

ROEHAMPTON GARDEN SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1873

MONTHLY BULLETIN

April 2021

www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk

Chair's Report



The committee, aided by some other volunteers have been very busy getting various projects completed or at least into a useable state. With lockdown restrictions easing,

the toilets have been opened. On both sites, extractor fans have been fitted and more cleaning equipment has been made available for plot holders to use. The expectation is plot holders will clean after their use and before if they so choose. Toilet monitors are needed to ensure consumables are available for users and that the area is clean. If you would like to make a contribution to the allotments by volunteering for this duty please contact Vivien Fowler plot 66A on site 3 or Carol Martinez plot 13A on site 2 or just send an email to rqs.sw15@gmail.com. If you would like more information you are welcome to phone me on 07736 422 373.

Progress with the communal areas on both allotment sites is progressing well. The Tea Potting Shed on site 3 is now available to use so you can make yourself a cuppa and enjoy it in the sunshine in the veranda area. There still is a bit of finishing off to do and once we have a shed to accommodate the shredder that will be available for use.

Site 2 is almost done too. The shed needs some rather radical repairs to make the floor safe which Alan Strowger is working on - many thanks to him. Carol



Volunteers laying the path on Site 3

Martinez organised a working party a couple of weekends ago to get some finishing off done. Thank you to these volunteers: Eugene Power, Anthony Fitzsimmons, Charles Gillbe, Reiko Hara, Sue and Mark Illingworth as well as Alan Strowger.



Tea and cake for the volunteers on Site 2

Also thank you to Lee Fennel and Brenna Lattimore for assembling the very smart raised beds, Georgina O'Reilly for painting the shed and Graham Scott for the landscaping and laying of chippings in the seating area.

With the picnic table in place (assembled by Alan - quite the carpenter!) you can now enjoy a sit down in pleasant surroundings. Once the repairs to the shed are complete you will be able to make yourself a cup of tea. Carol Martinez has put a huge amount of work into the project so many thanks to her too.



Alan assembling the picnic table



Graham and Florence taking some time out

Thames Water tell us they will be commissioning the new water system by the 23rd April - I hope they mean 2021. I am very sorry there has been so much delay with this project. I can assure you that The Council, the subcontractors, the subcontractors subcontracted by the subcontractor and Thames Water have been assiduously chased to get the project finished. I am acutely aware that plot holders have been charged so much more this year for water in anticipation of having the new water system working and metered. The old system is hobbling along and I am particularly sorry that the south end of site 3 is so very poorly served with water. I just hope Thames Water come through by the 23rd of this month.

Over the next few months, you may come across a young Australian man called Mitchell Lewis taking wildlife photos on the allotments. He is particularly interested in foxes. He has taken some remarkable pictures which you can see on his website at: <https://www.mitchlewisphoto.com/> A couple have been entered into the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition with some success. Do take a look at his pictures on his website, they really are quite something. He has promised us some pictures that he takes on the allotments.

Helen Finch, RGS Chair

Store Report

It is great that we were able to reopen the Store on 4th April. We had a good clean and clear-out just before it opened to change its modus operandi from Click and Collect back to personal trading. We had great success with our Click and Collect scheme which ran for 8 weeks from 7 February to 28 March. The total amount taken in this period was c £4,600- a bit of a record! Many thanks for all your support for this scheme and to all the volunteers that made this happen which did take a lot of their time.

There are social distancing rules in place that still need to be adhered to when visiting the Store on Site 2. Please read these instructions on the Board at the entrance to the Store. We have made sure that there is plenty of hand gel which must be used. You must wear a mask and we have to limit the number of people in the Store to 2 at a time.

Unfortunately, the cafe is still closed and will remain closed for the foreseeable future.

Now that we have cashless pay, you no longer need to visit the Store on Site 2 to pay for items available from the Site 3 huts. Do please remember to bring a payment card to both Site 2 and Site 3 in order to pay for items.

We also have several new volunteers helping at the Stores on both Sites 2 and 3. We welcome them and thank them for giving up their valuable time.

