

Cripley Meadow Allotments Newsletter October 2013

October working party

Is Sunday 13 October 10.30 to 12.30. There are a number of plots that need a lot of work clearing and the island tumps and boundaries need their autumn prep for the winter months.

Cripley Meadow trading starts: compost for sale from this weekend

We met Tom Wilson and succeeded in getting a much better price for his bagged compost/manure, which we will now be responsible for selling on site. Sarah Edwards, our new committee member organising trading, will start sales this weekend. The price to members is **£4.50 per bag** (cash or cheque). This is the first of our trading items – more will follow in the spring. We aim to save on travel miles and traffic on site, as well as provide a service to members.

Where? The Association's shed on the south field (concrete shed a few yards from main path on the left – by the ash tree).

When? These are initial dates (further dates/times will be displayed on members' noticeboard and in newsletter):

Sunday October 13th 9.45 – 10.30 am and 12.30 – 1pm (i.e. before and after Working Party)

Saturday October 19th 10.30 – 11.30

Sunday October 27th 10.30 – 11.30

Saturday Nov 2nd 10.30 – 11.30

NB We may decide to close in bad weather.

If you can't make these times, Sarah will be happy to do sales when she is on site – her plot is 120 on the south field, next to the trading shed (on the left as you face the shed door).

We plan to purchase a trolley so you can transport around the site more easily. Meanwhile, if you need to borrow a barrow or need help getting bags to your plot, speak to Sarah.



Bumper season

Many members have reported a bumper season of crops and their delight at seeing so

many butterflies and bees. Some of us have had

to relearn our butterfly names due to lack of use over the past two years.

Our enormous variety of flowering vegetables,

flowers and fruit is the very best news for the bumble, solitary and micro bees that make up the most and the best of the pollinators in this country. On the whole do not seem to be the pest problems that honey bees are experiencing. Let's hope nobody works out how to make them an agricultural tool and messes them about too.



A lot of members now grow borlotti /cannellini beans for drying for the winter. Hopefully this year's crops will inspire you to give it a go if you have not done it before. Some find climbing beans a little difficult to get going. Certainly I had to sow one row twice but these are my saved seeds and I had enough. They need a good, humous rich soil to retain moisture (remember I do not water my plot other than if sowing when there has been no rain) but then they require no attention other than picking, shelling and drying. The climbing frame needs to be strong.

Over the winter we hope to have enough members and time in WPs to mend and paint a label our recycled wheel barrows and leave them outside the shed so that members can borrow them for specific jobs. They must be returned to the shed area immediately after use and not kept on plots overnight.

CYRIL PEAD plot 50a

I know many of you have already heard the sad news about Cyril who 'passed away peacefully in hospital on 19th September 2013, aged 67. Dearly loved husband to Sue and a much loved brother and uncle. He will be sadly missed by all his family and friends'.

The funeral service was on Thursday 3rd October at Oxford Crematorium. It was standing room only at the crematorium and at least 11 Cripley Meadow members attended. Some went on to see Sue and family at The Bookbinders. Donations can still be made in Cyril's name to Sobell House Hospice Charity c/o The Co-operative Funeralcare, Holyoake Hall, London Road, Headington OX3 9ED.

Cyril joined us as a member in 2007 when he retired from Lucy's. It feels as though he had been a member for much longer as he and Sue were so well known in Jericho. Cyril loved looking after his plot and Sue liked to come and walk round and have a chat. Cyril loved to chat about news from

the heart of Jericho's community centre. It is sad that he did not get back to the plot this year. The association has helped to keep his plot going with some mowing where we could. Sedhar very kindly planted some vegetables and not only tended them but also took some produce for Sue and Cyril.

2nd Audit

Is on Sunday October 26th

Plots must be open. Audit reminders are on the web site and noticeboard. Please make sure you have taken action on any previous reminders so that we can all continue to work together in accordance with our agreed rules and advice.

Fruit

2 Member's have reported pears being stolen this year. Please keep an eye and let us know of any unusual behaviour or people you do not recognise on plots.

A lot of members have reported great apple crops. Our orchard is developing but has been slow to establish given 2 years of drought followed by being under water for over 80 days over the winter. We have not lost any trees but we will not there are not apple crops to share as yet.

Roger Dudman Way Cycle Track

opened on October 5th We are now getting enquiries about plots from our new neighbours.

Competition Awards Evening in the Town Hall in the Town Hall on Thursday October at 7pm.

OCC and ODFAA Allotment Competition Celebration of Awards and Certificates Evening takes place The judges John Alcock and Mike Kent will be there and Martin Stott, a director of Garden Organic will present the prizes and certificates. Cripsey Meadow entered the site competition and Richard and Jean entered the over 70s.

Sorry we had to cancel Lunch on the Green but after such a lovely summer the weather was not on our side. We will let you know if and when

we can find a space/suitable weather to organise a **BBQ around a bonfire in November**

Things to look up in [Gardeners Year](#)

Garlic It's time to think about ordering and planting your garlic.

Comfrey As you know I am a real fan of comfrey as it makes a great tomato feed for free and can be used as a fertiliser for potatoes and fruit trees and bushes. It's as rich as manure when it comes to getting a compost heap going and, combined with leafmould, produces a great seed compost. At this time of year I cut down any remaining leaves and put into my feed maker. This is a large water butt with a hole in the bottom and a bucket underneath to catch the dripping 'black liquid'. This store gets me started before the leaves come back up. A good comfrey plant can take 3 to 4 cuts during a good season. Cut before the flowers develop for the best results. I usually check there is flowering comfrey around for the bees. Cripsey is the best place for bumble and solitary bees as there is a wide mixture of flowers to suit many different species.

John Harrison's monthly newsletter also has this information about dock leaves from Amber Newell; She writes "I value dock leaves for lining containers when I collect soft fruit. It keeps the fruit fresher longer. They were once used to wrap butter for taking to market. Maybe this is why. Also I planted soapwort as I need it for delicate textiles. A leaf makes handy soap rubbed in wet hands when up the plot. And dock leaves come in again as wipes and towels"

As a child we used dock as an 'emergency wipe' when out camping or walking but I'd never heard of the other uses.

Thanks for reading and good growing Wendy