



Guildford Allotments Co-operative Society Limited, PO Box 1081, Guildford, GU1 9HU

Newsletter Spring 2022



Message from the Chairwoman



We have come through some strange times and the weather has done its best to add to our troubles. Many greenhouses as well as sheds and polytunnels were damaged courtesy of Storm Eunice and the strong winds that pertained around that time and of course the frosts in March had us running in and out with seedlings! My commiserations to all who suffered damage. Today, with the warmest temperature this year, I can look out and see the sun on the young, fresh greenery of the oak trees and feel hopeful that from now on our allotments will flourish!

We hear a lot about climate change and environmental damage. The recent storms had plastic sacks and ground cover flying all over the place. The use of peat is very much in the gardener's mind. Have you, like me, found it difficult to buy seed compost without peat at a Garden Centre? What's more, it seems to be impossible to buy any seed or potting compost that is not in a plastic sack! All plants are sold in plastic pots - many of which are non-recyclable. Yes, it is convenient but environmentally very unfriendly. I think it is time to question our suppliers and point out to them where they can make changes. If you know the right place to go you can take a bottle and fill up with washing-up liquid, so why not have the same arrangement for buying liquid plant food, for example? Garden centres could have bins of compost which we collect in our own containers. If we are serious about improving our universe, things must change, even if this means some inconvenience.

So much for my ranting! I am now looking forward to a wonderful growing season with the best-ever

vegetables and flowers. I hope you are too. And if any of you end up with a surplus of crops that you cannot use yourself, remember that there are food banks and charitable organisations willing to take it off your hands - The Hive at Park Barn for one.

Bellfields

The Secretary of State finally gave his verdict on 11th February 2022 that Guildford Borough Council (GBC) could have change of use of 1.91 hectares of existing allotment land for housing. In our own calculations, that meant we would retain 1.5 hectares as allotments at Bellfields, with North Moors and the extension at Aldershot Road making



North Moors site

up the balance. However, GBC are not satisfied with this proposal, and they have gone back to the Secretary of State asking for a further 0.5 hectares to be allocated to them. We are awaiting his reply which we are told may be available by the middle of May 2022.

Tenants were due to view their plots at the new sites at the end of April 2022, but this is likely to be delayed as the alternative sites are far from ready and in fact work that had been carried out at Aldershot Road suffered during Storm Eunice. In the meantime, GBC have been quick to send a Notice of Termination of the Lease on the whole of Bellfields, resulting in us having to send out Notices to Quit their allotments to all Bellfields tenants. The termination date is the 5th of April 2023. At least that gives this Summer growing season and tenants will have all Winter on their existing plot and their new plot if they move. It is very difficult for your Committee to give more exact information at this time but with the schedule slipping week by week we do not know what is



Sheds at the new site at Aldershot Road blown over by Storm Eunice

going to happen when. We will have to wait and see but the aim is for tenants to be able to prepare their new plots in time for next Summer's growing season and remove all they want from their existing plot. All new plots will have a shed with a water butt and GBC have offered assistance in moving greenhouses and polytunnels and any fruit bushes etc which need careful uprooting and replanting. As soon as we get more definite information and dates we will, of course, be in touch with all tenants.

Best wishes,
Philippa

AGM

This year's AGM will be held on Wednesday, 13th July at The Hive, Park Barn Drive, Guildford, GU2 8EN. Put the date in your diary and do come along to learn more about your society and meet fellow allotmenters. This is your opportunity to find out what has been happening throughout the year, have your say and we welcome your interest and involvement. This year there will be a raffle with many great prizes. Raffle tickets are available at a cost of £1 from your Site Warden or the Newsletter editor. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Items for the agenda must be submitted in writing - by post or email – to the secretary by the 1st of June 2022, after which a full agenda will be prepared and circulated by email. If you want to receive the agenda, please make sure we have your email address.



GACSL Committee

Committee positions showing current post holders who are standing for re-election.

Officers

Chairman: Philippa Wright
Secretary: Jeanette Collings
Treasurer: Andy Simmonds

Executives

Waiting List Managers: Lorna McGregor
Peter Sedgwick
Sue Webb
Equipment Co-ordinator: Bob Layzell
Warden Representative: Vacant
Newsletter Editor: Vicky Russell

Non-elected Committee support roles

Website Management: Susie Merry
Facebook: Vicky Russell
Security & Police Liaison: Vacant
Publicity: Vacant

Would you like to be part of the Guildford Allotment Co-operative Society Ltd Committee? If so, do come along to a committee meeting or have a chat with our chairwoman Philippa Wright.