We managed to secure deliveries of our most popular items early in the season which is just as well for two reasons;

Our members decided to buy many items earlier than in previous years to ensure that they would have them when they were required. I don't remember so many growbags being bought in February before!

Also, in talking with our suppliers, they are shortages of the most popular composts. SylvaGrow was waiting for deliveries of

the raw ingredients which make up their composts and no New Horizon Compost will be available until the end of April. We are hoping to receive some from another supplier who still has some in stock.

We also experienced difficulties in securing Country Natural, so popular with our members. There have been problems which has limited supplies, but despite this, we managed to get some, but not as much and as often as we would have liked.

Greg Willcox has built up a good relationship with our supplier of Country Natural. We would not look at other suppliers given that when one lady changed her supplier, Japanese Knot Weed was inadvertently introduced into her large mature garden. The entire garden and soil had to be removed and replaced! Heart-breaking as well as expensive. 50 bags of Country Natural were then delivered to her garden!

We will continue to source items from reputable suppliers. With lockdown easing, it is hoped that shortages will be less of an issue as we grow our own vegetables and flowers and support our wellbeing.

Gill Tamsett – Trading Secretary



Plant Sale

Saturday 24th April 2021 on the Site 2 store area

There will be some lovely and interesting plants for sale!

Two sessions – 2pm and 2.30pm – to avoid crowding at tables and long queues.

Equally good plants will be available at both sessions

Plants and seedlings needed - Please place sale plants on the tables outside the store on the Saturday morning – clearly labelled. Some small labels will be available if you need them.

Masks to be worn at all times

Card payments or cash into a bucket – and apologies for not being able to give change

And all proceeds will go to the Wandsworth Food Bank

Seeds

This year has seen the seeds fly off the hooks and we have had to make repeat orders which Kings have struggled to fill. A lot of favourites are “out of stock”.

You don't need a greenhouse to grow your own from seed, a warm windowsill will start them off and keep them safe until the frosts have passed.

By far and away the BEST SELLER is the Broad Bean “Aquadulce Claudia” which can be sown direct in your plot now or in the autumn.



Other popular stalwarts are Beetroots, various Chards, Kale Nero and Perpetual Spinach.

We also sell a lot of Herbs like Basil, Chives, Coriander and Parsley and various mixed salad leaves (best used as cut and come again).

There are many varieties of tomato to choose from with Gardener's Delight and Sungold leading the way. We all seem to grow peppers (chilli and sweet), courgettes, cucumbers and winter squashes.



So, come on into the store now and have a look – there is still plenty of stock.

You can sow your peas direct now and a bit later add some climbing or dwarf beans.



Then add a few flowers to the mix e.g., Cosmos, Sunflowers and Poppies as a treat for bees.

Jackie Savage

See the RGS website for jobs to do this month

<http://www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk/growing-things/plot-jobs-month-by-month/>

Welcome to new plot holders

Site 2

Carlos Lourenco
Muhammad Suleman
Jane Quayle
Michelle Dunne & Sophie Horn
Aleks Kaczmarek & Kasia Baumgart

Site 3

Aty Behnoud & Cynthia Hazine
Katy Sophoclis
Julian Abbott
Adele Stebbings & Mark Perna

Wild life spotting



Masses of spawn in Emma's pond on 27th February.

Let's all look out for Hedgehogs

They are on the endangered species list but we can all do small things to help them survive.

Hedgehogs are often called 'the gardener's friend' because they eat slugs and snails but sadly there is a sinister side to consumption of these gastropods who may harbour parasites which can cause Lungworm, a parasitic worm which fills the lungs of hedgehogs and if left untreated can cause a slow, painful death. There are no known controls of lungworm for free living wild hedgehogs but there are ways we can help them.

1: Plant for pollinators. Hedgehogs' favourite foods are insects and they particularly enjoy beetles, earwigs and caterpillars amongst others; they will also take advantage of carrion and the odd egg should the opportunity arise. Planting for pollinating insects and avoiding use of neonicotinoids and other insecticides will increase food sources for hedgehogs and wildlife.

