost Maker is a mix of nitrogen and ground limestone that accelerates the production of rich, dark, crumbly compost. It provides food to promote bacterial growth that encourages the temperature to rise and kill off weed seeds. This is sold in 1 kilo (£2.50) or 1/12 kilo (£3.75) packets or loose at £1.25 per kilo.



To support your broad beans and other crops there is a variety of canes and twine to choose from.

To protect plants in your greenhouse, Fleece and Greenhouse Shading is sold by the metre (£0.50/£1.00).

Potato Fertiliser (£1.00 per kilo) can be reapplied 4-6 weeks after planting.

The Maxicrop Natural Seaweed Extracts are very popular, sold in liquid form at £5.00 per litre. Maxicrop Original is a plant stimulant that also boosts healthy

root development. Maxicrop Original Plus Tomato Fertiliser is a potassium-rich feed for tomatoes and strawberries. Members are encouraged to bring their own bottles to fill up.

Given the growing concern about the use of plastics, we would encourage members to bring their own containers when buying loose products. These can be glass jars (see photograph), plastic containers



that you can use again, or your own bags. We use paper bags as often as we can but these are not always strong enough and to buy stronger ones would be too expensive.

Gill Tamsett, Trading Secretary

REPORT ON HEDGEHOG TALK



www.wildlondon.org.uk/hedgehog

Emma Pooley, Hedgehog Project Officer spoke to a group of 30 members about her 1 year project 'Urban Urchins' to map and survey the hedgehog population in London

and gave some tips on how to improve their survival. Emma works for the London Wildlife Trust, a charity dedicated to London's nature that has 38 nature reserves to manage across London. 50 volunteer have been trained to carry out the survey and mapping.

There has been a real decline in hedgehogs over the last 60+ years. In the 1950's there were around 30 million hedgehogs in Britain and today there are less than one million. This is due to a number of factors:

- Barriers to movement
- Tidy & lifeless gardens
- Declining food shortage
- Climate change

Although there are 17 species of hedgehog in the world there is only one in the UK.

Hedgehogs are nocturnal animals and active between April and September. They weigh between 800 gm to 2 kg. Their eyesight is poor but their hearing and sense of smell acute and they can move fast and across distances, swim and climb.

Hedgehogs are a solitary species but promiscuous, with females mating with several partners. Gestation is 4-5 weeks, with litters of 4-5 hoglets and 20% mortality. By 3 months they are fully independent.

Diet is beetles, caterpillars, worms, birds' eggs and small slugs and habitat wild areas with plenty of leaves, and cover. Hedgehogs have around 6000 spines, made of keratin and are usually brown but can be blonde. They have 5 toes, including a prominent big toe and a

skirt of skin around their belly. There are a number of predators that are a threat, i.e. foxes, who mainly cause leg injuries, badgers, who are strong enough to unroll them, dogs and traffic. Also there are threats from garden netting, strimmers, bonfires and pesticides.

How to help

- Avoid use of slug pellets
- Leave wild areas in gardens and on plots
- Make a 13x13cm hole in fences to allow hedgehogs to explore & look for food
- If you think you have hedgehogs leave them meaty pet food and a bowl of water
- Build a simple shelter or house (see website)
- Ensure ponds have a slopping edge so hedgehogs can get out.
- Share your sightings by filling in the online survey at

www.wildlondon.org.uk/hedgehog

Or download the free app by searching for Hedgehog Mapper in the App Store or on Goggle Play

If you want to take part you might want to get a hedgehog tunnel kits via their website.

There are hedgehogs in Regents Park and next year the project will survey Richmond Park. Contact them if you would like to have training and help with the survey.

Further information from:
British Hedgehog Preservation Society

www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk

Pat Dark

HEDGEHOG ALERT: SITE 2

Hedgehogs have been spotted on Site 2. Now, potentially, there may be two additional hogs from Surrey in the “array”. (Yes, this is the collective noun but it does not come up much as hedgehogs are, essentially, solitary creatures!)

On Easter Monday we collected a pair of hedgehogs from Wildlife Aid in Leatherhead. Each in its small, straw-filled cardboard box the hogs travelled to our West Putney garden to be released at dusk as instructed by the volunteers who had been looking after them over the winter. When it started to get dark we tipped the boxes on their sides so that the hogs could go explore.

Our back garden has two potential hedgehog dwellings and two holes in the fence at earth level giving access to Site 2. Of course the hope was that they would move in and eat the slugs in our garden during their nocturnal forays. We were given a male and a female who hadn't met so we hoped that they would get together. We don't know what happened. It seemed that the female pushed off pretty sharpish, while the male hog stuck around for a few days before also disappearing. The ways of wild animals are a mystery. What we do know is that hogs can travel a distance of 2-3 km in their nightly search for food.

