

# Cripley Meadow Newsletter August 2017

**The next Working party** is 10.30 to 12.30 Sunday August 13. More plot and weed clearing! We meet at the green association shed.

## Save the date OCT 8<sup>th</sup>

Early warning that we shall be having a Bring and Share BBQ on the Green for members, family and friends. More info to come

## Weather

Some better rain has been great for growth! Now I want some sun back.



## Cripley Meadow in July

One of the annual Cripley Treats, the lime tree in Walton Good car park was in flower as usual. Its sweet perfume was most prominent around the gate area.



## Summer Pruning

Rodney, Manda, Jamie and Anna have spent about 40 hours between them in summer pruning the

orchards. The trees are being kept small to enable mowing, picking and in anticipation of more work along this boundary? We want the new young trees to survive challenges. Anna Benn has taken over managing our orchards and she has made a fantastic improvement to the espaliers on the Castle Mill

orchard. We will continue are working slowly on trying to reclaim the root stock and stability on Cripley Island trees.



Apologies we have no photos of Anna! We have managed to raise the canopy on some of the larger trees on the island and we will do more of this over the winter.

Managing our fruit trees and hazels will be a priority during the autumn/winter, weather permitting. We have made some progress with renewing the management of the guards, tumps and weeds. Cripley Island will also have its usual annual pollarding. Further tree work by Oxford City Council is due on our boundary willows in the autumn. Apples are much less this year but it looks like a great pear harvest. **Picking working party days will be notified. Please do not pick anything except windfalls individually.**

## Fruit Thefts

We have had a report of plums stolen from two trees in the last weeks. It was not a great year but it was reported that the whole small crop went at once. This is really dispiriting. Hopefully there will be no more. Members must not be on others plots (whether fenced or not) and should not use anyone else's plots paths unless given permission. Some member's fruit is on headlands next to site paths but this does not make the fruit available for others to pick. Members should now be aware there are always badger cams around the site.

## Members seen stealing fruit will lose their membership.

Our community is built on trust between members and this is totally unacceptable. This includes if children are responsible. They should be made aware and they must be supervised on site.

## Badger Fencing

Our badger cams have shown little activity on site recently. It may be that our new fence has persuaded them we are no longer 'easy picking' and they have moved onto pastures new. The badger hotel path out to



the car park and Port Meadow still show signs of use. Please make sure you keep our new fence totally clear a metre either side. What is in the photo is totally unacceptable! Thankfully it was rapidly removed. This area must not be used for any storage or weeds!

**Castle Mill** changes now have planning permission. The expected date of August for a start has been deferred, probably until October. It will inevitably mean further

disruption to Cripsey Meadow. We have just had our first meeting with the contractors and OU and we will keep you informed as we get further information about schedules. Once the work begins we will meet with them regularly. They will need about a metre of working space our side of the fence along the length from the gate to c. plot 122 to install the changes to the badger run. They may also ask for a patch of land by the fence. If this proposal is put forward it will be with safely enclosed with badger proof temporary HERIS fencing and we will ensure they protect the land and members.

The fence and any subsequent changes to the boundary must remain badger proof and allow badgers to use the run every night. This will be monitored by OU and OCC. The fence and buildings will look different when completed and generally they will 'move closer' to us. They may be more dominant from our viewpoint as rather heavier but this may be the cost of them looking better from Port Meadow. The area that is now the badger run will also be used to house the planters and bicycle sheds, with the badger run more concealed in the lower layer.

- You will be informed about dust, noise or further impingement on Cripsey Meadow.
- Our palisade fence will be replaced (it will be probably being recycled to another allotment site) by a wire and steel sheet fence along the stretch adjacent to Castle Mill Phase 2.
- Insertion of new badger run will be in separate sections so at no time will the badger run be closed to badgers nor Cripsey Meadow be open overnight for badger access

- We remain unconvinced of the impact of tree planting here but we will have an agreed maintenance schedule so it does not impede our track.
- We are discussing the cycle access and the badger hotel area. The planting here is so dense it makes safe turning on the pedestrian cycle track almost impossible.
- The water butts will remain and hopefully the harvesting will improve as they have never fully solved the valve problem. However, they are also harvesting the roof water to irrigate the new trees so we may only have second call on available water.
- Unfortunately, our viewing mirror on the bridge which is there to be able to see traffic over the bridge was smashed some time ago. It now has graffiti on another bit of the face making it quite difficult to be useful. We may need to buy another.
- Lastly, whenever they arrive, please do not approach the contractors with requests for work and / or materials. We had a lot of trouble with this last time.

### **Trading shop update**

Our allotment 'shop' will be closed during August, as so few people need things and many members and volunteers are away. But you can still ask for a one-off sale if you need something. Contact Sarah on [sarahjehome@aol.com](mailto:sarahjehome@aol.com) or text 07960 352787. You may get a delayed reply if Sarah is away for a few days. Please note that we have few second-hand tools now.

### **Green waste plots**

Please do not put your weeds or other wood rubbish on green plots 84 and 109. These are being harvested for compost. Unfortunately, having opened plot 66 to some member use it now seems to be being used by many as their main weed storage. We cannot manage this amount!

In accordance with our rules members must manage their weeds. Indeed, you should be jealous of them as the resulting compost improves soil fertility and condition. Plots 109 and 84 are managed by Arcadian Living who use it for their green waste only. Members can take the resulting compost, **not add green waste.**

You can use the pit on plot 66 for some less compostable plot waste if it is an odd occasion and it is not invasive perennial weeds nor very long and thick woody growth. The latter should be managed on the bonfire site. The bonfire area is not a place for green weeds! Perennial weeds can be bagged and composted when rotted to black mush. Plants with transferable diseases should be kept separately and dried then burned. We will be developing the fire area by the green association shed to include a dry storage area and a small incinerator for member's immediate use, when weather conditions allow. Please do read our rules about managing waste.

Meanwhile I hope you are coping with any gluts. Our courgettes and beans are in full flood and the tomatoes

started a few weeks ago. The tomatoes are easy to store as passata for the year but



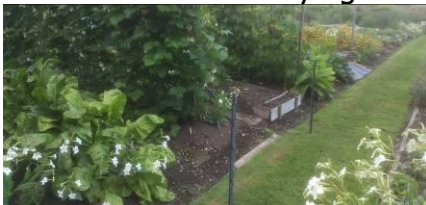
as always courgettes and beans often challenge everyone in their capacity to eat enough! If

you did not see them here are two timely recipes for courgettes.

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/jul/29/courgette-recipes-cobbler-marinated-with-freekeh-pasta-yotam-ottolenghi...>

We have tried and enjoyed the cobbler one already.

Great for a wet night. I did not cook the courgettes quite as long as in the recipe, but I did cook them slowly for 30 mins by which time they were delicious. I also put onions in with the garlic and doubled the tarragon. I never do manage to keep to a recipe! I still use courgettes as pasta. I have no new spiraliser, I have always used my vegetable peeler to cut into strips. Also, do remember you can leave beans to mature and pick them as beans for drying.



My butter beans are growing well and they are now beginning to swell the seed cases.

**You** can communicate with other members AND leave excess crops by the members notice board.

Good gardening to all  
Wendy