

# Cripley Meadow June Newsletter 2015

[www.cripley Meadow.org.uk](http://www.cripley Meadow.org.uk)

**Next Working party is  
Sunday 14th June** from 10.30  
to 12.30. Meet at the shed.

Jobs include: plot clearing, shed  
removal and building and filling  
raised beds.

[See more May working party  
photos](#)



## **We still have plots**

**available.** We have taken on  
13 new members so far this  
year. We are still busy clearing  
plots and making raised beds  
on plots 64/65. These are for  
members with less mobility.



**Jericho Street Fair Saturday  
June 13** We hope you are still  
busy collecting and potting up  
for our **Cripley Meadow Stall.**

**Split** garden perennials, self-  
seeded plants, potted cuttings  
and pricked out seedlings as  
well as whole packets of seeds  
or leftover onion sets are  
welcome as well as any jams or  
chutneys or cakes etc. made  
from allotment produce.

**Please bring your offerings  
between 11 and 12.30 and  
you can buy from 12 to 4.**

Please do not bring after 1pm.  
Mine are all boxed up ready to  
move.



This is our 9<sup>th</sup> year at this  
important community event.  
The committee and members  
contribute plants and work the  
stall and the proceeds go to the  
site.

**Trading** The shop will open as  
usual during June ie 11am -  
12noon most Sundays, 12 -  
1pm on the Working Party day  
(14th June). Many thanks to  
people who've given seeds  
(more welcome!) - we still have  
spares to give away. Everything  
on our pricelist is available and  
a range of second hand  
tools/equipment. Members who  
can't come on Sundays are  
welcome to arrange one-off  
sales, weekday or weekend, by  
contacting: Sarah  
(sarahjehome@aol.com or 07960  
352787) or Sara Jones  
(allotment@qtq.org). Sarah is  
also happy to do sales when  
she is on her plot, which is 120,  
right next to the shop. Please  
note that we may close in bad  
weather

**Water testing** The wells were  
tested for the last time in April.  
The University have submitted  
the latest Groundwater  
Monitoring Interim Report. No  
exceedences above the trigger  
level have been recorded in any  
of the allotment wells.

The results indicate that there  
was no significant impact from  
the diesel spill on allotment  
water quality.

Emily Green | Environmental  
Sustainability Officer  
Environmental  
Development Oxford City  
Council

**The next audit is on Sunday  
July 6. We have a few  
locked gates (?) so please  
ensure these are open  
before our 8am start.** The  
rules can be found on our web  
site. Please check your audit  
email/letter from October and  
follow up any action...

otherwise we have to send it  
again! Our job is to work with  
what the lease and AGM agrees  
is necessary to allow members  
to work together and protect  
the land for growing food for  
many more years to come. It is  
much harder to grow if you are  
next to a constant source of  
seeding weeds. Apart from  
holidays and emergencies,  
which we all have, plots  
generally need working weekly.  
A weekly hoe and grass cut will  
keep most seeding problems  
managed.

**This year we will continue  
to focus on the following  
areas:**

- **Between plot buffer  
paths.** All members should  
be working to keep or re-  
establish, keep and manage  
the buffer path which must  
be between all plots. (See  
rules). Generally this is the  
path to your left when  
standing at your shed. For  
plots 120 - 158, the shed  
positions are now varied as  
members can have their  
shed at either end of the  
plot. If you have one of  
those plots and a shed at  
the flats end, the buffer  
path you should maintain  
will on the right as you face  
your plot with your back to  
the flats. This path should  
be kept cut and weed free  
and must not be used as a  
compost area. Some of  
these got a bit confused in  
reclamation and fence  
building so if you are not  
sure where yours is you  
should ask. Wendy can  
generally recall who put up

which fence and it is these that at times confuse the issue. We are very unusual in having fences but paths between are a must on all allotment sites

#### **Please note fences on site**

were erected as a necessary rabbit defence. Now we have lost the rabbits and the fences have proved ineffective re badgers and muntjak. We recommend that you take them out unless you can keep them clear of perennial weed. They are now proving really problematic in the transfer of perennial weeds across the site and plots. All fences (and other areas of plots) must be managed so they do not allow perennial weeds like ground elder and horsetail to make further inroads.

- **Adjacent fences** must be kept clear of growth that is over the height of the buffer path (3 ft. max)
- **Headland fences** must be regularly managed to keep perennial weeds out. Ground elder and horsetail are still spreading across the site along these.
- **Glass** No glass panes, windows, shower cubicles can be brought on site. Please skip them. If already in use in a building they must be replaced with plastic/polythene before broken. Sadly most is stored and breaks before ever used. We already have far too much glass in the soil for comfort.
- **Rubbish and stored materials.** If you bring material on site for sheds, structures etc. you must first have permission and it must be used quickly. The site and plots cannot be used for storage and not at all for non-allotment or non-harvested stuff.

**Storage round the association shed.** Please do not take any materials from around the green association shed **without permission**, apart from rubble and plant pots. This is one of the places the committee store materials we can recycle or use on site. We are still reorganising.

