

November 2008 Newsletter

Special General Meeting

Held on Thursday 23rd October, 28 members attended the Special General Meeting. The meeting was held at the instruction of members following the AGM in April and under point 43 of the Constitution. The aim of the meeting was to present and discuss the Business Plan and for members to decide whether or not to raise the annual Pole Charge and, if so, by how much.

The outcome of the meeting was a majority vote to raise the Pole Charge to £2 per pole from April 2009.

Many thanks to Graham Porter, Treasurer, for putting together and presenting the Plan.

Membership News

We were very sad to hear that Cliff Hing, who had been a member for 35 years, died last week. At the SGM members stood in silence in memory of Cliff. Not long before he died Cliff resigned from the Society and finished his letter 'I would like to wish all members "Good Gardening" in the future.' Cliff will be missed by all who knew him.

We had written to Cliff to let him know that two previous members had returned to the field and taken over his plots. Welcome back to Graham Porter and Ivor Griffiths. We would also like to welcome new tenant Sarah Williams who will be taking a 5 pole plot.

Driving on the Field

Would you please avoid driving on the field. At the Bow Brickhill entrance, where many people park, the ground has been levelled on many occasions but there are still ruts in the newly disturbed ground.

Seed & Potato/Onion Orders and Manure

We have received orders from 40 members for seeds and potatoes and over 20 orders for loads of manure have been taken.

The manure delivery is almost complete – many thanks to Ralph Pursell for arranging this and to Ian Watson, the farmer who has delivered the loads of manure.

The special orders are already being posted and seed orders should start to be received within the next two weeks. We expect potatoes to be delivered sometime in late January. Once the potatoes arrive we will make arrangements for collection or delivery.

Rotavation.

If you would like you plot rotavated with the tractor and large agricultural rotavator the cost is £25. Please contact Peter Toogood, Vice Chairmen on 01908 645670

Pumpkin Competition

Several members entered the pumpkin competition which was judged by Peter Leadbeater on the morning of 4th October. There were some large pumpkins and Peter measured them all! It was a close call with Angela Price and Christine Owen being declared the winners. Angela's pumpkin weighed 106lbs and Christine's 104lbs. Angela was declared the winner. However, as the difference was negligible they shared the prize of gardening vouchers which had been generously donated by Peter.

A View from the Field

by Peter Leadbeater

What you should be doing in October/November

- Carry out any pruning required on fruit bushes – currants, gooseberries, and blackberries. Summer fruiting raspberries should have the strongest canes tied to support wires. The old canes and any weak growth should then be cut back to ground level. Leave Autumn fruiting raspberries until the end of January before cutting to ground level.
- As blackcurrants fruit on new wood, try to remove a proportion of the old wood. Red and white currants fruit on the old wood so cutting back ie.

shortening the new growth will encourage fruiting.

- For blackberries, cut back old growth and any weak briars to ground level and tie the new briars to the support wires. Loganberries and Tayberries should be treated in the same way.
- Propogating more bushes from the offcuts is relatively easy. Use pieces of new growth in all cases. For Blackcurrants - cut cleanly and squarely just below the bud to form the base of the cutting and make a sloping cut just above the bud at the upper end – length 200 – 250mm. Make a slit with a spade in a sheltered spot and plant the cutting with half the length below ground level and firm in.
- For red/white currants and gooseberries – prepare as above but rub off all of the buds which will be below ground and one or two above so that when the bushes grow they are on a short leg.
- Blackberries etc. can be reproduced by pegging down the tip of a new briar allowing it to root before cutting away from the parent plant.
- Plant fruit trees, bushes and canes. Bareroot trees are available at this time of year. Plant to match the soil mark on the trunk. Tie the trunk loosely to a stake, firming in and water well.
- Put grease bands on fruit trees to prevent female (wingless) winter moths from laying their eggs.
- Sow broad beans at the beginning of November. Suitable varieties are 'Aquadulce' and 'The Sutton'
- Clear any spare areas of your plot and start winter digging, leave the ground rough to the weather.
- Harvest any available vegetables as required. Most common now are cabbage, brussel sprouts, autumn cauliflower, leeks and parsnips.
- Plan you plot for next year, rotating the crops. Remember to leave adequate space next the track for manure delivery. No over wintering vegetables should be planted in that space.

Pests

The following advice continues Peter Leadbeater's series on pests.

Aphids (greenfly, blackfly and mealy)

These pests attack the soft new growth of plants - feeding on the sap. They breed very rapidly and spread if not controlled. Beans, particularly broad beans, are regularly subjected to blackfly. Autumn sowing reduces the risk and the removal of the growing tip of the plant is a great help. Spraying with soapy water assists or spray with a suitable insecticide. Mealy aphids, a pest which attacks brassicas, (this includes Swedes) and shows distorted leaves with yellow blotches. On examination especially of the underside of the leaves powdery grey colonies of the aphid will be seen. It is most harmful in the early part of the year (May/June) as the plants growth can be permanently stunted. The cure is to spray with insecticide.

Gooseberry Sawfly

The caterpillars feed on the leaves of gooseberries and red and white currants. Several generations occur in the year with the eggs being laid in the centre of the bush. The caterpillars move up the stems as a group and can, if unchecked, completely defoliate the bush. This reduces the crop of berries. Pruning to keep the centre of the bush open helps and the caterpillars can be removed by hand or by use of insecticide. Attacks can start early in May.

Carrot Fly

This pest ruins the edible roots of carrots and related plants (eg. parsnips and parsley) as the larvae tunnel

into them. There are two generations of the fly. Sow carrots thinly to avoid the need to thin out and, when harvesting, take them all working gradually along the row as needed. Control can be achieved by treating the seed drill with chlorpyrifos granules. Fleece provides good protection and a new biological control, the predatory Rove beetle is available but expensive. As the adult fly is low flying, placing a barrier about 18" high around the bed can prevent infestation. I have never tried this – maybe they fly into it and break their necks!! I am assured it works.

Newsletter

Contributions and ideas are welcome from all members. Contact Marie on 585284 or secretary@wsallotmentsociety.co.uk

Small Ads.

Two plastic compost bins available. Phone Val Kelsey on 582803 if you are interested.