Waiting List

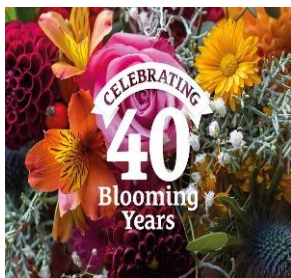
Demand for allotments continues to be far greater than we can supply. At the height of the pandemic, new applications soared but since Covid restrictions were lifted and people returned to work, the number has slowed down to a more manageable level. Ten of our thirteen sites are, however, currently full and there are only 4 vacant plots across the remaining three sites. These will be re-let immediately.

Lorna McGregor



YOU CAN STOP DIGGING NOW DARLING
THE WAITING LIST SECRETARY HAS GONE FAST

Guildford in Bloom



In 2021, Guildford's favourite horticultural competition celebrated its 40th birthday with the theme 'Blooming 40'. The evening award ceremony, held at Yvonne Arnaud, was wonderful, with live

music from Guildford Jazz and 400 delicious cupcakes supplied by La-Di-Da, Cupcake Co.

There were over 80 entries in the **Best Allotment/ Kitchen Garden** category, with 14 GACSL plot holders achieving Gold. Once again, however, it was Les and Stella Hind from Burpham who scooped first prize, winning Gold and Best in Class for the 4th year running - as well as Best in Class in the **#Blooming 40 Themed Entry**. Congratulations! Les and Stella have decided not to enter this year, to give the rest of us a sporting chance... 😊



Les and Stella's award-winning plot at Burpham

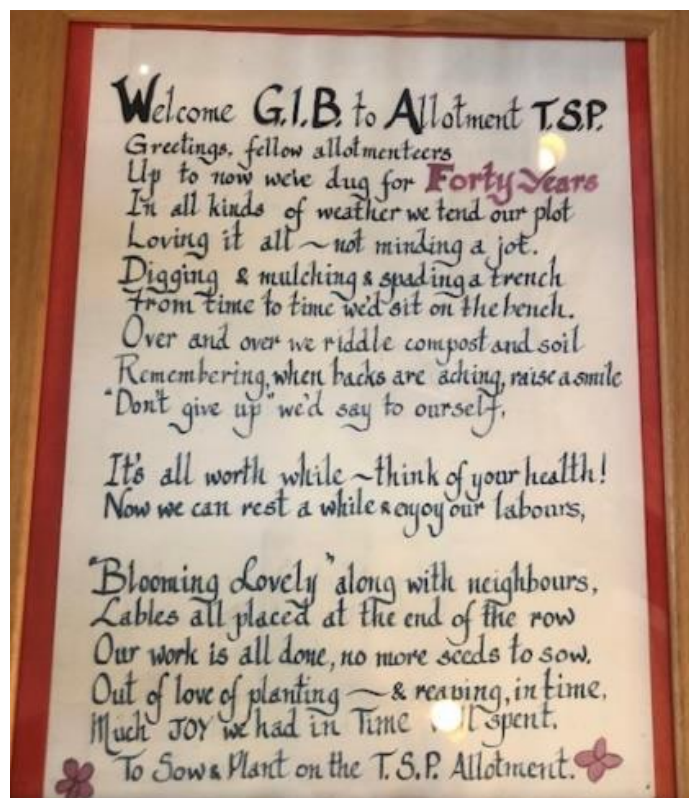
Well done also to all our other Gold Award winners!

Derek Squibb	Aldershot Road
Charlotte Waitt and Ian Knee	Burpham
Howard Turner	Burpham
Isobel Gurney and Liam Byrne	Farnham Road
John Hill	Pewley Hill
Julie and Peter Lee	Burpham
Keith and Lucy Johnson	Burpham
Marion and Arthur Kinge	Merrow
Mark and Lynne Preece	Lido
Michael Houchin, Vicky Shepherd & Martyn Gannicott	Epsom Road
Peter and Janice Sedgwick	Burpham
Tom and Heather Hall	Dagley Lane
Tom Smart	Merrow Road

Patricia Payne was thrilled at having her poem read out at the awards ceremony. Tanis Unwin, her daughter, was also awarded Silver Gilt for her Plot 63b at Pewley Hill. They were made up!



Plot 63b Pewley Hill



Patricia's poem

Guildford in Bloom 2022

The theme for this year's Guildford in Bloom competition is the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Judges are expecting to see lots of red, white, and blue as well as purple – the theme colour for the Platinum celebrations.

Extra points will be awarded for plots that are eco-friendly, peat-free, and take care of and encourage wildlife. To take part, download and complete an entry form from www.guilfordinbloom.com and send to info@guildfordinbloom.com by Sunday, June 19. Judging takes place between June 27 and July 15 with the Awards Ceremony on 6th September at Yvonne Arnaud.

