

June 2013

Issue 10



Earley Allotment Association Newsletter

EAA News

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'Sumer is Icumen In' (well it was last weekend), now it's time to play catch-up.

A Plant Swap was held last weekend, thank you to those that attended and brought plants to swap, there was a good selection. But I think we chose the wrong date, what with it being a Bank Holiday and half term. Next year we will try and arrange it earlier in the month.

This year, the excess plants were left out under a canopy next to the EAA shed for sale over the rest of the weekend, with payment dropped in the honesty box. This was very successful and will be repeated next year.

It is hoped that a free group visit to Wisley can be arranged for this summer. I am afraid I gave you duff information in my recent email, as group visits can be arranged on all days and that includes Sundays.

We will need to know possible numbers

and preferred dates. If you are interested, please contact a committee member or drop your preferences in the honesty box on the shed.

If you cannot make the group visit, as part of our membership as an Affiliated Society with the RHS, the EAA has a card that allows a 30% discount on the entry price to any RHS garden for an EAA member and guest. Unfortunately, this card cannot be used at Wisley on a Sunday, but can be used at the other three gardens. If you wish to make use of this card, please contact me.

Last month, John Snow's wife Pat, sadly passed away and at the same time, Tony had to have an operation, so the HPHS shed could not open for two weekends.

The EAA has offered its services if they need any help in the future. Thank you to everybody that volunteered to be included on the rota to help in the shed.

Slugs, Whitefly and Tomato Blight

These tips were published in 'Grow your own' magazine, in an article about Richard Sanford.

Richard grows fruit and vegetables without the use of pesticides or artificial fertilisers on his plot.

Why not see for yourself and visit Richard's vegetable plot at Lower Lovetts Farm, Knowl Hill Common, Reading. It is open under the National Gardens Scheme on 21st and 27th July this summer.

Slugs

'I use planks on the surface of the soil to protect its structure. They also provide the perfect hiding place for slugs, so turn them over every morning and get rid of the slugs.'

Whitefly

'Whitefly can be a nuisance but I boil up rhubarb leaves, cool the concoction down, decant off the liquid, dilute it 20:1 and use that as a spray. The same goes for elderflower leaves, they can be used in the same way. I don't seem to have a problem with whitefly.'

Tomato Blight

'Blight spores need water to grow and move around the leaf. So, from the second the seedlings emerge, not one drop of water ever hits the leaves.

I never spray them, I grow the plants at an angle so that any water can go straight onto the compost surface and I've never had a problem with this fungal problem.'

Saturday Refuse Points Forthcoming Events

Wokingham District Council parks a refuse vehicle at various places in Earley on Saturdays for the disposal of general & garden rubbish. Might save a trip to the tip.

Site	Dates
Instow Road off Beech Lane Chelwood Road 8am – 11am 2 nd Saturday of Even Months	13.04.13, 08.06.13, 10.08.13, 12.10.13, 04.12.13, 08.02.14
London Road/Hilltop Road 8am – 9.20am 3 rd Saturday of Even Months	20.04.13, 15.06.13, 17.08.13, 19.10.13, 21.12.13, 15.02.14
Church Road/Mays Lane 9.30am – 11am 3 rd Saturday of Even Months	20.04.13, 15.06.13, 17.08.13, 19.10.13, 21.12.13, 15.02.14
Kilnsea Drive 8am – 11am 2 nd Saturday of Odd Months No service in January due to Christmas collections	11.05.13, 13.07.13, 14.09.13, 9.11.13, 08.03.14

Potato Taste Trial

Potatoes are a bit late this year, like everything else. Hopefully, the first earlies will be ready for the first tasting on **Saturday 29th June**, with a further tasting three weeks later, **Saturday 20th July**. Bring along a sample of your harvest to the EAA shed, they will be cooked and compared for taste and texture. Tasting of main crop potatoes will be included with the BBQ.

Scarecrows

Judging of the scarecrows will also take place **Saturday 20th July**. Your scarecrow should be on your plot by Friday 19th July. There is no theme, anything goes, so let your imagination run wild.

BBQ

This will be held on **Saturday 7th September** in the car park. There will be the usual competitions: 'Best Vegetable' and 'Best Produce' which all attendees can vote for. The children's competitions will be 'tallest and broadest' sunflowers and the 'funniest shaped' vegetable. More information in the August Newsletter.

Cub Night

The EAA will again play host to the 71st (Anderson) Reading Cub Pack on the evening of **9th or 16th September**, the date to be finalised with the Cub leader. The Cubs will be divided into groups and will either help plot holders with various tasks or take part in a quiz.

Cookery Corner



Broad beans, love them or hate them, they are a versatile vegetable. There should be an abundance of them by now, but with the late start and the cold weather, it may be another month.

What to do with them when they are ready?

A quick snack - broad bean & mint bruschetta

Crush cooked broad beans, season and mix in grated parmesan, chopped mint and a slug of olive oil. Rub slices of toasted baguette with a garlic clove and top with the broad bean mix. Drizzle over a little more oil, finish with parmesan shavings.

Tapas

Cook cubed pancetta in olive oil until crisp. Add wine vinegar and whisk to make a dressing. Toss the warm, cooked beans with the dressing and flat leaved parsley. Cubes of feta or goat's cheese can be scattered over, if liked. Serve warm with crusty bread.

Broad bean & pea falafel with skinny dip

Preheat oven to 200°/Gas Mark 6. Place beans and peas in a bowl and cover with boiling water, leave for 5 mins. Drain and add to a food processor with 3 chopped spring onions, dill, garlic clove, 2 tsps. fresh breadcrumbs and 1 tsp. cumin. Season well and whizz to a purée.

