

# ROEHAMPTON GARDEN SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1873

## MONTHLY BULLETIN

February 2017

[www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk](http://www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk)

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



The Store is fully stocked and open for business on Sunday mornings between 10.00 & 12.00. Come and buy and support the RGS and have some coffee and cake. See page 3 for details.



Broad beans



Despite the frozen tanks and ground, there are signs of growth on our allotments. More photos on p. 8.



Cavalo Nero & Chard

## **CHAIR'S REPORT FEBRUARY 2017**

I hope you all had a good break over Christmas and the New Year. Walking round the allotments on a recent frosty morning I was so proud of how fine most of our plots are looking this year. Long may it continue! Why not try something new this year? I am going to plant some of the new Mixed Beetroots and some Barlotta Lingua di Fuoco Beans (not just because I love that name!) both from Kings Seeds.

I am delighted to say that Jean Crawford, plot holder member, is designing our new website. She has expertise, skills and creative ideas and I can't wait till we see the final result. Our old website is still up but looking increasingly tired so we plan to have the new one in place by early April.

The plan to become a Charity and obtain a 50-year lease on our land from the Council is still progressing slowly. We have reached the stage where we are now negotiating the rent with the Council. Once agreed the Council will have to give formal approval, and carry out statutory advertisements in the local press for two weeks. Assuming, all is in order we will then go back to the Charities Commission and, if they are agreement, back to you with our final proposal.

**Jackie Savage**  
**Jackiesavage29@gmail.com**  
**07508 559134**

**DIARY DATES FOR 2017:**  
**SHOWS 24<sup>TH</sup> JUNE AND 9<sup>TH</sup>**  
**SEPTEMBER.**  
**AGM 15<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

## **DISCOUNT ON RHS TICKETS**

As we are affiliated to the RHS they offer us special discounts for some of their big Horticultural Shows. e.g. Hampton Court.

You need to purchase your tickets by 28 February 2017.

Discounts:  
RHS Chatsworth Flower Show  
£27.50 (usually £29.25)  
7-11 June 2017

RHS Hampton Court Palace  
Flower Show  
£23.50 (usually £29.25)  
4-9 July 2017

RHS Flower Show Tatton  
Park  
£20.00 (usually £24.30)  
19-23 July 2017

For more details and to book  
Go to the RHS website  
[www.rhs.org.uk/shows](http://www.rhs.org.uk/shows)

Or you can phone 0844 412  
4650

Please quote AFF2017 and  
give the RGS affiliated  
number 10532300

We now have the new rents per rod from Enable/Wandsworth.

There is an increase of approx 3% from last year.

Standard rate: £22.20

Over 65: £18

Disabled: £17

## **STORE REPORT**

The Store is fully stocked and has had its annual tidy-up and clean.

We now have a variety of seed composts to choose from. We have John Innes Seed Compost in 25 litre bags for £4. This is a mixture of loam, peat and sand. We also have Gro-Sure Seed and Cutting Compost that is a superfine grade, with added fine Vermiculite, peat, seaweed and nutrients for healthy growth. It comes in easy to carry 10 litre bags, which cost £3.50.

You can buy a couple of loose seed composts. As our Clover Multipurpose Compost is so popular with our members, we are trialing their Seed and Cutting compost. This also contains peat and is light and airy and sells for 50p per kilo.

Also being trailed is a wool based seed compost called Lakeland Gold, which was recommended to us by Kings Seeds. This is peat free and is made by a sheep farmer and his environmental scientist wife in the Lake District Fells using wool from their flock and those of neighbouring farmers and

combining it with the bracken that would otherwise make grazing difficult. The wool keeps the compost moist. It sells at £1 per kilo or is available to buy in a 12 litre bag for £7.

Vermiculite at £2 per kilo is stocked, to add to compost for extra drainage or to sprinkle on top of seeds. We also sell root trainers (£4).

We have a good selection of Kings Seeds but they have warned us that sweet pea, peas and beans are likely to be in short supply this year due to the poor harvests in 2016, so stock up soon!

Potatoes are now in the store. This year we have the following varieties:

Foremost - First Early - plant in mid-February - April and harvest in June - July.