Thank you, Jean!

After 10 fruitful years on the Committee, Jean Wickens finally stepped down as the editor of the Newsletter to spend more time pursuing her other interests such as travel, family, history talks - and tending to her allotment of course! She will be greatly missed but we will ensure her legacy lives on... and hope she continues to contribute to the Newsletter when time allows. Thank you for everything Jean!



Jean enjoying her Alstroemeria and thank you card from GACSL.



89 Worplesdon Rd, Guildford, GU2 9RT

Or call Glen at: 01483 573 174



Jim tilling the soil at Lido

Rotavators

GACSL provide mowers and strimmers for tenants to enable them to maintain their own paths surrounding their plots as per their agreements.

Rotavators, on the other hand, are NOT supplied by GACSL. Some sites may indeed have a rotavator either donated or left behind from a previous tenant. However, GACSL will no longer be responsible for any service or repair of that rotavator and once this rotavator is no longer in service, NO replacement will be sought.

If you feel you need a rotavator, you will need to rent one for the period of use you require it for at your own cost.

The prices of tiller cultivators from TJ Plant Hire on Worplesdon Road, Guildford are as follows. All prices are inclusive of VAT and include delivery and collection.

Rotavator	One day	Two days (weekend rate)	One week (7 days)
Medium cultivator /tiller	£38.40	£44.40	£56.40
Large Rotavator	£74.40	£86.40	£104.40

T.J. Plant Ltd are offering a 10% discount to all new GACSL customers on production of this Newsletter. So why not get together with other fellow plot holders on your site and hire one out for the week? Glen and his team at T.J Plant Ltd will be happy to help!



Jack rotavating at Bellfields

Guildford Seed Bank

Protecting biodiversity and food sovereignty



Sunday the 27th of February saw the first ever Surrey Seed Swap at Zero, a vibrant, community space in Friary Street, Guildford. Over 150 people attended the event, bringing seeds and plants to swap - or sell for a nominal fee of 50p.



The initiative of a community seed bank came about to save and share locally adapted seed. Unlike the massive seed banks which keep seed in cold

temperatures for decades, a community seed bank is all about saving locally sourced seed and using it in the next growing season.

Prior to the middle of 20th century, most horticulture was done on a local scale, with farmers saving and using their own seed. However, this practice changed alongside the development of hybrid cultivars and global agribusiness. Home gardeners have been persuaded to buy 'better' seeds from a few central sources, with the promise of higher yields and more uniform crops.

As a result, most of the world's seed nowadays comes from a handful of multinational corporations and our food systems rely on a severely depleted range of cultivars and crops. This over-reliance increases vulnerability to the challenging conditions growers are facing due to climate change and the emergence of new pests and diseases.



Community seed banks can help meet these challenges. Small growers, saving their own seed from season to season, can help maintain and develop agricultural biodiversity, build community, enhance access to less expensive (or even free) seeds and food sovereignty.

The aim of the seed bank is to build a network of growers who are willing to harvest seed from their own produce and then pool and distribute these seeds locally. Initial comprising of a group of a



dozen volunteers, several commercial growers such as Farnham Community Farm are already on board with the first growing season planned for 2022. Meetings have been taking place at Rosemund Community Garden, deciding what to grow for this year. The aim is to expand the project to involve local schools and other community groups in the area.

Another seed swap is planned for next February, but for anyone who wants to save seed, various meet-ups will be held throughout the summer to give everyone plenty of encouragement and support. Peter Brinch, who spoke at the opening event on the 27th of February will be running a short workshop before the end of the growing season on how to save seed and for those who want to save seed but don't feel confident, a mentoring/buddy system can be arranged. There will also be a stand at Farnham Sustainability Festival on Sunday 22nd May, so gardeners are more than welcome to come along for a chat. All the seed collected will be pooled, processed, and packed, culminating in a late summer BBQ for members (weather permitting), Watch this space!



If you'd like to get involved, get in touch via email guildfordseedbank@gmail.com. You can also visit the website at www.guildfordseedbank.org.uk or <https://www.zerocarbondguildford.org/seed-bank>. If you don't have growing space, don't worry – you are welcome to join Rosamund Community Garden, which has an allocated space for the Seed Bank. Even if you don't want to get involved in the growing side or seed saving, there are plenty of other tasks associated with getting the seed bank up and running. **Follow Guildford Seedbank on Facebook or Instagram at @Guildfordseedbank. Twitter @GlfdSeedBank**

Natural Dyes

Mirela Dumic first encountered natural dyes as a child growing up in Bosnia/Croatia where it was traditional to dye Easter eggs deep rich, rust colours using onion skins. Placing tiny leaves on the eggs before tying them up in stockings and boiling them in the onion dye, would create further, stunning designs. With two children of her own now, Mirela has kept on this tradition while living in the UK.



