

ROEHAMPTON GARDEN SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1873

MONTHLY BULLETIN

November 2020

www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk

Chair's Report



The AGM this year, unfortunately due to lockdown, was a bit of a non-event but it does mark the end and the beginning of the RGS year. Papers have been published reporting on

activities during the year and the all-important process electing the Committee was done remotely. We are fortunate in having just two changes on our committee; Elaine Barnwell and Liz Smart have left the committee and Dorcas Johnson and Emma Blackwell have joined. Both Liz and Elaine have done a huge amount for the RGS. Liz has been on the committee for many years and was Treasurer for four of them. Elaine has served for three years, the last one as Treasurer and has implemented many changes to the way the accounts are kept as well as making a big contribution in many other areas. Many thanks to both of you for all the service you have given the RGS. We are very fortunate in having Dorcas take on the role of Treasurer and having Emma who will be put to work in all sorts of capacities. A big welcome to both of you.

A full list of the committee members and a question asked of the committee is towards the back of this bulletin.

A lot has been achieved over the last year and 2021 is going to be a 'finishing off' year. On site 3 the water upgrade is almost completed, the communal centre will soon have power and the site 2 communal centre is progressing nicely. Once we are all free to be fully sociable both tea huts will be in operation. Hurrah for that day!

This is the last Bulletin of the year so although it does seem rather early may I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Helen Finch, RGS Chair

Store Report

After this report Robert describes his successful growing last year of grafted blight resistant tomatoes from Dobies. I am pleased to report that we now have the Dobies 2021 catalogues available from the Store.



The RGS is a member of the Allotments and Garden Council (AGC), one of the discount schemes run by Dobies for societies. This provides RGS members with a 50% discount on seeds and 15% on other items sold by Dobies. Postage is £1.99 for seeds, garlic, shallots and mushrooms and £4.99 for other items.

There is a particular set of rules for this scheme. Although you can use the website (dobies.co.uk) to view the whole range, as an AGC member, **YOU CAN ONLY PLACE YOUR ORDER BY POST AND BY USING THE SPECIAL AGC 3 PART ORDER FORM** which should be included in the brochure. Order forms are also available from the Store.

So please do NOT order online or by telephone. Also, you have to **PAY BY CHEQUE**, sent with the order form.

I have discussed whether we can modernise this procedure with those responsible for these schemes at Dobies, but have been advised that this is **your only way** we can order items under this scheme.

An example order form is below.

Dobies Order form for Society Members for the Allotments & Gardens Council (UK)

Name of Society or Club: Roehampton Garden Society Please give the top 2 copies of this form to your organiser; secretary - Ringed the 3rd copy for your records. N/A

Members Name: YOUR name

Address for delivery: YOUR address

Postcode: _____ Tel No: _____ Your special discount rates are: SEED - LESS 50% OTHER ITEMS - LESS 15%

Mobile No: _____ Email: _____

PACKET SEED ONLY					OTHER ITEMS				
Page No.	Item Code	Item Price	Packs Req.	Total	Page No.	Item Code	Item Price	Packs Req.	Total
		£ p		£ p			£ p		£ p
SAMPLE FORM									
Total value at catalogue price					Total value at catalogue price				
Less 50% discount					Less 15% discount				
Amount Payable					Amount Payable				
					Total				
					£ p				

Please Note: Your organiser/secretary will advise you how and when to pay. N/A

Cheque payable to: Dobies Ltd. Cheque number: _____

Cheque enclosed: OR Other (for seeds, garlic, shallots and mushrooms) Other (including other items)

Grafted blight-resistant tomato plants – Give them a try!

Fig 1 shows the difference between an ordinary tomato plant and one that has been grafted on to a vigorous root stock. If you spread out the roots of the grafted one, they stretch about 6 feet. In previous years, when blight has been a real problem, these blight-resistant plants have produced large crops of perfect fruit.



Figure 1

This year our plants arrived on 9th April looking rather dry and sad (Fig 2) but soon recovered – see Fig 3 (photo taken 2nd May). They need to be planted so that the graft union is just above soil level.



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4 was taken on 30th August, this single plant is about 5 feet across and because the root is so vigorous you can have lots of branches bearing trusses of tomatoes.

We had a total of 6 plants, 2 each of Crimson Cherry, Crimson Crush and Crimson Blush and in one morning picked 29 lbs of tomatoes (and many more lbs subsequently).

Blight seems to be a particular problem on Site 3, but not unknown on Site 2.

Robert L

Gill reports that she also successfully grew some grafted tomatoes from Dobie's. They were Lizzano, a bush variety from the organic section.

Dobie's have said you should be able to order up until about February but they do sell out quickly so if you like the idea I would order soon.

