

**Cripley Meadow Allotment Association Newsletter
March 2018**

www.cripley Meadow.org.uk

Due to the unusual weather we are postponing our Oxclean working party to Sunday March 11 at the usual time of 10.30 to 12.30...and the last subscription hour at the shed. Do come and join us. Please sign in at the shed as usual and wear clothing, footwear and gloves suitable for rough and probably cold work. I have attached the specific safety instructions for Oxclean.



Invoices for 2018/9 From Sara, our treasurer:

If you're not planning to renew your subscription to work your plot, please let us know so that the plot can be made available for a new member. Your invoice and invitation to the AGM should have arrived in early February. Only one invoice is sent per plot, so if you have not had one do check with other members on your plot. If your plot did not receive an invoice in the first few weeks of February, please email Sara allotment@qtq.org including your plot number in the email. Payment is due on or before the AGM

Our new Gardening year starts at the AGM so please pay promptly. Do remember that this year, as previously, there is a late payment surcharge of £10 which will be applied after 31st March 2018. **Next year we anticipate the surcharge will be applied after the AGM to be in line with our constitution which states we 'pay in advance'.**

Presently if we do not hear from you or you do not pay we wait till the end of April before we take back the plot. We will discuss this at the AGM but in future we expect this closure to be the end of March. This will avoid the April unworked and unloved plots and their rampaging weeds. This is also

the last year we intend to provide an opportunity to pay at the shed. It has only been used by one person for 2 years and we c. If anyone has difficulty paying their subscription, please be in touch with Sara or Wendy.

Our 2018 AGM is on Monday March 12th at St Barnabas School Hart Street, Jericho. The meeting starts at 7pm Members of the Committee will be present from 6.00 pm for you to pay your subscription. There will be nibbles/drinks/slides from 6 so that you can chat to us and other members. Do come along if you can. It is important that we have a good turnout. It is always good for the committee to talk with more members from other parts of the site. We always try to have a new member on the committee so if you have some time you could spare to help do let Wendy or Manda know. We will lose 2 committee members and 1 co-opted members during this year. All members should have received the email information package for the AGM.

This includes the 2017/18 annual report, 2017 draft AGM minutes invitation to the AGM, AGM agenda, budget and accounts, and a draft waste guide. Please remember we have these on screen at the AGM so please print if you want to have a copy in the meeting.

We already have one item for AOB. Our data protection framework is due to change on 25th May when GDPR (General Data Protection Legislation) comes into

force. We shall be clarifying how this will effect members. **Remember this year there will be no St John's Leaf mould. We have had 5/6** large loads of woodchip by The Green. most of this disappears within days of landing!

Castle Mill mitigation

is starting. Beard, the contractors have started installing work bases. We are still awaiting details about the programme of work. We hope to have more information for the AGM. The work has been delayed. It was due to start in August 2017, so it will now go on later than April 2019. To facilitate the work we are discussing plans to allow the contractors to do some work from our side. It seems it may go on even longer if we are not helpful. This will probably mean some closure and limited car access along the some paths, particularly for plots on the Castle Mill side. We will be ensuring the site is compensated for inconvenience and use. Roger Dudman Way will be usable for all but a short time. The plans for the badger run area are the most significant for us and we are working hard to ensure our continued protection. It is expected the new boundary will have improved badger exclusion and badger protection. The badger run space will also accommodate bike sheds and planters which will go over the badger run. The badger run will continue to be kept clear but should be more secure and less open to interference.

Hazel poles

We have some Cripsey Harvested Hazel poles in the shop as we have coppiced some of our stock. There is more to come as we expect to do some further coppicing and pollarding on the island asap

Things to do - March

You could be picking

- Over wintered spinach, leeks and kale. Old Brussels sprouts stalks will give a late head of greens that are good to eat.

- If you still have parsnips they will be beginning to sprout so lift and store if you want to eat. Keep cold and dry.
- Check forced rhubarb. If ready, pull rather than cut to reduce infection. Once picked leave cover off so plant recovers.
- Lambs lettuce and corn salad leaves

You could still be digging and clearing

- If you dig get as much done as possible but try to do it when the soil is dry. **Do not dig if the soil is clagging your boots or when frozen as you will bury wet and cold soil.** If you are digging, try to add some organic matter (compost or manure) to make it worthwhile.
- **Build a compost heap.**
- To reduce digging - look up 'bed systems'.
- Try to keep soil covered when not being used to keep clear of annual weeds.
- You should have cleared and stored any Jerusalem artichokes soon as they will start to sprout.
- Cut autumn fruiting raspberry canes to the ground
- Clear and cover strawberry bed for an earlier crop.
- If you didn't do it in October cut back vines to 1-year old wood for fruiting this year. The later you leave it the more the vines will bleed as sap rises.
- Divide clumps of mint/ chives to rejuvenate. Plant mint in a sunken bucket to prevent invasion.
- Cut back shrubby herbs like lavender, thyme and sage
- **Put in water butts if you have a shed or other structure.**

You could be sowing and planting

- If you have some fleece or polythene cover the soil to warm it up for first sowings.
- When the soil is warmed, (weeds start) it is worth trying some early sowings of peas, broad beans, beetroot, radish, cauliflowers, spinach, spring onion and possibly some early lettuce and carrots under cover.

Fleece is effective cover and gives some protection from bird damage.

- Onion in warm sunny spots. Cover to protect from birds
- Feed over wintered brassicas like spring cabbage and sprouting broccoli and kale
- Early potatoes. If you have trouble with scab on your potatoes try a layer of grass cuttings in the bottom of the trench to keep in moisture.
- Buy and plant fruit trees and bushes (You need to write to committee re trees)
- Late march direct sow hardy annuals like cornflower, nigella, Californian poppy, poached egg plant (all easy to grow and seed and bird friendly. Liked by hoverflies which eat aphids)

Other Jobs

- If you still do continue chitting early potatoes. Put them in trays in a light frost-free place to develop little buds. There is now lots of evidence to suggest this is probably only worth it for earlies.
- **If frost is forecast protect early fruit blossom with fleece. Uncover on frost free days**
- Erect pea/ bean poles.
- Cover strawberry plants for earlier fruits Cut autumn fruiting raspberry canes down if not done already tie in summer ones if come lose from supports.



It was good to see Cripsey members at the Pennard Potato and Plants fair. ODFAA had 173 visitors from across the city. We hope to do this again next year when we are aiming for an earlier date and a Saturday slot. **Good gardening. I am looking forward to seeing you at the WP and AGM Wendy**