The second time Mirela encountered natural dyes was on a visit to Jane Austin's House Museum in Alton in 2017. On a tour of the garden, she came across a 'dye patch' with plants such as madder, weld and woad which were used to dye textiles red, yellow, and indigo respectively in the Regency period. Her interest was piqued! However, it wasn't until lockdown that Mirela had the inclination – and time – to really research natural pigments and started buying books, unbleached wool yarn and experimenting with different mordants and modifiers (agents used to bind dyes and change the colour of a dye, such as alum, iron and copper water made from rusty iron chicken wire and an old copper pipe).

With a designated 'dye patch' now on her own plot at Burpham, bursting with marigolds, comfrey, and woad in full summer, Mirela insists she is still very much a hobbyist:



Silk ribbons dyed during lockdown.

With a designated 'dye patch' now on her own plot at Burpham, bursting with marigolds, comfrey, and woad in full summer, Mirela insists she is still very much a hobbyist:



Scarf pigments; marigold, woad (blue) nettle and comfrey.

'It's a slow process – you need a lot of patience - this scarf took 6 months from start to finish with all the pigments coming from plants on my allotment - and I still have a lot to learn. But my perception of plants has changed, and I will never be able to look at nettles, bark, or rhubarb leaves in the same way again!'

Mirela is planning to hold a free **workshop** on how to use natural pigments at her site in Burpham at the end of June/beginning of July, when the marigolds are in full bloom. **For more details and to book a place, please contact the Newsletter editor.**

Bug Hotels

Bug hotels have grown enormously in popularity in recent years with most garden centres displaying a wide selection to choose from. The good news is you don't have to spend lots of money on store-bought kits to encourage beneficial insects and wildlife onto your allotment. The best bug hotels are eco-friendly and built using upcycled garden materials, natural items such as leaves and sticks and re-purposed items from home that are no longer wanted.

Set up your bug hotel in a sheltered area of the allotment away from the prevailing wind. Most insects prefer slightly damp conditions, but solitary bees demand the sunniest aspect possible to help them get out and about on a cold day. Bug hotels benefit lots of different types of insects and creepy crawlies such as ladybirds, solitary bees, spiders, and woodlice. They can use your bug hotels as a safe space to shelter, lay their eggs, raise their young and seek refuge from predators.



5-star Bug hotel at Dagley Lane

shelter, lay their eggs, raise their young and seek refuge from predators.



Stuti's solitary bee hotel at Merrow



Worplesdon Road



Bee hostel at Lido

As can be seen, bug hotels come in many shapes and sizes and can be beautiful as well as functional. They are fun and easy to make – especially for children - and a brilliant way to attract insects which keep all the plant eating bugs at bay. Ladybirds can consume up to 50 aphids a day, while centipedes devour slugs!

News from your allotment sites

Aldershot Road

Remember, remember the 5th of November!

Having a lot of unwanted pieces of wood, I decided to have a bonfire and opened it up to anyone else at Aldershot Road. I didn't see why I couldn't share the fun of having a fire - and why not add a hot dog and cuppa! Many of my fellow allotmenters came along bringing wood to burn, cakes to share and a lot of bonhomie. In the end we had two fires blazing away giving many the satisfaction of



having cleared that corner of their plot. Thanks to Nigel and Liz, we had a sophisticated BBQ kit and Liz turned out to be an amazing BBQ cook. Thank you,

Liz, what a star! We also had the advantage of an outdoor wood-burning stove on which to put the kettle and thanks to Sergio for patiently stoking the fire and keeping an eye on the kettle.

Philippa Wright



Working party (No. 1) at Aldershot Road

A small team got together and worked out there was a lot to be done around the site in addition to the plan to move the Community Plot from its hidden location to one where everyone could see it and hopefully make use of it. So, notices went up inviting everyone to join in to help improve the site. On the day, many turned up despite it being a cold January day and set to work. Ivy was stripped from both trees and tool shed, the hut on the old Community Plot was dismantled and moved to the new plot ready to be re-erected at another date, two loads of rubbish were collected and put aside ready for collection the following day, scrap metal emerged from the strangest of places, and again, set aside for collection. Due to the work being done on the proposed new allotment site adjacent



to Aldershot Road, surface rainwater has become even more of an issue than usual. The Broadacre entrance had become so wet it was dangerous to walk on. This too was sorted out by the addition of woodchip by some of our team. What a difference that has made for all those coming and going from this gate.