**BONFIRES** As the weather gets warmer and windows are open please limit bonfires as much as possible and always follow the bonfire code on the noticeboard. Remember the Oxford City Council soil analysis of the allotment site (2008 to 2011) found traces of polyaromatic hydrocarbons in the soil. These could have resulted from Victorian ash but also could have been produced by more recent bonfires. Where possible we are advised not to hold bonfires on plots for fear of adding to these traces and inconveniencing others. There is a **communal bonfire facility**, just near the main allotment shed, by the Cripsey Island Orchard entrance. This is now too large for members to burn. You can leave allotment waste for burning but please do not leave brought in furniture from home or kitchen tops as they are full of glue and make the ash unusable for soil conditioning.

Help yourself to the ash to put around your fruit bushes, or to discourage slugs and snails. Bonfires are permitted in all areas of the city providing you do not cause nuisance to other people but if you make your own bonfire, please conform to the Code of practice for bonfires on Allotment sites. OCC advice about bonfires

**ONLY HAVE BONFIRES IF YOU ARE SURE THE MATERIAL IS DRY AND THERE is an easterly wind**

**and it will not disturb anyone else.**

**From OCC  
FREE compost giveaway  
Saturday 27 June  
10am – 12 noon  
Florence Park  
Rymers Lane, OX4 3PW  
Bring a bag AND spade  
and take some compost  
made from Oxford's food  
and garden recycling**

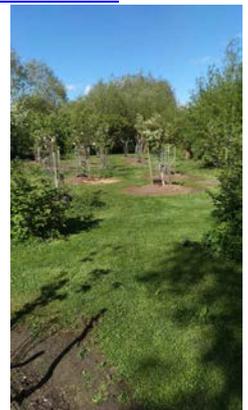
#### **Cripsey Island Orchard**

We were struggling to keep the boundaries managed over the past two flooded years but we have now made progress and the island is looking wonderful. This is our quiet space. Please ensure your children are always supervised. There is a very overgrown pond which is only wet with the water level but the banks are no longer visible so do steer clear. If members want a bbq on a bigger space than on their plot The Green is available. Click here to find [more recent photos of the island on the web site.](#)

**It is now 5 years since we cleared the island and planted this orchard. It is a magical place with an amazing setting.**

**Both orchards had blossom this year so we hope to organise some picking days in September/October.**

**We have entered the site for the City Allotment Competition.** The first plot judging is on June 14<sup>th</sup> and then again in September. ODFAA and OCC run this



competition so that members across the city can participate. They aim to celebrate sites, members and good practice. ODFAA work to ensure OCC are kept aware that our designated allotment spaces are well used. Please try to make sure headlands and fences are managed and there is no rubbish around as this is part of the site judging. 2 members have entered this year.

There is always a monthly fresh supply of grass cuttings on the Arcadian living plots.



**We hope to be turning the green waste plots in late June/early July so there will be new compost eventually.** Please leave till the autumn to cook. The green waste piles on 86 and 109 are for Arcadian Living who pay for this plot and manage the turning. When you take from these green waste sites please pile up the brash and woody bits tidily so it can be moved more easily. Periodically we will try get the shredder to process this... and make more green waste for compost making for members who bring stuff to shred. **Members may use the pit on plot 66 for green waste.**

### **MOWING**

Do keep rubbish off headlands and paths as this can wreck the mowing machine. Barnaby tries to cut as low as possible to avoid coming more than once a month. Mowing is a very large part of our site maintenance expenses.

**Cropping at last!** We have had fantastic asparagus this year and our artichokes have been heading up since April. The asparagus beetle is being regularly squashed and the elephant garlic is growing well. The first peas and beans are nearly there and we have had the first few strawberries.

**We have lots of good gardeners on Cripely so if you are new or struggling a bit do take a walk around. There are so many different and great ways for using plots within the rules**

**Sweetcorn Tips** Sow or plant out under a cloche or the ever popular enviromesh. But beware we still have the risk of badger visits when ripe and before that late frosts. But beware my latest ever record of frost on Cripely was June 6 so we are safe? Sweetcorn doesn't like it cool.

### **Carrot Tips**

If the early ones failed you still have plenty of time to sow more carrots. Early varieties are full size in just 12 weeks unlike maincrops that take 16 weeks, although they generally grow bigger and keep longer.

### **June drop**

Thin apples to one every 4 to 6 inches if nature does not do it for you and pears to 2 per cluster

### **Compost efficiency**

If your soil's quality isn't all it could be you can make your compost and manure go further by using it where it is most needed. When planting out pumpkins and squashes, dig a hole roughly 60cm on a side and the same deep. Mix the soil in your wheelbarrow 50:50 with compost and refill the hole which will now become a

mound and plant out on that. For crops in rows you can do the same, drawing out a shallow trench and refilling with an improved soil/compost mix. Eventually you'll improve the whole plot this way as the improved rows join together.

### **Cripely Soil set in June**

Remember Cripely soil generally 'sets' in June making it harder to dig. So if you have digging to do get going.

If you have spare ground do sow some green manure and improve the structure and fertility of your soil.

### **Sheds for sale**

**One of these small sheds and a larger 6x8 are on site for sale. These two are already made up the larger one will need building and some repair.**



We have one of these small pent sheds with paving slab standing available. They are on site on their backs on Plot 147 and are available to members to buy. We suggest £50 each one. There is a larger dismantled 8x6 shed also for £75 or ONO. This will need to be built and have some repair to the base and roof. We think they are in reasonable condition and will be bought as seen. Email if interested?

There is more gardening info on the web site  
Good gardening. Wendy