

Cripley Meadow Newsletter

July 2012

Next Working party

Sun 8 July 10.30 am-12.30. Weeding, digging out old fences and cutting boundaries on the island is our priority. We will need lots of pairs of hands to keep up with the weeds!

Castle Mill are inviting members to view the building site

On the evening of Tuesday 17th July 2012 at 6.10pm . There will be snacks and nibbles and refreshing drinks. Please let Wendy know if you wish to attend. We will take the first 20. If there are more who wish to visit we will arrange another visit.

Jericho Street Fair makes us £320

Alison, Alex, John, Tony, Richard and Claire managed the stall and we raised £320 - so a very good result. Wendy, Jeremy Alison, Jamie, Alex, Claire, James, Gabi and David, David, Wendy Ball, David and Lesly, Sedhar, Hannah, Mark, Sara, Izzy and Martha all helped with the stall by moving, selling, setting out and bringing plants. We had more variety of plants with vegetable seedlings, flowers, shrubs and fruit trees as well as more contributors this year which certainly provoked more interest and reward. Many thanks. The money raised will as always go to the association and this year it will help with our bee friendly planting and bird boxes on the island.



Cripley Island Orchard and Open Day is 11am-3pm on Sunday 19 August It would be great to see as many

plottolders and open plots as possible. This is a great opportunity for all members to discuss gardening with visitors, invite friends and family and visit one another's plots.

SKIPS and Landfill charge changes You may have read in the newspapers about the changes immediately implemented on landfill tax. This will have an effect on our skip hire charge. There was a wheel and its tyre in our last skip for which we will be invoiced an extra £7.50 + VAT. The committee will discuss this at their meeting and we may have to alter how the skip is used. One suggestion is that we may need to cover and lock the skip and only allow supervised filling on working party days.

Audit follow up on July 15

All plots have audit letters in the spring. They came from Claire and Alex if you have email or were posted if not. As we are sure you can imagine this is a fairly thankless but necessary task for the committee. We do enjoy going round all the plots but positive comments from members showing they are aware of the importance of this to the site really helps make a hard task easier. If you have had a timed warning or were asked to contact us we will be looking through these replies to Alex and Clare at our meeting on July 9 and we will be doing a follow up on July 15.

We recognise it has been the wettest June on record and July has not started out too well either. Strange when not so long ago we were worried about the lack of water! The problems this unseasonable weather brings are certainly difficult to overcome as no one enjoys gardening in the pouring rain and it has been difficult to grab a bit of dry time. We have recognised this in doing the audit and we can tell the difference between sustained lack of cultivation and a few annual weeds. However the latter do continue to grow at an alarming rate as they love this weather. Do try keep on top of them as they quickly swamp your crops. Onions in particular suffer with weeds which slow down growth and keep the water on the onions so mildews and fungal problems develop.

If you need temporary help on your plot to solve a plot problem or to tide you over a busy patch or just to water and cut the grass while you are on holiday, our Field Secretary Richard Haigh on plot 15 is available. He charges £10 per hour and is very experienced. Also Victor is available for thorough digging and weeding (at the same charge) ...as soon as his cut finger mends. If you want help contact Richard on richaloe@spamarrest.com or Victor on Plot 130A or write to him at 21 Whitworth Place, Canal Street OX2 6BZ

Be cautious about intruders We still have some ongoing interference with our site fence and flyposting. Please do not let anyone in who you do not personally know as a member and report any worrying activity at the gate to the committee or to Sarah Lally, one of our local police officers.

City Allotment Competition next judging is in early September. The first Judging was Tuesday

30 May. We entered the site and 3 plots entered.
The judges were impressed at our new south field and our many fantastic and varied plots.

Lunch on the Green September 16th....with the community brass band 'Horns a Plenty' have been booked for our annual Lunch on the Green. Now almost all plots have numbers the committee have decided to continue awarding £15 gardening tokens each year. This year it is for the most outstanding newcomers and goes to Plots SF1 and SF116...t. This will be presented at Lunch on the Green



Our waiting list for plots is starting again but we have a few Communal beds available.

These have been a great success. They can be the most productive plots on the site and we still have a few small plots available for this summer if you know of any newcomers who want to get started growing!

Vegetable stuff

If you're growing garlic, keep an eye on it. I have harvested mine but once the foliage starts to go over or it forms a hard neck the bulbs start to break up into individual bulbs ready to grow next year. Once harvested, drying the bulbs is vital so find somewhere under-cover with good airflow so they will dry out. A slatted bench in the greenhouse

can be the answer but watch out for sunny days as you can end up cooking the garlic.

If you have a polytunnel or greenhouse try to ensure good ventilation or mildew problems will set in. And it is easy to forget that your greenhouse plants still need watering regularly when it is pouring with rain.

Comfrey Feed

My tomatoes are (finally) developing fruits! I use my own comfrey based feed which I also use on cucumbers, peppers and aubergines. I grow Bocking 14 comfrey on the plot and cut just before the blue flowers open. Do cover up as you cut as some people find the sap very irritating. I put the leaves in an old water butt with a hole in the bottom. I weight the top of the leaves with bricks and the black liquid oozes through into a covered bucket. Some people cover with water but I find this gives more smell and a weaker liquor. Just cover the bottom of the watering can with the black liquid top up with water. You can water with it and use as a foliar feed.

For more info on crops and jobs go to the web site
Good gardening...Wendy