2: Insect Dwellings. Creating a log pile and/or compost heap will provide places for diverse insect life and natural nest sites for hedgehogs. Care should be taken not to disturb resident hogs; stress can cause severe physical reactions in hedgehogs and mother hogs may even eat or abandon their young if their nests are disturbed.

3: Hygiene. If you are a fabulous hoggy friend and feeding hedgehogs regularly in your garden, please ensure to rotate and clean feeding sites and bowls regularly to avoid build-up of hedgehog faeces and deter snail trails which can contain parasitic larvae.

4: Vigilance. The signs of disease in hedgehogs suffering with lungworm may vary in their symptoms but in general, weakness, staggering, open mouthed, breathing difficulties, nasal discharge and inability/loss of appetite requires urgent medical treatment. Call us, Wildlife Aid or British Hedgehog Preservations Society for assistance.

5: **Pesticides are a no-no!** Please think twice before sprinkling slug pellets or spraying chemical pesticides, they really do have far reaching consequences. We know that many insect populations are changing and declining in numbers and diversity and much of the insects that hedgehogs and other wildlife rely on are simply not around in the abundance required to sustain them. As a result, hedgehogs are starving, and competition is fierce. Companion planting and non-chemical pesticides are much kinder to hedgehogs, the environment, wildlife and people.

If you are willing to take the plunge of a garden free from chemical pesticides, you may see an initial increase in pests, but this is usually short lived with the return of the pest predators such as birds, bats, amphibians and of course hedgehogs. 🌱

5: **Be encouraged!** Please remember that hedgehogs will still eat slugs and snails which make up part of their natural diet but if you see a hedgehog eating lots of slugs/snails it means it is starving and unable to find alternative food, this will inevitably increase the chance of contracting lungworm. We know that safe gardens with plentiful supply of natural food sources such as insects and/or supplementary food like cat/dog food encourages hedgehogs to visit and recent research has shown how some hoggies prefer certain gardens choosing to return over and over to feed. The more hedgehogs that visit your garden, the fewer slugs and snails you will have but you must of course have safe access for them into your garden such as a Hedgehog Highway.

6: **No Mow May.** A great way to help hedgehogs this spring is to participate in Plantlife's Every Flower Counts project aka 'No Mow May'. This is a great initiative to encourage people to put away their lawn mowers for an entire month to allow wildflowers to flourish giving nourishment to insects and increasing flower pollination and insect numbers, great news for hedgehogs! In the last week of May, we can participate in some citizen science by counting how many flowers we can see within a metre squared of our lawn (or

possibly more if a large lawn). For further information you may wish to watch this video: <https://youtu.be/G-XB8xhnoSw> or visit their website: <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts/>

7: **Thank you.**♥️ Finally, thank you for caring about hedgehogs who are now declared as vulnerable to extinction. Hedgehogs really do need our help and thankfully there is still much we can do - your help cannot be underestimated.

Next month: May is a busy time for SW15 Hedgehogs, we are carrying out several spotlight surveys in our continued research into local hedgehog populations and are hosting events for Hedgehog Awareness Week which runs from the 2nd to 8th May – how will you celebrate our fabulous spiny friends? If you would like to know more about our research surveys, or Hedgehog Awareness week or indeed you would like to share with us how you are helping hedgehogs please do contact us, we would love to hear from you.

Jackie and Nigel, SW15 Hedgehogs

If you would like to contact Jackie email saveourhedgehogs@gmail.com or call 07748 903660



Recipe

That allotment stalwart is popping up all over the place – rather than eating it make a lovely beverage.

Rhubarb & Ginger Vodka

From Sarah Raven's Food for Friends and Family

A frozen shot of this is delicious, and it makes a fragrant drink with tonic or served over ice with a little lemonade. Try to make the mixture a month before you want it so that the flavours have time to intensify. For the best colour use bright pink rhubarb, not the pale forced stuff.

Ingredients - Makes 750ml

- 500g rhubarb, cut into chunks
- 250g caster sugar
- 4cm piece of fresh ginger, peeled and sliced
- 6 long pieces of orange peel (from 2 oranges)
- 1 x 750ml bottle of vodka

Method

Put the rhubarb, sugar, ginger and orange peel into a 1-litre Kilner jar and pour in the bottle of vodka. Screw on the lid and put into a cupboard for 1 month, turning it upside down every other day.

