

December 2008 Newsletter

Committee News

At its last meeting the Committee agreed an action plan based on members comments at the SGM.

There will be work done on fences, hedges and trees as a priority. We are getting quotes for clearing the ditch on the Bow Brickhill Road end of the field. Hopefully, we will have a noticeboard in place soon and details of work to be undertaken will be posted there.

At the SGM we proposed plot identifiers. One member has the great idea of marking plot numbers on structures eg. water tanks. This will be done over the winter months. Re-measuring and straightening of some plots will also be done. Individual plot holders will be contacted as this work is carried out.

The final Committee meeting of this year is scheduled to take place on 18th December.

Thank you to all Members of the Society for your support throughout this year, and for your kind comments about the work of the Committee.

Membership News

Rosina Borrelli has moved from the area and so has given up her plot. Welcome to new tenant, Liz Farrant and new member Ian Parfitt. The waiting list currently stands at 17.

Field Matters

1 PLEASE DO NOT DRIVE ON THE FIELD.

We are not so much worried about you getting stuck but we are more concerned about possible damage to the water pipe, ruts forming and the compaction of the ground due to being constantly driven over – especially by 4 x 4s.

2. Manure

We are grateful to local farmer Ian Watson for delivering the manure and to Ralph Pursell for arranging the deliveries. It is inevitable that the weight of the tractor and trailer has churned up parts of the track and the edges of some plots - especially because of the recent spate of wet weather. The manure deliveries are now finished for this year. It would be very helpful if plot holders, who have received manure, could help out by smoothing ruts close to their plots and, if relevant, on neighbouring plots.

3. Water Tanks

The water supply to the field will be turned off on 24th November. Over the winter our beloved Chairman will be getting his hands dirty (and wet) servicing each of the water tanks. In order not to upset him would you please not wash vegetables and tools in the water tanks!

4. Skip

We are planning to have a skip on the field at the end of February. More details in the new year.

5. Potato & Onion Orders

Weather permitting, potatoes and onions will be with us in January. We are asking members to collect them this year as there will be over 400kg of potatoes alone. Details of collection will be in the January newsletter.

A View from the Field

our regular advice from Peter Leadbeater.

As there is little advice to give for December and January, this month Peter has written a piece about fertilisers.

In order to grow and remain healthy plants require a variety of nutrients to be available in the soil. The three most important being Nitrogen (N), Phosphorous (P) and Potassium (K).

Each has a different function: nitrogen produces healthy foliage; phosphorous promotes good root growth and potassium (often referred to as potash) is important for flowering and fruiting.

In addition to the big three there are other chemical elements needed for good growth known as trace elements eg. boron, magnesium, copper, iron and calcium.

The make up of general purpose and special fertilisers is generally shown as the NPK value plus trace elements which may be listed eg. Growmore NPK 7-7-7 is a general purpose fertiliser. The figures indicate the percentage of each element present and are always shown in the order NPK.

Fertilisers are available in powder, liquid and granular form and slow release.

Types of Fertilisers

Bonemeal is high in P and good for root development. Super Phosphate (typically NPK 0 -17-0) promotes root development.

Dried Blood high in N produces healthy leaves and so is useful on leafy crops such as cabbage.

Sulphate of Ammonia, high in N (20 – 30%) is perfect for green crops such as brassicas but should be used sparingly.

Sulphate of Potash, high in K, improves the performance of flowering and fruiting and is used for crops such as tomatoes and soft fruit.

Farmyard Manure

This varies considerably but has an N value of about 5%, however, it will contain many trace elements and is an excellent soil improver and helps to retain moisture during dry spells.

Poultry/Chicken Manure

Usually higher in nitrogen than farmyard manure, it is good for enriching the soil and suitable for all purposes. It is available in pelleted form.

Slow Release Fertilisers

These take a while for the nutrients to become available to the roots of the plants but then are released in a burst and last about a month.

Controlled-Release Fertilisers

These have been designed to release their nutrients slowly over a period of time, maybe up to 6 months, or even 12 months, feeding the plants slowly and continually.

Small Ads.

A water butt and compost bin are available to any member who would like them. Please contact Marie: secretary@wsallotmentsociety.co.uk

Newsletter

This month sees a complete run through for a year. Not wishing to be repetitive in 2009, we would welcome articles written by members of the Society and suggestions for items for next year.

Over 50 members receive the newsletter by email each month and most of the rest are delivered by members of the Committee. (For those of you who have commerrted about envelopes, it is cheaper to buy envelopes from Costco and print the names than it is to purchase & print labels!)

We now post just 6 newsletters each month.

If you have an email address please let Marie know.