We were very grateful to Parks Department granting us a special license for another bonfire and once again many appreciated being able to get rid of their unwanted wood. Even more appreciative was our resident fox who was caught on camera enjoying the warmth of the ashes the next day!



A well-earned coffee, sandwiches and cake was enjoyed at the end of the day. Thank you to everyone who joined in, and we hope to have many more useful, but more to the point, enjoyable events in the near future.

Philippa Wright

Larch Avenue



John by his plot at Larch Avenue

John has been holding the fort at Larch Avenue and keeping things in order. Everyone who knows Les, sends him their very best wishes.

Burpham

Working Parties



Tea break

The Burpham Working Party continues to meet up to carry out essential maintenance tasks around the site every Wednesday morning from 10-12, come rain or shine. With more working parties springing up at other sites, Burpham's trailblazing initiative seems to have taken off!

Farnham Road

Moving day!



The Farnham Road Army turned up in force to move an old, salvageable shed from one plot to the community area. After much decision

making, we opted for the roller method, but it was definitely not without challenges! Having got the shed to agree to move from its home under the trees where it had resided for many years, we negotiated right



angle turns, and with continual uphill

momentum and risking a pile of collapsed wood, it arrived intact in its new home. With new roofing felt and a lick of paint, it was ready for fairy lights at our annual bonfire night.

Thank you everyone who helped!

Jeanette Collings

Worplesdon Road



A HUGE thank you to Philippa Wright, Chairman, Bob Layzell, Bellfields Warden and Alastair Henden, Bellfields who made up our working party at

Worplesdon Road site on 19 March. We tackled the tough job of clearing a derelict plot, cutting down brambles and removing several overgrown trees around the site perimeter fence which will now allow sun and light to flood this area again. As you can see from the photographs, we made an impressive wood pile ready for the next bonfire day in November. There is still more work to be done but the team made an excellent start and, hopefully, before long we can offer this plot to a new tenant. Best Wishes to Warden Peter for a speedy recovery after his fall.

Lorna McGregor

Westborough Bungalows

On the 8th of April a team of volunteers from various other allotment sites headed to Westborough Bungalows to lend a hand to Neville who has been poorly recently and was struggling to get his plot ready for all the seedlings shooting up in his greenhouse. After a couple of hours, the plot was transformed to its former glory, and we were able to get the first of the garlic and shallots in the ground. We wish Neville a speedy recovery.



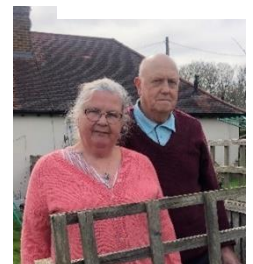
Burpham boys



Shallots in!



Coffee and cake



Warden Neville and his wife Rita.

Lido

The Flower Plot thickens...

Buoyed by the success of the National Citizen Service (NCS) coming to help clear an overgrown plot at Lido last July, the (Inter)net was cast once again, and early this year we were lucky enough to recruit another group of enthusiastic volunteers to continue work on the Flower Plot. This time the

volunteers comprised mainly of young Duke of Edinburgh students working towards their Bronze Award, but we were also lucky to recruit Chris, a seasoned gardener and previous allotment holder at Bellfields, and more recently Kevin, currently studying horticulture at Merrist Wood College, who, although late to the party, has hit the ground



Landscaping the steep plot.

running, passing on his extensive woodworking skills to the boys. One of the requirements of the Duke of Edinburgh (Bronze) is to fulfill 3 months of volunteering within the community, helping people, the environment and/or wildlife. So, since January, five intrepid teenagers, Chris and now Kevin, have been turning up weekly at Lido to continue to build on the fabulous work started last year, transforming an overgrown plot into the Flower Plot, worthy of a mention at Guildford in Bloom.

Equipped with tools and gloves, the volunteers soon got to work and proved to be an extremely hard-working and resourceful team.



Digging up this fruit bush root required team work!

Highlights so far have included unearthing a coconut, digging up a 20-year-old root and ancient piece of carpet and taking down branches with a chainsaw. We've also celebrated a birthday and had lots and lots of cups of tea!



Chris diligently planting bulbs in January



Unearthing an underlay of carpet.



Some jobs are more fun...



...than others!



The boys unearth a coconut!



Kevin passes on his skills



A well-earned tea-break...



...with cake!



