

Cripley Meadow Allotment Association Newsletter

Feb 2013

www.cripleymeadow.org.uk

Next working Party is Sunday Feb 10 10.30 to 12.30. We are looking forward to seeing more members this Sunday for the working party. Weather permitting we shall be moving tarps, moving compost and generally being good eggs! Soon things will be warming up and every day it stays light for another 2+ minutes! Your invoice will already have been done so if you attend this working party and have done your 3 hours you can subtract the £15. **This year to date members have contributed about 300 hours.** Many thanks to all.

Our OXCLEAN time is 10.30 til 12.30 on Saturday Mar 2

Here is the crew from last year. We meet by the gate at 10.



The AGM is on Monday March 25th at St Barnabas School Hart Street, Jericho. Meeting starts at 7pm but members of the Committee will be present **from 6.00**

pm for you to pay your subscription. There will be nibbles/drinks from then so that you can chat to us and other members.

The annual report is attached with a copy of the letter and AGM agenda that you will get with your invoice. We generally post the invoice and this formal notification as we realise not everyone reads their email.

You may have got your subscription invoice already as we processed them on Monday. They will be either hand-delivered or sent by Royal Mail so if you have moved and not renewed your contact details. Please contact: alison@oxford-canal.demon.co.uk if your invoice does not arrive within a week of this email or if there is a problem.

Our gardening year starts on 15th March so the next working party will be credited in 2013. **If you are not planning to work your plot this year please tell us now so that the plot can be available for a new member.**

It was agreed at the AGM in 2010 that late payers would be charged. A late payment surcharge of £10 will be any applied after 31st March 2012. Most members now pay by cheque by post or online but we have a **Subscription Hour** at the Shed on **Sunday March 17** from 11am to 12pm. If anyone has difficulty paying their subscription please be in touch with Alison or Wendy.

The weather and flooding

I am sure everyone is keen to get growing again but most plots are still too wet. Given the high water table this is likely to continue until we get some significant sun/warmth. Be cautious. I am as usual emptying my compost bins (a bit difficult and messy as this area still just under water but I am putting it in top of the soil as no way it can be dug. Starting seeds off indoors or under heat in a greenhouse can be a bit tricky due to short daylight hours. The days are getting longer but we're quite a way off the spring equinox where day and night are equal length on March 20th. Lack of light results in leggy seedlings that never seem to do as well. You can increase the amount of light by putting a mirror at the back to reflect light back onto them. Shiny kitchen foil stuck to cardboard makes a good cheap mirror and swap the seed tray around each day to stop them being drawn to the window.

When you can get to it there is rough compost on 109 and 84 and we should have a delivery of parks compost and St John's leaves sometime.. but it is still too wet to get on site much of the time. Please do not drive on the site unless absolutely necessary and you are confident it will not damage paths. Never collect compost by car. The path by 109 is now a mud field due to this activity. The central and stream paths past the green have no hard core and can only be used when dry.

Paths We will be doing some more path maintenance as soon as the weather allows. Do remember these are paths not roads.

**Offers from our John Harrison link.
15% Off Walk In Fruit Cages**

If you've had enough of the birds getting your fruit - or your prize brassicas, then take a look at Harrod Horticultural fruit cages. Pop the code **JHCG15** in at the checkout and get 15% discount.

Edible Garden Show Offer

The Edible Garden Show in Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire runs from March 15-17, has loads of exhibitors as well as talks and demonstrations from celebrity gardeners and cookery demonstrations.

Tickets cost £15 for adults with concessions for children and the elderly. But show organisers are offering us a third off with two tickets for £20. Simply quote **JOHN2013** but don't delay - the offer is limited to the first 500 applicants. For more show information or to buy tickets visit: www.theediblegardenshow.co.uk or **telephone 0844 338 8001**

Outdoor Sowing and Planting

Most of the site is still too wet but if you have one of the few plots out of the and you're going to plant out or direct sow into the ground in early spring, try putting a cloche up or covering the ground with horticultural fleece a couple of weeks before hand. It will warm the ground up a couple of degrees.

Chitting Potatoes

If you're chitting your potatoes in a shed or garage, watch out for very cold nights. If they get frosted at this stage your chances are pretty slim. Covering with fleece or newspaper is usually enough.

Pruning

Don't forget this is the last month for pruning apples and pears. Next month the sap will start moving and before you know it, they'll be in leaf. If you can get to them it is also the time to cut autumn fruiting raspberries down to the ground to stimulate the new canes and don't forget the blackcurrants.

Good gardening to all.