

Cripley Meadow Newsletter August 2012

Diary Dates:

Working party is **Sun 12th August**
10.30 am-12.30 at the shed

We will be working on the island and **clearing plots.**

Open day is Sunday
19 August 12 – 3

Do

- Come along with friends and family to be on your plot or just to take this opportunity to visit other's plots.
- Print **a poster** (attached) and put it in your window at home
- If you want to have your plot open there will be signs available on the day
- If you do not want visitors but want to be around just keep your gate shut
- If you have any **spare veg/fruit or flowers put them on the Green** so visitors can share allotment produce

This is a good opportunity to learn about different crops and styles of growing and to meet other members

New crops growing on Cripley



The red crop is Datta and it is the stem that is eaten. Adnan and his mum and aunty are also growing some impressive Bangladeshi marrows, pumpkins and squash and it is worth a trip to SF117 to see some different ways of growing them.

Longcross visit 17th July They have some interesting views across the site and allotments



The site work has uncovered an impressive range of bottles and jars. It was good to see the rooms developing with great views over the allotments and to see some of the water retention methods they have used. We were made very welcome



They were really helpful in carrying out the fence work we agreed with Oxford University. We are still working on this. Sadly carrots are still being

devastated and we have found another loophole to fill!

Crisis (Charity for the Homeless) is running the site café and the kitchen **welcome any spare crops from Cripley Meadow** members. All proceeds from the use of the café will be donated by Longcross to the charity. Just leave your produce in the basket (if it is there) or on the fence by the site buildings.

Bio tank Longcross have just taken delivery of the first sewage bio converter in the country. We have been meeting with their environmental consultant Iain Henderson to see if we can develop a project to test this out on Cripley Meadow. It is supposed to make the uptake of food/water much more efficient and produce food which stays fresh longer. If we can work this out our members will run a trial using 2 new polytunnels and attach some more water tanks to the new association shed. Early days yet!



Possible well covers

The committee is looking at whether access chambers could be used by members to make wells raised and

safe. Here is Rodney and a stack of the covers.

If you have not already noticed the wonderful smell whilst coming over the bridge it is from the lime tree in flower by the car park.

The weather continues to be depressing but on the bright side we have had more rain than 2007 and MUCH less flooding. 2007 was the year when I decided to raise the level of my plot as much as possible by using the rough compost. There is still some available on the green waste piles if you have areas where the plants have not survived the slug fest.

You might have noticed yellowing leaves on your waterlogged plants. There are two possible causes for this. Firstly, the water is washing out nutrients from the soil, mainly the nitrogen which is the shortest lasting of the food trio. Your best answer for this is some liquid high nitrogen feed. A liquid feed is far faster acting than a solid feed. The second cause, drowning, is harder to solve. Roots need air as well as water and food. Usually there's enough in the soil but when it is sodden the plant is drowning. Loosening the soil with a fork may well help get some air in and the water away but often it's just too wet to do much apart from hope for sun at this stage.

Potato Blight The weather has been perfect for blight. There is a good article

about potato blight by following this link: [Potato Blight](#). Once you've noticed blight it's usually too late to stop it but you can limit the damage. The blight resistant varieties like the Sarpo strains fare much better than others but it's an ongoing battle, a bit like winter flu vaccines. Last year's vaccine may help a bit but this year's flu is going to make you ill. The strains of blight mutate and change so that a plant that was resistant to one type may succumb to another. Don't think you're safe when you've harvested, either. Do sort and bin those affected (not the compost bin) and keep checking them. You can give the unaffected ones a quick wash. Just be sure they're properly dry before you bag them up again.

Tomato Troubles. Remember tomatoes are the same family as potatoes and they can get blight as well. It's less likely in a greenhouse or polytunnel as the spores are mostly kept away. But it can get in and cause just as much devastation as with the spuds. There is not a lot of sun about so removing any yellowing or diseased leaves from the tomato plants may help more light get to the fruit.

And Finally...it's not all doom and gloom as the sun is shining now and some crops seem to be doing fine like the beans and finally my beans and chick peas are coming along. - [How to Store Your Home Grown Produce](#) has good ideas on how to manage any surplus.

Chick pea I am trying again

This year I managed to find some chick pea seeds. I have tried to grow these before no success. These are from 'seeds of Italy' and have been well trialled in our climate. They were sown inside in Feb with great germination and planted out in March! The weather was against us from April but they were protected by environmesh and some flowers were seen



in Late May/June. These were dropping off without being pollinated. There are bees all over my plot and other things were pollinating well. However as the sun came out briefly the flowers have opened more and we now have pods.

***Good gardening
Wendy***