The Flower Plot

Obituary

On 23 November 2021, David Matthews (Dave) sadly passed away in the Royal Surrey County Hospital. Dave had health issues for several years, and finally succumbed to Covid in November. He loved his plot at Merrow Street, which he took on under a joint tenancy with his daughter Sara in 2004. After Sara moved to Dorset, he continued to work the plot by himself although Sara was still a tenant. We remember Dave fondly for his brightly coloured shirts and his large hat. He was a lovely chap, always smiling and chatty despite health issues of late, and is missed by all who knew him up at the site.



Arthur Kinge unveiling the plaque

Donations from fellow tenants at Merrow Street went towards a plaque to go on the back of one of the Community benches in his memory. Arthur Kinge, a fellow plot holder and good friend of Dave's, kindly cleaned up the bench, organised the plaque and said a few words before the unveiling. Five members of Dave's family attended as well as around 20 other plot holders. The bench and plaque look lovely, and Rosemary, Dave's widow, and her family were very touched. After the unveiling, there was tea and cake. It was a lovely event, despite the cold weather.



Rosemary and her two daughters

Lime Grove



Lime Grove get their new plot numbers

Epsom Road



Newly elected Warden, Susie, by her polytunnel at Epsom Road

Merrow Street Easter Egg Hunt



On Saturday 16th April, Merrow held its annual Easter Egg Hunt. A total of 78 chocolate eggs were hidden around the site and the children who came along found an impressive 75 of them. Any plot holders who find the remaining 3 are welcome to them! While the children were looking for the eggs, the adults were set a challenging word search with an Easter Egg as prize. Everyone had an eggcellent time...

How to go Plastic-free at your Plot

Plastic is an incredibly versatile material in the garden; it's light, cheap and doesn't rot, even when damp. Since the birth of the modern



Toilet rolls make perfect seed starters

plastics era in 1907 with the invention of Bakelite by the Belgian-born American Leo Baekeland, it has permeated every area of gardening, from seed trays and plant pots to horticultural fleece, hoses and even wheelbarrows. But the very qualities which make plastic so useful come at a high price to the wider environment. Plastic is among the worst pollutants of our oceans, devastating marine wildlife and washing up as unsightly rubbish on beaches. Returning to more biodegradable materials like wood, paper, cardboard, and coir (twine made from coconut fibre) can, however, reduce the environmental cost of gardening significantly - and sometimes they're better for our plants too.

So, if – like me - you'd like to avoid using plastic in the years to come, here are 10 simple hints, tips and swaps that will help minimise the amount of plastic used at your allotment plot.

1. Make **seed trays** from scrap wood.
2. Use toilet rolls as **seed starters** instead of flimsy, plastic modules which shatter easily and are rarely recycled. Seedlings can then be planted without removing the container which rots away in the soil.



Seed tray made from recycled pallet.

3. Instead of plastic **labels**, use lollipop sticks, wooden clothes pegs or even stones to remind you what seeds you've sown.



4. Plastic **plant pots** take more than 400 years to break down. These can be replaced, however, with

terracotta, fibre (made from cellulose), coir, Vipots* and - for a more economical solution – square boxes can be made from waste cardboard. Of course, it also makes

sense to reuse those already in circulation, Plastic pot recycling collection points are becoming more common place in garden centres these days – and at our allotment sites too (see below!)

5. Make your own **potting compost** (or order in bulk) to eliminate the need for plastic compost bags. While some garden centres do sell compost in refillable bags (e.g., Edibleculture in Kent), unfortunately there don't seem to be any in and around Guildford at the moment. However, this may change in the future...
6. Use a metal **watering can**, which can last a lifetime – unlike plastic ones which go brittle and eventually shatter.
7. Replace **plastic water butts** with metal tanks or drums.
8. Use a pallet **compost bin** rather than a plastic one. A great and easy alternative to plastic – and happily a common sight on most of our sites already.
9. Use natural twine (e.g., coir, jute or hemp) instead of **plastic cable ties** and avoid polyethylene or polypropylene-based netting where possible. Natural twine is kinder to plants as it won't cut into stems. Wildlife can become entangled in plastic netting, which is rarely recycled, so to protect fruit and brassicas, cotton netting can be a more environmentally-friendly option – or make cages from galvanized metal mesh which is sturdier and can last for many years.
10. While most gardening purchases come packaged in plastic, **plastic-free mail order** nurseries do exist. By buying bare-root plants and growing from seed, cuttings and divisions, this can also minimize the amount of plastic in circulation.



Pot recycling collection point at Bellfields

*A Vipot is a lightweight, albeit pricier, option made from rice and grain hulls, and bamboo.