Kestrel - Second Early - plant in March - May and harvest in June - July.

Charlotte - Salad - plant in March - May and harvest from end of June.

Picasso -Main Crop - plant in March - May and harvest in mid-August to mid-October.

These are all £2 per kilo, and you can start chitting them now. Empty egg carton are perfect for this!

***Gill Tamsett, Trading Secretary***

**Welcome to new plot-holders and members**

**Site 3**

David Robinson

Nenita Tan

## **TREES ON ALLOTMENT PLOTS**

### **Trees on allotment plots**

All plot-holders should remember that they need prior permission from their Site Secretary, Georgina O'Reilly for Site 2 and Helen Finch for Site 3, before planting any fruit tree on their plots. Permission will only be given for trees grafted on to dwarf rootstock.

Enable/Wandsworth Council have also advised that they do not want to see any olive, bay or fig trees planted directly into the ground on allotment plots, all of these must be planted in pots if they are on your plot.

Any existing trees that you already have must be regularly pruned to ensure that they do not cause any annoyance to neighbouring plot holders, or overhang the perimeters of the site. All fruit trees need to be able to be cropped and pruned from ground level – if you are not able to do this; your trees are too large and needs to be pruned back.

### **What is the rootstock?**

A fruit rootstock is the stump of a related species which already has an established, healthy root system, and to which a separate fruit tree is joined by grafting or budding. The resulting fruit tree will be stronger, quicker to establish and will take on the desirable features of the rootstock itself. The join between the fruit rootstock and the main fruit tree (also called the scion) is easy to identify. It will appear as a bulge or kink just a few inches from the bottom of the stem

where the wood has knitted together.

### **Why use grafted fruit trees?**

If allowed to grow naturally, most fruit trees will easily reach heights of at least 4.5m (15ft). Such tall fruit trees would be difficult to harvest as well as being far too large for allotment plots and most gardens. To overcome this problem, most fruit trees are grafted onto the roots of a related species that has a more compact habit, or some other particularly desirable characteristic such as vigour or disease resistance.

### **Dwarf rootstock**

A dwarf rootstock will allow a tree to be grown in a smaller space than if it were grown on its own roots. Such dwarf fruit tree rootstocks will restrict the ultimate size of the tree, but will have no impact on the size of fruit itself, so a fruit tree on dwarf rootstock will produce the same sized fruits as a large orchard fruit tree.

***This item has been adapted from an article in the October 2016 edition of the Wandsworth Horticultural Society Newsletter.***

### **CHISWICK HOUSE EVENTS**

1. Magical Lantern Festival – a celebration of lanterns and Chinese culture from 19<sup>th</sup> January to 26<sup>th</sup> February.
2. Camellia Show 2017 – Chiswick House camellias growing in their beautiful conservatory from 3 March to 2 April.  
[www.chgt.org.uk](http://www.chgt.org.uk)

## **GROW TO EAT SHOW**

**19 MARCH 2017 AT RHS  
WISLEY**



The National Vegetable Society is holding its 'Grow to Eat' Show 19 March 12.30 – 4pm at Hillside Events Centre, RHS Wisley. Booking is not required and free to all after garden entry

There will be talks on how to grow bigger, better and tastier vegetables, and techniques and advice for successful crops. Browse wonderful recipes for all the produce from your vegetable garden, including the new National Vegetable society recipe booklet and plant up your own pot of bean seeds to take away.

Talks from experts including:  
David Thornton – MD Select Seeds  
Barry Newman – Senior NVS judge  
And demonstrations of vegetable planting techniques

## **MINIMISING HEALTH RISKS IN THE GARDEN**

A couple of members have said they have suffered breathing problems after using wood chip so Georgina O'Reilly did some research and found the advice below put together by the RHS.