Hedgehogs eat slugs, worms and beetles. We hope that most, if not all, potholders on Site 2 use slug pellets that are harmless to pets, birds and other wild life. Other slug control methods exist and applying Nematodes is worth considering as a way of reducing the slug

population. Given that the hedgehog population is declining at a rate of 5% per year (same as tigers!) in both urban and rural areas, the more gardeners can do to halt or even reverse the trend the better.

Notes

If you see a hedgehog during the day it means that there is something wrong with it. In late September 2017, I noticed a slightly wounded hedgehog lying down on the paving in our back garden. It was still alive so I rang the RSPCA in Putney who advised putting it in a box to keep it safe and covering it to keep away flies. They did not have the resources to take it. Phone calls to various animal charities eventually led me to Wildlife Aid who were willing to take the injured hog. Without delay we delivered it to their base at Randall's Farm in Leatherhead. A few days later I rang up to find out that they had not been able to do anything for it and had put it down.

The Wildlife Aid Foundation is dedicated to the rescue, care and rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned wild animals. Established in 1980, the charity's veterinary wildlife hospital in Leatherhead, Surrey deals with more than 20,000 wildlife emergencies every year.

To find out more go to
www.wildlifeaid.org.uk

Elizabeth Smart

**WELCOME TO NEW
PLOT-HOLDERS AND
MEMBERS**

**Site 3:
Bernadette Brewster**

Lorna Roberts

LONDON ON COURSE TO BE DECLARED THE WORLD'S FIRST NATIONAL PARK CITY IN 2019

This amazing achievement is down to grassroots support and activity to get official backing for the idea from over 1,000 local and regional politicians, including the London Assembly and Mayor of London. 346 of 654 ward teams from across all of London's boroughs have declared their support so far.

The next phase is to make the case for London to be a National Park City and show what it will mean in practice, working with the Mayor of London, local communities, borough councils and a growing range of businesses, professionals and agencies that want to play their part.

You can also help to shape the coming year as the Trustees build towards the declaration of London National City Park in the first half of 2019. The aim is to improve life across London, more time spent outdoors, making our city a greener place from balconies and streets to gardens and schools, communal spaces and allotments.

More people need to know about the project so tell your family, friends and neighbours and refer them to the website for more information. Find out if your ward has signed up.

The website is worth looking at and you can get a very original free map of London showing all its green spaces.

<http://www.nationalparkcity.london>

Pat Dark

AFTERNOON PEEPS

I've had a bit of a disaster the past couple of months with my seedlings. Asking peoples' opinions I concluded the problem was 'damping off' disease.

The first seeds were sown late January (shallots, leeks and tomatoes). Seeds germinated brilliantly.....and then just didn't grow, looking limp and then died. I sowed again mid February, hardly watered and the same thing happened.

The RHS describe this as "Damping off", caused by several soil-borne fungi and fungus-like organisms including *Pythium*, *Phytophthora*, *Rhizoctonia* and *Fusarium*, which infect seedlings and cause them to 'damp off' or collapse and decay.

It is present in soil and some compost.

Anyway, I thought it would be useful for people to know about this so that they can act quicker than I did and re-sow sooner!

Emma Blackwell

ENABLE

As you are probably aware ENABLE, on behalf of Wandsworth Council, are responsible for a number of services, including parks and allotments.

ENABLE PARKS: ALLOTMENTS UPDATE, MARCH 2018

This is the first edition of Enable's Update.

The Update aims to keep everyone informed about what's going on with regards to allotments in Wandsworth and connect up the wider allotment community. There are some interesting updates on the various allotments in Wandsworth.

Below a couple of items of interest from the Update.

Meet the Enable Parks Allotment Officer:
Anna Costello, Allotments Officer



Gardening Tips

Don't be in too big a hurry to sow or plant out your veg - better a bit late than too early. Also, don't start rushing around with your watering can every time the topsoil looks a bit dry. Let your established plants go down and find the moisture that is in the subsoil. It is what they are programmed to do. (Tender seedlings excepted of course.)

John Hooper, Garratt Park Site manager

A gardening tip regarding broad beans: once you see ants coming up onto your broad beans cut the tops off as it means black fly are around. It will reduce considerably black fly attack. Turn the broad bean tops into soup.

Mark Hewitt, Beatrix Potter Site manager

NPK

Not a branch of State Security, but three essential plant nutrients, the proportions of which should be displayed on the packaging of products sold as fertilisers:

N = Nitrogen for protein synthesis.