Recipes from the allotment by Helen Holt

Rhubarb

There's a glut of rhubarb at the moment, and if, like me, you want to find some new ways of consuming this perennial 'vegetable' look no further! The Chinese have been using rhubarb root medicinally for its antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, anti-fibrotic and anti-cancer purposes for thousands of years with the plant thought to have been brought to the UK in the 1760s.

Remember, you don't need to peel the rhubarb, it's just the leaves that contain oxalic acid which is poisonous.



Rhubarb and chocolate cake

This is an old favourite of mine. Easy to make the recipe gluten free too!

Ingredients

270g rhubarb, thickly sliced
190g caster sugar
150g butter, softened
Finely grated zest and juice of 1 small orange
70g ground almonds
150g self-raising flour
1tsp baking powder
100g chopped dark chocolate
2 eggs
Small handful flaked almonds
Icing sugar to dust

Method

Put the rhubarb into a bowl and sprinkle over 50g of the sugar. Stir so the rhubarb is covered, then set aside for 30 mins to draw out some of the juices (macerate).

Grease and line the base and sides of a 23 cm loose-bottomed, round cake tin with baking parchment and heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Put the remaining sugar, butter, orange zest and juice into a large bowl and beat with an electric whisk until well blended. Add the flour, almonds, baking powder, chocolate, and eggs, then beat again until smooth. Fold in the rhubarb and any juices. Spoon into the tin and level the top.

Sprinkle with the flaked almonds, then bake in the centre of the oven for 1 hr-1 hr 15 mins until risen, golden and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cover with foil if the cake starts to brown too much during cooking.



Leave in the tin for 15 mins before removing and cooling completely on a wire rack. Dust with a little icing sugar before serving.

A bit about me...

In my spare time (I have two jobs - SEN tutor and Complementary Therapist) I spend as much time as I can up at my allotments - it keeps me sane! I like nothing better than getting my hands dirty and get up to Lime Grove as often as I can. I have two plots there.



I took on the first four years ago now, and I've had my second plot for 18 months. My biggest bugbear is mare's tail. My second plot hadn't been weeded for many years, so I've been kept busy trying to deter this invasive perennial as much as I can.

I grow a wide variety of vegetables and fruit and am passionate about including flowers on my plot to encourage pollinators. Last year I grew chickpeas, having found that they do grow in this country, but the length of time it took to pod them all made it too labour intensive to grow them again. My biggest success, however, was Gigantes beans - a variety from Greece; they're a climbing bean, look like runner beans but you leave the pods on the plants until the beans have fully developed, then harvest them. The pods are too tough to eat by then but are great for stock. As for the beans - they are so flavourful and, like the name suggests, much bigger than runner beans. Give them a go if you've not tried them before, I can't recommend them highly enough. Being one of the founder members of Guildford Seed Bank, I'm going to be saving more seeds - and beans - this year too!

Another of my great loves is cooking, which is why I agreed to do this recipe corner. I'll be suggesting recipes using seasonal produce, not to mention making flavoured gins with fruit from my allotment!



Helen's flower bed at Lime Grove last summer.

Spring Allotment Prize Crossword

Good luck!



Prize!



Across

1. The key ingredients of Saag Aloo are potatoes and _____
6. What type of fruit is an Anaheim?
8. What grain is used to make semolina?
9. What vegetable is used to make Imam Bayildi?
12. What garden plant was exchanged as a form of currency in the 17th Century?
14. What plant takes its name for the Italian phrase for beautiful woman?
16. What is another more common name for an Alligator Pear?
17. What pest is French Marigold said to deter?
18. Saffron comes from which plant?
19. What would you use to feed garlic?
20. The 'love apple' is the original name for what?

Down

2. Which allotment vegetable is traditionally used to make a sweet jam?
3. What family does the cultivar Elephant Garlic belong to?
4. The 3 sisters combination features: beans, squash and _____.
5. Queensland Blue is a variety of which allotment favourite?
7. What is the name of Monty Don's garden in Herefordshire?
10. What is the main aid to pollination for beans?
11. For rotation purposes, which group does the turnip belong to?
13. Often called England's greatest gardener, what is Capability Brown's first name?
15. What is the main ingredient in classic Borscht?

To enter competition to win **Mini Meadow for Bees, Butterflies & Bugs...** send answers to Newsletter editor by post or email by 13th July.

Photos from



around the sites



Website

The GACSL website is packed with useful information, important documents, online newsletters and lots, lots more! You can find out how to apply for an allotment and check the rules and regulations that must be observed as set out in the Tenancy agreements. If you haven't done so already, please visit us at:

<https://www.guildfordallotments.org.uk/>



The National Allotment Society

National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd

The NAS website has a Members' Area. All GACSL tenants can access this. Log in with username s1969 and password 5511584.