## **Disease and plant risks**

**Legionellosis (*Legionella*):** caused by *Legionella* bacteria, this is an infectious disease that can be caught by anyone, but elderly gardeners and those with a suppressed immune system are most vulnerable. There are two types to which gardeners may be exposed: *Legionella longbeachae*, occurring in soil and compost, which can lead to a respiratory disease; and the more common *L. pneumophila*, which leads to a type of pneumonia known as legionnaires disease. The latter form occurs naturally at low levels in watercourses but can multiply in standing water to potentially harmful levels when the water temperature is between 20°C to 45°C.

**Bioaerosols:** these are airborne micro-organisms including spores, bacteria and fungi (e.g. *Aspergillus fumigatus*) that are naturally present in decomposing material. Gardeners are most likely to breathe these in when turning compost, especially in warm weather. People with an existing chest conditions such as asthma or bronchitis or those prone to allergies are most at risk.

**Tetanus:** the tetanus bacterium can enter through cuts or wounds. Since gardeners regularly handle thorny plants, soil or manure, they are at a higher risk of being infected than non-gardeners.

**Weil's disease (*Leptospirosis*):** this is a disease humans can catch from rats through water or wet vegetation contaminated with rat urine. Rats also transmit salmonella.

**Plant hazards:** as well as some plants being poisonous, there are also a number of plants whose sap or hairs can cause skin blistering, burns, rashes or breathing difficulties.

## **MINIMISING THE RISKS**

What can we do to minimise the risks? Here are some simple precautions to take;

- Wear gloves whenever handling soil, compost, fertiliser or pesticides. Thin latex (or latex-free for allergy sufferers) gloves can be worn for delicate work.
- Do not open bags of compost or potting media with your head right over it.
- Fold over the top of compost bags when not in use.
- Avoid potting-up in confined spaces.
- Moisten dry potting media before use. Also dampen down dry compost heaps before turning or use.
- Consider wearing a dust mask when turning compost heaps and handling potting media or other dusty materials.
- Avoiding storing potting media in greenhouses as these will heat up and may encourage *Legionella*.
- Empty the water out of garden hoses after use and do not leave full hoses in the sun after use.
- Avoid splashing water around when watering pots.
- Keep water storage containers such as tanks and butts clean by emptying and scrubbing out once a year. Insulate them to reduce temperatures increasing in warm weather or paint them with a light colour to reflect the heat.
- If the temperature of stored water for use in mist irrigation or sprinklers is above 20°C, do not use.
- Wear gloves and keep arms covered when pruning plants that can cause irritations; e.g. ivy (*Hedera*), *Fremontodendron*, *Euphorbia* or rue (*Ruta*).
- Only shred woody prunings in an open, well-ventilated area.
- Ensure tetanus jabs are up to date. Otherwise, see your local GP for a tetanus vaccination if you have cut yourself on a plant or got soil or manure in an open wound.
- Discourage rats by securing rubbish in bins and not putting cooked food on the compost heap.
- Rat-proof compost bins with wire mesh if necessary. To reduce the risks from salmonella avoid using rat-infested compost on edible crops, especially those not cooked before consumption.
- Protect from water-borne diseases such as Weil's disease by wearing waterproof gloves, clothing and boots when clearing out ponds.
- Always wash your hands after gardening and especially before eating.

- Keep a hand sterilising gel down in the potting shed if clean water is not available.

**See also...**

**Potentially harmful garden plants**  
**NHS Direct**

***Re-established communal herb bed near the store on Site 2***



A communal herb bed for all our members had been sited near the store on site 2 for over 40 years. Gradually it had become neglected and the final sage and rosemary bushes died of old age a couple of years ago. We have now had the bed renovated and we are looking for donations of established, but not old, healthy perennial herbs such as rosemary, sage, oregano, chives and mint for planting in the new bed.

If you are able to donate any of these please reply to me via [root@roehamptonallotments.co.uk](mailto:root@roehamptonallotments.co.uk) and leave outside the store labelled for me and I will care for them. If you are donating rosemary, please check carefully that it is bright green and healthy in

appearance and does not have signs of being affected by rosemary beetle as this spreads easily and the plant will not thrive.

If you are a bit of a herb expert, please send me your tips!

Many thanks

***Georgina***  
***Secretary Site 2***

## ***HISTORY OF GARDENS***

One of our plot holders, Lindley Maitland, has been doing a course on the history of gardens at the University of London. She has really enjoyed the course and thought other members might be interested. Below are some details of courses and a website you can access for more information.