When ready, strain into a bottle and use as suggested above. (The straining is essential or the drink will turn rather bitter.)



Recipe suggested by Gill Tamsett

Dates for the diary

Saturday 24th April – Plant sale on site 2
2.00 and 2.30

Saturday 22nd May – Tool sharpening event

Sunday 6th June – ‘How to show in the show’, 12.15 in the store

Sunday 13th June – Summer Show, Site 2

Saturday 11th September – Autumn Show, St Margaret’s church hall

Friday 12th November – AGM, evening, venue to be confirmed.

Petition to save allotments in Southfields

Please sign if you haven’t already

<https://www.change.org/p/petition-to-the-owner-of-the-granville-road-allotments-and-to-wandsworth-council-save-the-granville-road-allotments-we-support-this-petition-to-save-the-granville-road-allotments-from-development>

Wandsworth Council Waste & Recycling Centre

For those who have not been recently, you now need to book a slot.

[Centre Opening Times - WRWA](#)

Scaffolding boards for sale

A plot-holder on Site 3 has access to some scaffolding boards to sell at £6 each and a load can be delivered for a charge of £50.

Plot-holders may want to arrange delivery with other plot-holders for just one charge.
Call 07951 764027.

Updates from the RHS

[An increase in front garden greenery will boost wellbeing and help the environment / RHS Gardening](#)

[Discover the future RHS Hilltop – The Home of Gardening Science / RHS Gardening](#)

[homepage | Wild About Gardens](#)

Updates from the Gardening Museum

[British Flowers Week 2021 - Garden Museum](#)

Show at the museum - 10th -15th June

The RGS Committee 2020/21	
Committee member	Office/role
<i>Helen Finch</i>	<i>Chair</i>
<i>Jackie Savage</i>	<i>Vice Chair, Store Seeds, Waiting List Secretary and RGS email account</i>
<i>Dorcas Johnson</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
<i>Catherine Maunsell-Bower</i>	<i>Site 2 Secretary and Legal</i>
<i>Alison Linton</i>	<i>Site 3 Secretary (plots 101 to 127))</i>
<i>Vivien Fowler</i>	<i>Site 3 Secretary (plots 50 to 100)</i>
<i>Carol Martinez</i>	<i>Bulletin Editor and Show Chair</i>
<i>Gill Tamsett</i>	<i>Trading Secretary</i>
<i>Patrick Crawford</i>	<i>Buildings, Facilities and Lease Negotiator</i>
<i>Greg Wilcox</i>	<i>Store Manager</i>
<i>Brenna Lattimore</i>	<i>Events</i>
<i>Emma Blackwell</i>	<i>New officer</i>
<i>Mike Cooper</i>	<i>Security Manager</i>
Non-Voting officers:	
<i>Jean Crawford</i>	<i>Website manager</i>
<i>Robert Linton</i>	<i>Membership secretary</i>
<i>Charles Gilbe</i>	<i>Site Manager appointed by Enable [WBC])</i>

RGS CONTACTS

Committee Chair: Helen Finch.

Site 2 Allotment Secretary: Catherine Maunsell-Bower.

Site 3 Joint Allotment Secretaries:
Vivian Fowler & Alison Linton

Site Manager: Charles Gilbe
Comments or questions for Chair and/or Committee via website:
rgs.sw15@gmail.com

All policies and procedures are on our website.

www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk

RGS ADDRESS AND POST BOX
(Fixed to the right of the gate at site 2)
Roehampton Garden Society
The Pleasance Allotments
The Pleasance, London SW15 5HF

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 Helen Finch, Chair, rather than confront another plot holder. Helen.finch2@btinternet.com 07736 422373

SECURITY

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

NEXT BULLETIN

May 2021. Editor Carol Martinez.
Email stories and photos to carolmartinez@hotmail.co.uk by 9th May 2021. Recipe suggestions always welcome.