Facebook page

The Facebook page is continuing to grow with currently more than 250 members. It's a great way to keep in touch with the latest news and updates from GACSL, as well as read contributions from members and ask for advice from more experienced, knowledgeable allotmenters! Why not look next time you're online? We'd love to have more of your input. You can find us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/guildfordallotmentsociety>



It's competition time again!

Following on from the popularity of last year's three competitions, we will be running the Scarecrow, Sunflower and Pumpkin competitions once again with the addition of the Calendar Photographic Competition. We're looking for plot holders to send photos each month, taken from their site. Photos can be of vegetables, flowers, wildlife, sunsets, sunrises etc etc. The best photos will be selected and published in a GACSL calendar for 2023. A first prize will be awarded for the cover picture and for each photo published in the calendar. It would be great if each site is featured...

Photos can be submitted via Facebook or can be emailed directly to the Newsletter editor. Many stunning photos have already been received so keep snapping!

Sutton Green Garden Centre have very kindly agreed to sponsor these competitions once again, so do pop in and say hello to Peter and his team.



Allotment Shop

Sadly, due to the closure of the Bellfields site, Wally's shop will also be winding up by the end of the season. Peter will be having a closing down sale to run down stock so please pop along and show your support. Hopefully - if there is enough popular demand – provision for a new shop can be justified.



Many loyal plot holders have been going to Wally's for years for staples such as seeds, fertilisers and potatoes.

could be a thing of the past here in Guildford. Wally's has been a plastic pot recycling collection point for years – long before it became popular to do so, and with the Surrey Seed Swap now on our doorstep, what better place to exchange local seed than an allotment shop?

Maybe a future allotment shop could order in compost in bulk to be sold in resealable 'bags for life'. In this way, the sheer volume of ubiquitous, empty plastic compost bags



Resealable 'bag for life'

Peter's granddaughter, Lily continues to make bespoke, hand-made signs to brighten up your allotment. Contact Peter Fitzpatrick on 0779 3965375 to place an order for signs or for further details on closing down sale.



UPDATE YOUR DETAILS WITH GACSL

Please remember to let the Secretary know if any of your contact details have changed. Please also remember to tell your site warden if you are unwell and/or unable to keep your plot in good condition - this will save you receiving a warning letter and possible eviction.

Who to contact at GACSL

Your site warden is your first point of contact, and all site notice boards should display your warden's email and contact details; please contact them initially with any queries you may have. If, however, you need to contact the committee, details are as follows.

For queries relating to:

Existing tenancy matters, security and general enquiries:

secretary@guildfordallotments.org.uk

Invoices

treasurer@guildfordallotments.org.uk

Waiting list and new tenancies:

waitinglist@guildfordallotments.org.uk

There is also information on the website:

www.guildfordallotments.org.uk

If you need to get in touch by email, please direct your email to the relevant committee member only.

When you contact the committee please give your full name, plot number and site name.

If you don't have access to email. Please contact us at the address on the cover page.

Next newsletter

The next printed newsletter will be at the end of Summer 2022. Please send all your contributions, articles, letters, gardening tips, comments, recipes & photos etc to the editor, Vicky Russell at onsiteenglish@yahoo.co.uk

See you at the AGM on the 13th of July!

Sunflower Competition

The current conflict in Ukraine lends extra poignancy to this year's Sunflower Competition. Grown on the country's central and eastern steppes since the 18th Century, the sunflower, or 'soniashnyk' has long been the National Flower of Ukraine. Traditionally considered a symbol of peace and hope, the flower has now taken on new significance as across the world people are growing sunflowers to show support and solidarity for Ukraine. It is no coincidence that the Ukrainian flag evokes fields of the bright yellow flower against a cloudless blue sky...

So, following on from the popularity of last year, it would be great to see as many sunflowers as possible on the sites to show our support for Ukraine with prizes for the top three tallest entries. As before, please submit photos via Facebook or by email to your site warden or Newsletter Editor.

2021 winners

A big thank you to everyone who entered the Tallest Sunflower Competition last year. There were some impressively tall entries but... first prize went to Peter (Old Farm) whose sunflower reached a staggering 3.505m. 2nd prize was awarded to Alan (Lime Grove) whose sunflower reached a whopping 3.3m and 3rd prize went to Sylwia (Merrow) whose sunflower reached a magnificent 3.2m. Well done everyone! Each winner received a certificate and packet of sunflower seeds courtesy of Sutton Green Garden Centre. Looking forward to seeing even taller sunflowers this year!



Sylwia, Merrow



Peter's sunflower, Old Farm



Prizes



Derrick measuring Lime Grove's entry,