See the RGS website for jobs to do this month

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



Robert sent this fabulous photo for the September issue for the autumn show photos but unfortunately it was left out. (sorry, ed). It shows the 3 different Crimson tomatoes plus Zephyr and Romanesco courgettes.

Welcome to new plot holders

Site 2

Henrietta Evans

Site 3

None this month

Au Revoir

Sadly, we are saying goodbye to a plot-holder on site 2 who has tended a plot which has been in one family for over 50 years.

Val C is off to live in France and she reports that the plot originally belonged to her partner's father John Gardner. He was very active on the allotments and also well known in the Putney Society for running a campaign to get the 22-bus route started. John had the plot for about 30 years before he died and then his wife Brigitte took over 18 years ago. Val worked the plot with Brigitte but they gave up the double digging which John had been so keen on. Val carried on the same plot, taking it over from Brigitte more than 10 years ago.

Lockdown

We asked what your allotment meant to you during lockdown and received the following;

After being on the waiting list for 4 years I was incredibly lucky to be offered my allotment on the very first day of lockdown. As I unlocked the gate with my new key, I had no idea what it was really unlocking. It let me into a world that felt a million miles away from the stress of the new corona virus world that we have all been thrown into. It's a place where whatever is happening in the world outside does not seem to matter for the hours that you are there.

I had imagined that having an allotment would bring hours in the fresh air, good physical workouts, making plans and having the pleasure of seeing things grow. It has been all of those things but I was totally unprepared for the amazing kindness, comradeship and support of my allotment neighbours. Without fail I have been met by kindness, generosity and never-ending wisdom about getting started on my allotment for which I am so grateful. I have bombarded them all with questions and they always patiently guide me in the right direction, nudging me so gently when they see I need help.

My lasting memory of this summer will be standing in the warm evening sunshine under quiet skies chatting with new allotment friends sharing a love for the earth and its amazing generosity.

Kate H

Janis shared this photo of herself with Sheila and Bob sharing a takeaway and beer in the new community space on site 3, at the end of a hot day during lockdown.



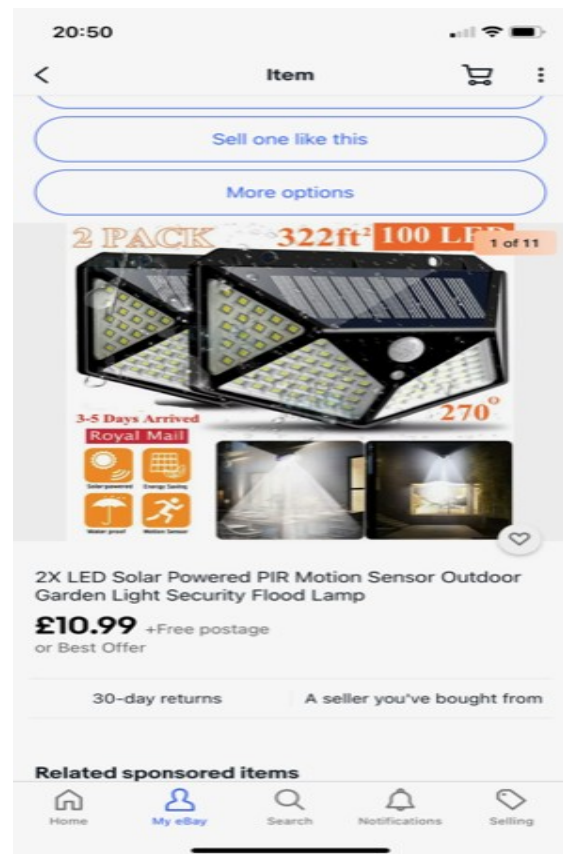
Wild life spotting



Seen on Charles' plot on site 2.

Whilst this cheeky chap might look like a fine, well fed specimen, foxes have been reported as a problem on both sites in the last few months.

Vince has a solution that we might want to try, if lots of us do it though it might look like Wembley Stadium.





PIR lights are a very good deterrent to stop foxes ripping open bags of manure or trampling plants. The lights are easy to assemble, they are solar powered and work quite well in the winter. They do no harm to hedgehogs if you adjust the light so it doesn't come on when a hedgehog walks past. Getting the right height is the only tricky bit to adjust. To do this, just roll a football under the light. If the light doesn't trip on then you know that it will not startle hedgehogs.

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.

Leave a dish of fresh water out. Put some stones in to allow for an escape route and also act as a landing place for insects.

Make a feeding station and leave out tinned cat or dog food, which is better than commercial hedgehog food. This keeps the food protected and cats away.



Let a corner of your plot or garden grow wild.

Avoid using slug pellets as they will kill hedgehogs if they eat them.

Make a hole in your fence 13cm by 13cm and encourage your neighbours to do so as well, to allow a hedgehog highway through your gardens.

Be careful with netting and roll up the bottom 20cm from the ground. Store netting you are not currently using in your shed.