### **INTRODUCTION TO GARDEN HISTORY**

A 6-week course, at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London.

Garden history encapsulates a fascinating amalgam of art, architectural, landscape, social, literary and horticultural history as well as archaeology and the evolution of garden design.

The Birkbeck Garden History Group (BGHG) wants to encourage the study of garden history by introducing the subject to people who have not been involved in it previously, although they may have an interest in one or more of the disciplines mentioned above.

Monday mornings with 2 afternoon visits. Tutors: Letta Jones MA & Stephen Smith MA

Full details this course and others can be found at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/introduction-to-garden-history-course>

## **FEBRUARY RECIPE**

### **SWEET POTATO CAKES**

750g sweet potatoes, peeled  
1 onion, finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, chopped  
1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme  
2 tbsp. olive oil  
2 eggs, beaten  
200g goats cheese, crumbled

1. Preheat oven to 220° C, gas mark 7.
2. Grate the sweet potatoes into a bowl using a coarse grater or food processor. Place in a clean tea-towel to squeeze out any liquid. Put back into the bowl.
3. Heat 1 tbsp. oil in a pan and sauté the onion and garlic until softened. Add onion to the grated sweet potato with 100g of the cheese, thyme and the beaten eggs. Mix well and season with salt and black pepper.
4. Divide the mixture into 4 and shape with hands and place on a greased baking sheet. Drizzle with the remaining oil and roast for 25 minutes.
5. Remove from the oven and sprinkle remaining cheese onto each potato cake and return to oven for a further 5-10 minutes till cheese is melting and brown.
6. Serve with a green salad and crusty bread.

## **Ready for Growing!**



Two plots ready for planting.



## **NOTICES**

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Summer Show: 24 June 2017  
Autumn Show: 9 September 2017  
AGM: Wednesday 15 November  
2017

### **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](http://www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk)

### **RHS CONTACTS**

Committee Chair: Jackie Savage,  
Site 2 Allotment Secretary:  
Georgina O'Reilly;  
Site 3 Allotment Secretary: Helen  
Finch.  
Site Manager: Shirley Gillbe;  
Comments, questions for Chair  
and/or Committee via website:  
[root@roehamptonallotments.co.uk](mailto:root@roehamptonallotments.co.uk)

### **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](mailto:jackiesavage29@gmail.com) or  
07508 559134

**THE CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION TOOL SHED Mend**  
and re-furbished old garden tools  
for schools  
[www.conservationfoundation.co.uk](http://www.conservationfoundation.co.uk)  
[www.vegetableseeds.com](http://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,**  
Give 10% of the cost of your order  
back to the Society when you buy  
from:  
[www.cartridgepeople.com/Raising  
MoneyFor/Roehampton-GS](http://www.cartridgepeople.com/RaisingMoneyFor/Roehampton-GS)

### **AUSTIN MOWERS**

Repairs and sells reconditioned  
mowers and sharpen shears. 300  
Garratt Lane, SW18 4EH 020 8874  
4206 [www.austinmowers.com](http://www.austinmowers.com)  
[austinmowers@aol.com](mailto:austinmowers@aol.com)

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391 Upper Richmond Road West,  
East Sheen, SW14 7NX Tel: 0208  
392 2233

**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  
artandelialisi@gmail.com

**MANTRA LANDSCAPES**

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

**FREE HORSE MANURE**

Ridgway Stables in Wimbledon (next to Swan Pub on the corner of Hillside and Ridgway) have a constant supply of free horse manure available.

The manure is bagged up and gardeners are welcome to collect between 8am -5pm, 7 days a week. They will also deliver manure in larger loads (approx 60 bags) to allotments in the area, on Saturdays.

Please call Julia on 020 8946 7400 if you are interested.

**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, also serving tea, coffee and homemade cake.

**NEXT BULLETIN:**

The next Bulletin by  
Sunday 5 February 2017  
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:  
patdark13@yahoo.co.uk by 20  
February 2017