With floured hands, make 12 walnut-sized balls, place on a lightly oiled baking sheet, flatten a little. Put in fridge to firm up for 20 mins.

Cook falafels in oven for 20-30 mins. Turning halfway until golden brown. Serve with dip made from 200ml 0% fat Greek yoghurt and mint leaves.

Seasonal Tips

At last, there are signs of growing on the plot. If you're lucky, some of the first sowings of the year will be ready to harvest this month - baby carrots, salad leaves and radishes and maybe some early potatoes. Keep sowing quick maturing crops, little and often is the word, every two or three weeks for continuity of supply.

Keep on top of the weeds, using a hoe, the warmer weather will dry out uprooted weed seedlings on the surface.

Now is the time to transplant out winter brassicas, caulis, sprouts, kale and sprouting broccoli. Remember, brassicas like a good firm soil, rather than one recently dug. Because these plants need both root and top space to thrive, planting distances are important.

Especially with Brussels sprouts, overcrowding can be one of the causes of sprouts blowing. Protect from cabbage root fly, caterpillars and pigeons by covering with horticultural mesh, the holes in ordinary mesh are not small enough. Remove occasionally to check for whitefly and mealy cabbage aphid, if a problem, spray with soft soap.

Asparagus - it is wise to stop cutting spears by mid June and let the fern grow, ready to fuel the crowns for next year's cropping season. Weed the bed thoroughly and give the ground a good soaking if dry. Mulch with a generous layer of well rotted compost or manure.

In warm, dry spells (what are those?), water well, especially quick maturing crops.



Hoe, Hoe, Hoe

Liquid Feeding

Liquid feeds should be part of every plot holders armoury. They get nutrition straight to where it's needed and are perfect for an instant boost if your plants are looking a little jaded.

You can get them in all sorts of formulations depending on what you want to achieve. You can make your own using weeds, manure or comfrey.

Timing your liquid feeding is important, because you'll waste it if you apply it too early and won't get the full effect if you're too late.

With most fruiting plants, such as tomatoes, aubergines, chillis and sweet peppers, start including a high potassium liquid feed, such as tomato feed, once a week as soon as the flowers start to form to encourage healthy, strong growth.



High nitrogen nettle feeds encourage lots of greenery – great for boosting spring cabbages after a long winter. Liquid seaweed has lots of trace elements and is a good all round tonic for young plants. So use nettle or seaweed feed early in the season, then tomato food once flowers appear to keep plants in tip-top condition.

Ongoing Plant Sale

It has been decided to erect a more permanent area for the sale of excess plants.

For those that couldn't make the Plant Swap and have too many plants, why not place them on the racks that will be erected next to the shed, please clearly mark the pots. All plants will be 20p and the proceeds will go towards the Lawnmower Repair Fund.

The EAA has a petrol rotary mower, which when repaired, can be borrowed by any member.

Payment for the plants can be put in the honesty box on the front of the shed.

Did you know?

The onion was an ancient symbol of eternity because of the concentric circles that it contains. For this reason, Russian and other orthodox churches are designed with onion domes, a bulb-shaped dome with a pointy top.

An old Welsh tradition is to rub themselves with leeks before going into battle to bring extra strength and power while providing protection from injury. So if a Welshman smells of leeks, watch out!

Neonicotinoid Pesticides

Neonicotinoid based pesticides have been implicated in the alarming deaths of bees and other pollinators that are so crucial to pollination and biodiversity in the UK as a whole. It is not just agricultural products that they are used in but also a number of products aimed at the domestic home and garden market.

The following is a list of products currently approved for use in the UK that may be available to be purchased by the general public.

Many thanks to Sarah del Tufo (Plot 8) for bringing this useful information to our notice.

Product Name	Manufacturer	Active Ingredient
Bug Free Extra	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Imidacloprid
Provado Lawn Grub Killer	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Imidacloprid
Provado Ultimate Bug Killer	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Imidacloprid
Provado Ultimate Bug Killer Concentrate	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Imidacloprid
Provado Vine Weevil Killer	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Imidacloprid
Valiant	Sherriff Amenity	Imidacloprid
Bug Attack Granules	Westland Horticulture Limited	Thiamethoxam
Bug Attack Quick Sticks	Westland Horticulture Limited	Thiamethoxam
Bug Attack Ready to Use	Westland Horticulture Limited	Abamectin & thiamethoxam
Westland Plant Rescue Bug Killer Concentrate Ornamentals Plants	Westland Horticulture Limited	Thiamethoxam
Westland Plant Rescue Bug Killer Ornamentals Plants	Westland Horticulture Limited	Abamectin & thiamethoxam
Baby Bio House Plant Insecticide	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Thiacloprid
Multirose Bug Killer	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Thiacloprid
Provado Ultimate Bug Killer 2	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Methiocarb & Thiacloprid
Provado Ultimate Bug Killer Concentrate 2	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Thiacloprid
Provado Ultimate Bug Killer Ready to Use	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Thiacloprid
Provado Vine Weevil Killer 2	Bayer CropScience Ltd	Thiacloprid
Bugclear Ultra	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd	Acetamiprid
BugClear Ultra	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd	Acetamiprid
BugClear Ultra for Pots	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd	Acetamiprid
BugClear Ultra for Pots Ready to Use	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd	Acetamiprid
BugClear Ultra Gun!	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd	Acetamiprid
Bugclear Ultra Vine Weevil Killer	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd	Acetamiprid
Bugclear Ultra Vine Weevil Killer	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd	Acetamiprid
RoseClear for Bugs	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd	Acetamiprid
Roseclear Ultra	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd	Acetamiprid
Roseclear Ultra GUN!	The Scotts Company (UK) Ltd	Acetamiprid