

Seed Scheme – order by 31st Oct

Buy discount seeds and contribute to allotment funds at the same time!

The Seed scheme will continue again for the 2010/11 season. Those of you who were on the plots over the last five years will remember that as the Association is member of the National Association of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners, this is one of the benefits – cheap seeds from Kings. Plus we get very necessary insurance cover as well.

If you look at the prices in the catalogue you'll see discounts of up to 40% and some things are even cheaper. The other advantage is because we're ordering in bulk, you'll have no postage and packing to pay – just a standard fee to facilitate the Association's individual packing costs and distribution. There are organic seeds in there too, so you need look no further to maintain your green credentials.

If you want to order seed through the scheme, fill in the order form at the back of the booklet as instructed and return it along with your payment to either John Lambert or John Weedy (addresses below).

Add £2.00 administration fee (£1 for the association and £1 for Kings to pack each members order separately which will help speed distribution of the order when it arrives), and pay by either cash or cheque at the time of ordering. If you're paying by cheque make it payable to Fairfield Allotment Holders' Association.

Please place all orders by 31st October at the latest.

This is what you do:

1. Choose your seeds and sundries
2. Fill out the order form
3. Keep the rest of the booklet for your records
4. To the total add £2.00 for the association administration and separate packing
5. Deliver the form & payment by 31st October
6. Wait for us to tell you when your order has arrived.

Send or take your order to:

John Lambert, 6 Carr House Lane, LA1 1SW

You can also purchase the very cool Fairfield Allotment re-usable cotton shopping bag through the seed scheme.

**Orders need to be with John by
31st October 2010.**

News from the bee plot

Have you noticed more bees than usual enjoying the flowers on your plot? Or had a bumper crop because of good pollination? The arrival of 4 hives of bees at the new bee plot might have had something to do with it.

As a result of generous funding from outside sources, and at no cost to allotment holders, a new quarter plot was fenced off in March and the first hive of bees arrived in April swiftly followed by three more during the summer. The bees have settled in well and have produced a good crop of honey, some of which was donated to the Surplus Produce sale in August and raised £30 for the allotments. The flavour of the honey is "multi floral" because the bees have been lucky enough to have a rich and varied supply of flowers and blossoms within easy flying distance. No wonder they are happy!

Barbara and Ruth, the beekeepers, would like to thank those who have taken an interest in the bees. Some people have gone out of their way to grow bee-friendly flowers. Others have taken the opportunity to have a closer look inside the hives with the beekeepers (there are spare bee suits for those who would like to do this). Last but not least they would like to thank those who were understanding when, on a few isolated occasions, the bees came just a little bit too close for comfort.

A hedge will soon be planted around the plot to give additional shelter from the wind. You won't see many bees during the winter because they don't venture far from their cosy hives. But their first outings in March or April will be a cheerful sign that spring has finally arrived.

Locking gates

Various members have reported the gates being regularly unlocked, with no-one in sight, both at dusk and early in the morning with no footprints in the dew. Whilst it's a shame that the gates need to be kept locked, they do, so **please can you lock up behind you** both when you come onto the plots and when you leave. This will stop uninvited guests or unsupervised children from coming onto the site.

With bonfire night coming up, we'd like to remind you that in the past sheds have been carried off wholesale for firewood. As well as the possibility of undesirable activity on-site (theft, vandalism etc), there's also the possibility that if there were an accident to a third party it could compromise our insurance.

Surplus sale

Many thanks to all who contributed to or bought from the surplus sale, and went towards making it such an enjoyable day. We raised a great total of over £500 on such goodies as fresh flowers, home-made cakes and jam, plants, some splendid marrows, and of course a lot of wonderful produce.

New leases

The new lease has arrived but is still under some discussion with the council before being formally adopted. As the lease has changed, the rules/ tenancy agreement will need to be adapted accordingly and agreed at the next AGM.

Plot usage

Now's the time to reflect on whether you've been able to make good use of your plot this year. If not, are you going to have more time next season?

If you are struggling, you could:

- Cover or mulch unused ground
- Have the plot reduced to a half or a quarter
- And you must cut weeds down – don't let them run to seed as this makes more work for you and your neighbours

If you can't really see yourself getting to grips with your plot, is it time to turn it over to someone else? The waiting list now stands at 110, so some people could be waiting for up to ten years!

Committee & contacts

Next committee meeting 6th January 2010. **AGM 8th February 2010** – all welcome, we'd like to see as many allotmenters as possible come along.

Your allotment committee is:

Acting Chair: Caroline Eames

Secretary: John Lambert,

6 Carr House Lane,

Lancaster LA1 1SW

01524 849371

secretary@fairfield-allotments.co.uk

Treasurer: George Burnett,

94 Westbourne Road,

Lancaster LA1 5JX

01524 62585

Members: Gillian Allen, Ian Fraser, Manjeet Lamba, Catherine Fatkin, John Weedy, Mike Brandwood and Anne Stewardson.

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

RHS allotment handbook

The RHS allotment handbook is available from The Book People at the bargain price of £5.99, £11 cheaper than the RRP. Search for "RHS allotment handbook" on the Book People's website.

<http://www.thebookpeople.co.uk>

Paths and boundaries

You may not be that bothered about your paths being unkempt, but your neighbours may be... are you leaving all the work to them? Please make sure all paths and boundaries are looked after.

General maintenance

One year's seed is seven years' weed... please don't let weeds run to seed on your plot as not only will they blow all over your own plot, they will probably blow all over your neighbours' plots as well.

All those on the new plots, please can you weed under the hedge by your plot as this will help it to establish more quickly. The tree tubes will need to stay on probably for another year or two at least, until the hedging plants are big enough to cope with the local rabbits!

If you become aware of any gaps in or under the fence near you through which rabbits are coming in, please do have a go at plugging them up, and let the committee know about them.

Contaminated manure

Here's how to test manure for contamination with hormone weedkillers such as aminopyralid, what affected growth looks like, and what's been done about the issue nationally:

<http://glallotments.co.uk/ACManure.aspx>

<http://apps.rhs.org.uk/advice/search/Profile.aspx?pid=477>

<http://www.growyourown.info/page164.html>

<http://www.manurematters.co.uk/gardening.htm>

The free manure left on the site has been tested once and was **not** affected by this issue, but to be safe please do your own test..

Website and forum

The Fairfield Allotment website is at this address: <http://fairfield-allotments.co.uk/> It contains news about our plots, photographs, links for information, advice, seeds, and a forum specially for Fairfield ploholders, at <http://www.fairfield-allotments.co.uk/forum.html> .