

fairfield allotments

newsletter 27 summer 2013

THE SURPLUS PRODUCE SALE

This will take place on **Saturday, 24th August 2013 from 11.00am until 2.00pm**. This is an important fundraiser for us, and all offers of help and donations will be gratefully accepted. We will be erecting the stands and setting out the produce from 8.00am near the Sunnyside entrance, and so please come and deliver your contributions and/or join us at any time during the setup or sale – Even an hour of your time would be much appreciated.

We would welcome contributions of fruit, vegetables, flower, jams, chutneys, pickles, plants, cakes and biscuits. In addition to selling the surplus produce there will be competitions, a raffle and refreshments for visitors – tea, coffee, soft drinks, cakes and biscuits. So it would be good to have cakes and biscuits for the refreshment table as well as for sale to take home. If you are not free on the Saturday, advanced donations can be left in Ruth Mackenzie's shed on plot 10a at any time.

Last year the Surplus Produce Sale raised a wonderful £340, despite the rain – Let's see if we can do even better this year!

EMPTY JAM JARS

Several of our members are excellent and enthusiastic jam makers, but it is sometimes difficult to get hold of enough jars. If anybody has spare empty jars Gillian Allen would be delighted to receive them on behalf of all the jam makers. They can be left outside the shed on her plot number 52B & 53B at any time of the year – We will do our best to fill them all with saleable jams for every fundraising event.

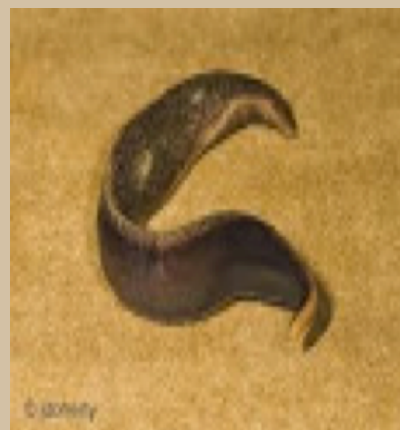
RAINWATER

The recent long dry spell has resulted in great use of watering cans. Everybody has access to the water storage tanks around the allotments, but these are filled from a metered water supply for which we all pay ultimately. So it would be great if everybody could ensure that they use all possible means to collect rainwater on their own allotment.

NEW ZEALAND FLATWORM

We are now almost certain that we have New Zealand flatworms on some of the plots. Whilst there is some disagreement about whether or not they are harmful, the majority view seems to be that they should be regarded as a pest because they kill our native earthworms. Please would everybody be vigilant. Some photographs are shown to help identification, but basically they are semi-circular in shape. As their name suggests they are flat on the underside which is also usually a light beige colour whereas the upper side is a darker brown or grey. They vary considerably in length from as little as one inch to about four or five inches, and they have been found under plastic sheets, under paving stones and in the soil when digging.

<http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/plants/publications/documents/flatwormsCop.pdf>



MANURE

Thanks to John Weedy's organisation we were fortunate to have a delivery of horse manure to both gates a few weeks ago. This was available to all members free of charge, and we are hoping that more will be available in the future. All members will be informed in advance of its arrival, but unfortunately the deliveries will always be during working hours because it is delivered by a local skip company. However there was still plenty left in the evening, and we hope that this will continue to be the case. Although every effort is made to ensure that deliveries come from a trusted source which is free of herbicides or other harmful chemicals, members should be aware that 100% guarantee is impossible. Members should perhaps consider storing their manure until they have successfully germinated some seeds using a small sample. Meanwhile, good luck and good growing to everybody.

GRASS CUTTING

We would all like to say a big thank you to Martin Luke who has been responsible for mowing this year. He is doing a wonderful job. If anybody would like to have any of the cuttings left on their plot, please tell Martin or alternatively inform Gillian Allen on Plot 52B & 53B

COMMITTEE AND CONTACTS

Your allotment committee is:

Chair: Manjeet Lamba

Secretary: John Lambert, 6 Carr House Lane, Lancaster LA1 1SW. Tel: 01524 849371

Email: secretary@fairfield-allotments.co.uk

Treasurer: George Burnett, 8 South Road, Lancaster LA1 4XD. Tel: 01524 840715

Email: georgeburnett52@yahoo.co.uk

Members: Gillian Allen, Phillip Atkinson, Val Burnett, Ian Fraser, Ruth MacKenzie, John Weedy

New members or observers are always wanted. If any member does feel like helping out on the Committee, or just coming to meetings, you will be most welcome.

Committee dates for 2013/14: 07.09.13 (Site Visit/ Inspection), 09.01.14, 06.02.14 (AGM).

RENT AND OTHER PAYMENT BY BACS

This is the first year that members have been given the opportunity to pay their rent and other dues by means of BACS transfer. Our Treasurer, George Burnett, says that the system has been very successful and it would be good if more of us would adopt this procedure in future. However it is most important to give your surname and plot number as the reference because George has to allocate every payment to a name and plot.

The only downside to BACS payments seems to have been that the number of voluntary donations has fallen. So please continue to top up any payment with a donation - All donations will continue to welcome and appreciated.

For your future reference our account details are:

Your Reference: Surname & Plot Number

Account Name: Fairfield Allotment Holders Association

Sort Code: 09-06-66

Account Number: 41562393

LOCKING THE GATES

Unlocked gates continue to be a problem. Most people are now very conscientious about locking the gates when they leave the area, but a few think that it is acceptable to leave them unlocked when there are plenty of people around. Unfortunately this is not the case. We have had a number of instances when groups of youths have been found wandering around the allotments and one member glanced up from digging and saw a huge man stamping around his treasured broad beans in search of a cricket ball which had come over the fence. On this occasion the situation was resolved because the ball turned up near the edge of the broad bean patch, but the man was belligerent and would have had no compunction about trampling on the beans.

RAGWORT

We have ragwort growing in a number of places on the plots, particularly in the 'new' plots along the fields. The Weeds Act 1959 includes ragwort and DEFRA's code of practice puts us as land occupiers within the legal framework of managing its spread. In the latest guidance we should make assessments every 6 months and depending on risk act on control or face possible prosecution. The code of practice guidance puts us in the high to medium risk category. Others do not agree that this management is necessary!

<http://www.ragwort.org.uk/facts-or-myths>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69264/pb9840-cop-ragwort.pdf