P = Phosphorus for energy metabolism.

K = Potassium for overall health and vigour.

And why, one might ask, K for potassium?

There's a scruffy little plant, common along sandy coastlines, known as saltwort. Its botanical name is *Salsola Kali* from its Arabic name al-kali (from which we get the word alkali). In the Middle East, large quantities of this plant used to be collected and reduced to a fine ash in fire-proof pots (not unreasonably, ash so prepared was referred to in English as potash, of which potassium is the Latinised version) and used in the manufacture of soap.

As for the related glasswort, a saltmarsh plant becoming familiar to patrons of gourmet restaurants as samphire, that's another manufacturing story, involving Venice and the Ottoman Empire (the clue is in the name!).

Chris Cooke, Putney Vale Site manager

For further information about Enable and to read the Update in full visit:

www.enablelc.org

**TOTAL BAN ON BEE-
HARMING PESTICIDES
LIKELY AFTER MAJOR
NEW EU ANALYSIS**

The EU's scientific risk assessors have found that neonicotinoids pose a serious danger to all bees, making a total field ban likely. A vote will take place next month.

This conclusion was made after analyzing 1,5000 studies. The report from the European Food Safety Authority (Efsa), published this month, found that risk to bees varied depending on the crop and exposure route, but that, "for all outdoor uses, there was at least one aspect of the assessment indicating a high risk".

Neonicotinoids are nerve agents, have been shown to cause a wide range of harm to bees, such as damaging memory and reducing queen numbers. A recent survey of honey revealed global contamination.

www.efsa.europa.eu

Pat Dark

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**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
WANDSWORTH HERITAGE
FESTIVAL 2018: 26 MAY TO 10
JUNE**

FOCUS THIS YEAR IS ON
WANDSWORTH'S OPEN
SPACES

Tooting Common Maps:

Saturday 26 May, 10am – 2pm

Drop-in session to view a number
of historic maps and drawings.

Venue: Tooting Bec Lido Pavilion,
Tooting Bec Road, SW16 1RU.

Workshop: Watercolour

**Landscape Painting: Tuesday 29
& Wednesday 30 May, 10am to
4pm**

Explore Putney riverside and parks.
Working on quick drawings in
sketchbooks, leading to a finished
watercolour painting. Some outside
and in studio.

Putney School of Art & Design
£56. Booking & payment required
020 3959 0117. Further info:

psad@enablelc.org

Workshop: Photographing

Battersea's Riverside

Tuesday 29 May, 2to 4pm

Meet at Peace Pagoda on the
riverside in Battersea Park
£8. Booking required, 020 3959
0117 to book place and pay.

Further info: psad@enablelc.org

**The War Graves of Wandsworth
Cemetery**

Tuesday 29 May, 3pm

A walk & talk on the 600+ war
graves. (Repeat of 6 years ago)
Meet at Cross of Sacrifice, just
inside the cemetery on Magdalen
Road, SW18. Free. No booking
needed.

Spies on the Common
Paul McCue, Secret WW2
Learning Network

Tuesday 29 May, 6.30pm
Battersea Library, 265 Lavender Hill, SW11 1JB.
Free. Register interest at hello@enablelc.org

Guided Walk: Best of Battersea's Trees: Wednesday 30 May, 6.30pm

Free. Meet at Bandstand in Battersea Park. Register interest at hello@enablelc.org

Drop in: Family Art: Thursday 31 May, 2 to 4pm

Free. No booking. PSAD. Meet outside the Pump House Gallery

Guide Walk: the historic & notable graves of Putney Vale Cemetery

Thursday 31 May, 2 to 4pm.
Free. Book at hello@enablelc.org

Guided Walk: Hidden Heritage: the wildlife wonders of the Wandle

Tuesday 5 June, 2pm
Meet at the Junction of the Causeway & Smugglers Way/Enterprise Way where the footpath crosses the river. Free. No booking.

Drop in: Scything Taster Session Wednesday 6 June, 10.30am to 2.30pm

Meet on Tooting Common next to Staff Yard at junction of Dr Johnson Avenue/Hillbury Road. Free. No booking.

Guided Walk: Wildlife on the Common. Thursday 7 June, 2pm
Meet Totting Bec Common Café, SW12 9HJ

Free. No booking
More info re all: www.enablelc.org
MAY RECIPE

CHARD GRATIN WITH GRUYERE CHEESE

500ml vegetable stock
Bay leaf
300ml double cream
50g butter
25g flour
Grating of nutmeg
150g Gruyere cheese, grated
2 egg yolks
1 kg Swiss or rainbow Chard, shredded
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 tablespoons breadcrumbs
S&P

Oven: 180C/Gas 4
Put stock in a pan with the bay leaf and reduce by one third. Add cream, whisk and keep warm.

