

# Cripley Meadow June Newsletter 2016

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

**It was wonderful to have seen some sunshine and warmth at last. That and the heavy rain have made for an explosion of growth so please make sure you keep your plot managed to that seeding weeds and grasses do not interfere with others growth.**

**Next Working party is Sunday 12th June** from 10.30 to 12.30. Meet at the shed. Jobs include: we are bedding in the new fence by raking over so we can mow it monthly. Bring rakes and forks. Also Cripely island orchard needs some work on the trees. Both these jobs need doing before the summer sets in so please do come and join us if you can. Weather permitting i.e. not raining, **we shall be sharing refreshments – tea, coffee, beer and wine afterwards if you wish to bring your lunch.**



**Cripley Island orchard has some new boxes for solitary**

**bee that are working well and it has a robin nest.**

**Jericho St Fair is Sat Jun 11**



We hope you have been 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. This year I have some sprouted yacon tubers. Gaby on plot 77 gave me one last year and the crop was enough to have some to pot on. It is a bit like a cross between a cucumber and a melon but very sweet and one of those indigestible sugars! It looks like a sweet potato and top growth is quite large.. some 3-4ft.

The site is beginning to get into its stride with lots of exciting new planting, sowing and finally..... crops. There are lots of good ideas so do take time to walk round .. it is well worth it.

**The small gate** needed some TLC this month so thanks for your patience whilst it was fixed. Thanks to Keith for this. We have had a few reports of the gates being left wide open or unlocked. Please remember to ALWAYS close and LOCK.

**We have some plots available.** We have taken on

19 new members so far this year. We have others on our list. We are reclaiming and reorganising some plots so they are covered. Also Francesco has been doing a great job removing old fences from released plots where they are full of weed or out of rule.

**Thanks to Jeremy** and the hired dumper truck we will finish filling the raised



beds and so will be advertising and offering these to people with some limited mobility.

The raised bed project has been made possible by a grant fund from OCC which was specifically for allotments to improve accessibility. Please let us know if you know someone who would benefit from being a member on one of these beds. The site paths are still not of great quality but this bed has better access both sides from the site paths. We have no toilet facilities but this extra height would be good for someone with a back or knee problem who finds bending down and kneeling problematic. We have left uprights so that they can be netted. We will be putting a communal shed on here with a ramp for the use of members and the orchard will give some pleasant shade. We will continue to mow this grass. As we do on other communal plots. Communal plots are ones with shared association sheds.

**Trading** Everything on our pricelist is available and we have some second hand tools /

equipment. We have a metal shed for sale (approx. 1.6 high, 2.3m wide, 1.1m deep) and a plastic mini-shed/tool store (approx. 1.4m wide, 1.1m high, 75cm deep). Shed on offer for £45 and tool store for £25. We also have compost bins and water containers.

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) 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

**The audit was on May 22<sup>nd</sup> so please watch out for your email letter and follow up any action!** Every plot gets one. The emails will go to the lead/invoice member. Some letters require immediate action if your plot is interfering with others. 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 focused on:**

- **Fence maintenance and management**
- **Rubbish and stored materials.**

### Cripsey Island Orchard



The trees have suffered from flood, drought and animals but and have survived but they are now

in need some emergency TLC



to prevent further damage. Richard seeded the tumps to try stabilise them, and Rodney removing the wires and stakes which are now pulling the eroded ones over! We need some help with this at the June WP. We are adding strimmer guards as we will go back to strimming the tumps ...and we found another nest!



Please do not BBQ here as it attracts animals.

### We have entered the site for the City Allotment Competition.

The first plot judging was on May 22<sup>nd</sup> and we had 5 entrants. ODFAA and OCC run this competition so that members across the city can participate. They aim to celebrate sites, members and good practice. ODFAA allows all allotment association sites across the city to work together for allotments and ensure allotment spaces are well used so they cannot be removed.



**We hope to be turning 109 green waste plot soon so there will be new compost in the autumn.** Please leave until 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.

**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. Asparagus, Lettuce and spring onions are cropping well but I



have pulled up my chard which

was serving us well but has finally gone to seed. It is a wonderful vegetable for coming through as an early spring crop after surviving the winter. My first peas and beans have flowered are nearly there but my carrots were very late germinating so it will be a while before they are pulled.

### **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. Pears are generally 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.

### **Cripley Soil set in June**

Remember Cripley soil generally 'sets' late in June making it harder to cultivate and dig. If you have spare ground, do sow some green manure and improve the structure and fertility of your soil.

### **Fencing project**

Water butts and trash pump trials are the next job. This is to substitute for water from the stream so please continue to do all you can to harvest water on your plot as well. The butts will not fill themselves and it is quite a task so we cannot guarantee water will always be there. The gates will remain unlocked until we have these established but please ALWAYS CLOSE carefully.

### **Badger activity**

We still have some badger incursions and are following this up with badger cams and further work. The main problems still appear to be where there were previously used routes and the badgers are now clearly making big changes! **Members are being really helpful at reporting sightings and activity like digging or dumps.** Please keep this up and keep a special eye for any digging activity on/around or under sheds and let us know immediately. The last thing we want is to keep one inside the fence.



**It is vital members with plots along the fence line keep a metre free either side.**

We have sprayed the fence line and we shall be mowing both sides monthly so we can monitor its length for at least the next 5 -6 months. Please do not stack anything in this space or fence it off or dump anything either side. That means no weed dumps please as these make mowing so much more difficult. This is a path for committee access for maintenance and monitoring.

There is more gardening info on the web site.



This always the best time for my aquilegia which lives below the grape vine and is threatening to take over some of my fruit tree/ bush beds.



Good Gardening-Wendy