If you see a distressed hedgehog let Jackie from SW15 Hedgehogs, know on saveourhedgehogs@gmail.com or call 07748 903660

There are some hedgehog houses available free if you can guarantee that the area it will go in is slug pellet free.

Jackie is sometimes asked to help create hedgehog friendly gardens and would welcome some help if you think you can spare the time or have some expertise.

A celebration of our crops



The best harvest of the year was undoubtedly our grape harvest. We picked 50 Kilo of sweet, ripe, healthy grapes on Saturday 19th September in glorious sunshine. We would like to dedicate this harvest to Americo who we understand from our neighbour Frank introduced most of the surrounding grapes to the allotments. He advised us generally but most importantly to buy good quality netting - after we had lost most of our first harvest to the pigeons! Next May we will collect our 25 bottles from our wine cooperative The Urban Wine Company. It's been a wonderful year.

Marianna and Bill



Florence pulled up this giant carrot which weighed 520 grams and was 34 cms long, 90 cm including the tops.



A chocolate Habanero chilli grown from seeds from one bought at last year's chilli fest at the Bishop's Park Allotments. It is high up on the Scoville Chilli Heat Scale and I am a bit scared to cook with it.
Carol (ed)

Belated Pumpkin Stories



Gary's talking heads on Site 3



A display of a pumpkin wearing a mask. Made of pumpkins and squash on the Sunnyfields PYO Farm in Southampton.
Did you know that up to 12.8 million pumpkins a year are carved and go uneaten?

Recipe

We usually raffle a Christmas cake for presentation at the AGM, this year Laura D (who usually makes and donates the cake) has sent in the link to the Mary Berry recipe that she uses.

<https://www.deliciousmagazine.co.uk/recipes/mary-berrys-rich-fruit-christmas-cake/>



Laura's advice is to stick exactly to the quantities given in the recipe and to weigh out all the ingredients into small bowls before mixing them. That way you will be confident you haven't left anything out!

Glass Door Charity

Our local church, St Margaret's on Putney Park Lane is unable to hold the weekly dinner and sleepover for homeless people as it did last winter, due to pandemic rules over social distancing.

However, they are asking for help with preparing and cooking food every Sunday, from your own home, and help to deliver it to another church in Wandsworth.

If you can help please check out the details;
<http://www.putneysw15.com/info/conglassdoor004.htm>

Or email office@stmargaretsputney.org

Christmas Card Offer

As we are talking about Christmas... one of our Site 2 members has organised a 10% discount on cards from the company she works for... Roger la Borde

Order online by December 7th 2020 using code ALLOT20 for 10% discount

<https://www.rogerlaborde.com>



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 50 to 100)</i>
<i>Vivien Fowler</i>	<i>Site 3 Secretary (plots 101 to 127)</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>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 Gillbe</i>	<i>Site Manager appointed by Enable [WBC])</i>

Question asked on the AGM forum on the website: What services do Enable provide?

Response from Helen: Good question, Lee. Enable act on behalf of the Council who is our landlord so it is mostly a question of what the Council provides. Recently they have paid to have the roof replaced on the store and for the water upgrade on site 3 (still not completed!). They do an annual rubbish collection which if we were to pay for would cost a lot of money. Enable do provide an appeal service if there is a conflict RGS is unable to resolve and we work together to develop policies. Normally Enable would organise site managers' meetings twice a year when we all get together and are able to exchange ideas or problems.

Without the capital projects the Council have recently paid for we don't get much value from the 80% of the rent we are compelled to hand over to the Council via Enable and the 20% that we keep doesn't cover the costs of running the allotments even though many people kindly give a lot of time on a voluntary basis to keep the costs as low as possible.

Staying Safe and well on the allotments:

Hands – Face - Space

Stay within your **own** plot and only use your **own** gardening equipment.

Any surface that is **communal** could be **contaminated** so **avoid touching**:

- **The gate:** it is possible to open and close the gate **without touching** it with your hands.
- **Taps:** the virus will survive on metal surfaces, so taps are likely to be contaminated. Safer to use your **own watering can** filled with water from the **dipping tanks**. If you have to use the taps, cover your hand or glove with a **plastic bag** which you then **turn inside out and discard**. The bag is easier to remove from your hand than disposable gloves without contaminating your hand.
- Keep some **hand sanitizer** with you or in your shed.

Gloves do not protect you or stop the spread of Covid-19. Keep gloves away from your face. Take care, when removing them, you do not contaminate your hand with the outside of the glove.

At best a Covid-19 infection is nasty, at its worst, catastrophic. We must **all stay well**.

RHS 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 me, Helen Finch, 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

January 2021. Editor Carol Martinez.

Email stories and photos to

carolmartinez@hotmail.co.uk by 6th

January 2021. *Recipe suggestions always welcome.*