Meanwhile, sauté the garlic in 25g butter over a low heat until softened. Add the chard and cook with lid on for 5 minutes. Transfer into a large casserole dish.

Melt 25g butter in a pan, add flour & cook for a minute, stirring. Slowly add the cream & stock, whisking till smooth, then heat stirring until thickened. Add half the cheese and nutmeg and egg yolks stir well. Season and taste. Pour sauce over the chard.

Sprinkle on top the rest of the grated cheese mixed with the breadcrumbs.

Bake for 25 minutes until bubbling and brown.

Serve with a green salad.

NOTICES

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Q & A session with a team of **RHS experts on Friday 22 June from 7.30 to 9.30pm**

Summer Show: 16 June 2018

RHS Talk: 22 June 2018

Wisley Trip: 23 July 2018

Autumn Show: 8 September 2018

AGM: Wednesday 14 November 2018

RGS ADDRESS AND POST BOX

Fixed to the gate at site 2, The Pleasance. The address is:
Roehampton Garden Society The Pleasance Allotments The Pleasance
London SW15 5HF
Website:
www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk

RHS CONTACTS

Committee Chair: Jackie Savage (07508 559134);
Site 2 Allotment Secretary Mariangela Renshaw (07770 968895)
Site 3 Allotment Secretaries: Helen Finch (07736 422373) and Vivian Fowler (07525 143265).
Site Manager: Shirley Gillbe;
Comments, questions for Chair and/or Committee via website: rgs.sw15@gmail.com

BASIC RULES FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL COHESION ON OUR ALLOTMENT SITES

- Respect the rights and belongings of other plot holders.
- No dogs without leads.
- No unsupervised children.
- Lock the gate behind you.
- Dispose of your own rubbish.
- No structures to be erected or trees to be planted without

permission of your Site Secretary. *If you think someone is breaking the rules contact a committee member or me, rather than confront another plot holder.*

jackiesavage29@gmail.com or 07508 559134

THE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION TOOL SHED

Mend and re-furbished old garden tools

For schools

www.conservationfoundation.co.uk

www.vegetableseeds.com

DISCOUNTS

Adrian Hall, East Sheen

On presentation of your RGS membership card you will receive 10% discount on horticultural goods that you take away with you, not on delivered items.

Neal's, Heathfield Road, SW18 3HR (opposite Wandsworth Prison)

Register for their loyalty card, as an RGS member by showing your membership card, giving your name, email address, post-code. A 7% retrospective discount on goods purchased, which can be redeemed at the time of the next purchase (like a Nectar card). The amount of discount is recorded as 'points' on the card and shown on each till receipt. £5.00 worth of points is put on your card as a thank you when you register. If you are over 50, and a loyalty card member, you will receive 10% discount on Wednesdays.

THE CARTRIDGE PEOPLE,

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www.cartridgepeople.com/RaisingMoneyFor/Roehampton-GS

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SECURITY

If you see someone trespassing or causing damage on the Sites, or in an emergency phone 999 or text phone 18000.

NEW DAWN GARDENS

Artan Deliallisi, one of our plot holders, offers regular or casual maintenance for gardens. He will repair or build fences, gates, sheds, paving, walls and arches. 07411 288485
artandeliallisi@gmail.com

MANTRA LANDSCAPES

Grounds maintenance specialists' www.mantralandscapes.com
Alexander Barrington Thompson-Byer
Tel: +44 (0)7985 463 283

CAPITAL GROWTH

Capital Growth is the largest food growing network in London. It was set up initially as a partnership initiative between London Food Link, the Mayor of London, and the Local Food Fund and helped create 2012 new community food-growing spaces across London by the end of 2012.

You may be interested in their courses and voluntary work opportunities. See what they are doing and sign up for their newsletter at www.capitalgrowth.org

Volunteer gardeners needed

Volunteers are needed to help in the large and beautiful gardens at Mount Court which is a retirement home in Weimar Road, Putney SW15 1SJ. If you are interested please phone Maggie on 07549 279 215.

THE STORE

Store open on Sunday mornings between 10 -12.00 noon.

Café, serving teas, coffee and homemade cake.

NEXT BULLETIN:

The next Bulletin,
Sunday 3 June 2018
by email, in store and on both sites.
Copy for next edition to Pat Dark
(020 8789 7568, 27 St Margaret's
Crescent, Putney, London SW15
6HL or by email to:
patdark13@yahoo.co.uk by 21 May
2018.