

Countesthorpe Gardens & Allotments Society

Newsletter: Autumn Edition

New equipment

At the beginning of the summer the committee met and one of the items discussed was the need for newer equipment to look after the communal areas of the site. In the past the equipment had been donated, and was usually past its best, at best. The old lawn mower case in point. Where not only did the wheels start falling off, but various nuts and bolts also started to rebel and go AWOL; being replaced a number of times before it was decided that enough was enough and we really did need to invest in a new machine. So now we have a new lawn mower for such jobs. It was also discussed that a hedge trimmer/strimmer was needed as the personal machines weren't really up to the task. So now the society has a multi-tool strimmer/brush cutter/hedge trimmer to take care of the communal area hedges and lang grass.

Bonfires

We have had a number of complaints from residents that border the allotment site about bonfires being lit when the wind is blowing toward the houses. We have also

had an official letter from the council about the very same thing. Can you please remember that no fires should be lit, whether in an incinerator or an open fire particularly when the material is wet, when there is any wind blowing from a southerly direction. If this still continues then further appropriate action will be taken. It is quite embarrassing having to pen this article when having relied on common sense to prevail, the evidence, however, now means that a more 'educational' approach has to be adopted. It is hoped that direct action will not be necessary.

Grass track

During the next few months the track down the side of the allotments will be roped off to stop vehicle access. This is more to protect the ground from damage, as happened last year, than to stop vehicles getting stuck, as also happened last year. So as a reminder, could those member whose plots are down the grass track please refrain from taking their vehicles past the rope until such times that the ground is less saturated. Usually towards the middle of March. Should you venture down there with your vehicle, and it gets stuck, it will be your responsibility to recover it as there is no longer any

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machinery at the business to help.

Rental Items

Again as a reminder for new tenants, the society has a number of items to rent. These are 2 rotavators and 2 x 240v power generators for plot holders to use. The fee for renting any of these is £15 per half day. The generators are particularly useful for those plot holders with electrical tools. Should you wish to borrow any of these items please contact Gill Postlethwaite, the Allotments Officer at gillposs27@gmail.com or via the website email link or see her at plot 32.

Also, we have a First Aid kit positioned near the Houghton's business area and plot 32. If anyone injures themselves please use the kit which contains such basic items as different sized bandages, sterilised wipes and saline solution for washing dirt from cut and abrasions and eyes. If any of the first aiders are present at the allotment then please seek their help if necessary. They are Dave Merrick, plot 17, Fiona Richmond, plot 20 and David Millar, plot 50. Should you use anything out of the kit, then please inform a member of the committee so that it can be replenished.

Allotment Cup winners

Another year comes and goes and the voting for the trophies for Best allotment

and Most Improved has come round again. There were quite a few up for nomination this year. Seven for Best allotment and three for Most Improved. One plot, despite the challenges of having all rain water drain down to their plot, took it on knowing the issues and have made a sterling effort to get it to where it is today. With both working full time, a lot of hard work clearing, what can only be described as a wildlife and couch grass haven, as well as free standing water during the wetter times made it even more of a challenge. But undaunted by these prospects, though there were times when they both thought they had taken on too much, plot 31, Wendy and Gordon Lloyd, have taken this years' Most Improved allotment. Well done to both of you.



The next trophy to be awarded was for the Best allotment. With seven plots shortlisted for this it was a difficult decision for the

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committee, with some walking round them a number of times to make their minds up. But in the end plot 48, John McGowan, came out on top. This isn't the first time Johns plot has won the trophy. Back in 2003, Johns father-in-law, Dennis Heywood, actual had the plot and did most of the work. But as the plot was in Johns name the committee, at the time, wouldn't put Dennis' name on the trophy. The good news is that Dennis' name has now been added to the trophy in recognition of his effort all those years ago, and at the age of 96 Dennis is still helping to plant seeds on Johns plot. Well done John, your hard work and effort has paid off. Here he is, flanked by his two granddaughters, Aryanna and Maddie.



Here is the list of those nominated. Keep up the excellent work everyone. You never know when it's your turn to win a trophy.

Trophy Cups Results 2021
Committee Members have Cast Their
Votes The Winners Are

Most Improved Plot Has Been Awarded to
Plot 31 Wendy & Gord Lloyd

Best Allotment Has Been Awarded to
Plot 48 John McGowan

Most Improved Plots Up for Votes Were
... 31 ... D ... 15...

Best Allotment Plots Up for Votes Were ...
38 ... 39... 48... 52... 54... 24... B & C...

Congratulations To Both Winners 2021

Changing of the Guard

After two years in the roles as chairman and treasurer, Chris Davidson and Maggie Mason have decided to step down. It is a great shame that Maggie is no longer continuing in the role, but as her husband Colin has given up his plot, the committee positions have to be filled by persons who are plot holders. Maggie works in finance so was the ideal person for the role when the previous treasurer stepped down, and she has certainly delivered on sorting out the finances that were a little awry. Chris has decided to step down due to other commitments and stated that he wanted to remain as the chairman only long enough to ensure that the committee was in a more stable state, and as it is now he feels he is able to step down to concentrate on his other commitments. He will, however, remain on the committee as a general member and will also continue to look after the bees. Thank you both so much for the work you have done.

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Allotment Tips & Techniques

If you have any tips and time savers that you employ on your plot either, for growing any particular veg or plants or ways and techniques for managing your plot why not share this information with your other allotmenters.

Tips & techniques

1. One for the early spring here. After transplanting tomato plants and initially watering them, don't water for another 7 days. This encourages a deep roots system and makes the plant stronger and more resilient. It also allows the plant to access more nutrients.
2. Buy dried peas from a supermarket. Sow them as you would the cultivated pea varieties. They are a fraction of the price and the young shoots can be used in salads or left to grow and harvesting for the pods.
3. Put cardboard down on the ground either before or after digging. This helps keeps the weeds down and will eventually will rot down into the ground.
4. Mulch winter root crops by covering with straw or other mulching material. This helps stop the ground around them freezing and makes them easier to lift when the rest of the ground is frozen.
5. Don't forget to net your brassicas over

- the autumn and winter. Pigeons will see them as a tasty meal and strip the plant in no time.
6. Did you know you can Pre-harvest leeks? Pull some leeks and then 'heel' them in in a more suitable and accessible place than at your plot, so when the weather turns nasty you can easily harvest them without braving the elements. A large plant pot with some compost will do, and they will keep well for a few weeks.
 7. If you have a problem of stored onions growing extra leaves, then just hold the root end over a naked flame for a few seconds. This will stop any further growth without affecting the taste. You are trying to give the roots a good singeing here, not burn the life out of them.
 8. You can have over wintered onions, garlic and broad beans. They will all be ready early the next year and can be picked in time to reuse the space for other late spring veg. They will need some protection from the hardest frost though, particularly the broad beans. The garlic will benefit from the early start and cold most.

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