

Horfield & District Allotments Association

Newsletter January 2016

Dear Member,

As we start the New Year we have much to celebrate in H&DAA. The fields are continuing in their progress and look better cultivated year on year.

The hedges on Golden Hill are being renovated and restored at a cracking pace thanks to Roger and his trusty team which now numbers more than a dozen on a good day. (For details of how to join in see below). Birchall has a new field rep, Katharine, who was welcomed to the Committee in the Spring.

We have been joined by 35 new tenants and 10 new members since last January, and still have a waiting list. About the same number of tenants have retired or been given notice. Giving notice is not a thing we like to do so if you are struggling with your plot see your field rep. You may be able to reduce the size of your plot or even take a break. If you give up for temporary change of circumstances there is no reason why you should not go straight back on the waiting list in the hope of more free time ahead.

Let's make 2016 a notice free year!

After long discussion the Committee decided that trampolines are inappropriate on allotment fields and requested their removal. If you wish to erect any kind of structure on your plot please consult with your field rep before you go ahead.

On a more cheery note, (gardeners need something to worry about), a new disease has reared its ugly head on Golden Hill. Raspberry die back (Phytophthora) has been reported on two plots. Disturbingly, both on new plants from reputable suppliers. Clay soil makes our raspberries vulnerable. Go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/knn2cvp> for tips on how to avoid/deal with it.

Compost delivered by BCC and sold for a voluntary contribution of £2 per barrow has proved popular. Future supplies are currently uncertain but may materialize. Unfortunately restricted access means that the two Grahams Fields miss out on this bonus.

If you want to air your views, pass on tips or look for advice our Facebook page is a good place to start,

www.facebook.com/groups/handdaa

A Happy and fruitful New Year to all our Members

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday February 8th

Hall of the Church of the Good Shepherd
(Between Bishop Road and Kings Drive)

Tea and Coffee available from 7.00pm
Meeting begins at 7.30pm

Agenda:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 2015 AGM (Will be tabled)
3. Matters Arising
4. Report from the Chairman on behalf of the Executive Committee.
5. Annual accounts and treasurers report.
6. Election of H&DAA Company Directors.
7. Community Garden report
8. BCC Allotments Officer
9. Presentation of Ted Hill Cup, the Phyllis Brooks Award & Best New Plot Awards.

Prizes

As you will see from the agenda above there are prizes to be won. In case you are new to H&DAA here is what they are for:

Ted Hill Cup, to the new tenant who has made the most progress in the first year of tenancy.
Phyllis Brooks Award: to a plot holder who has made an outstanding contribution to the benefit of their field.

Best on Field: a small prize for the best new tenant on each field.

Come to the meeting – join the debate

Planning next year's bumper crops?
Remember you can use:

**Ashley Down Allotments Association
Store:**

For seed potatoes, onion sets, seeds,
canes, fertilizers & other garden supplies
Station Rd (off Ashley Down Road) Open
Saturdays and Sundays 10.30am-12
Noon (Except Xmas/New Year period)

For more details go to:

**[http://horfieldanddistrictallotments.web
eden.co.uk](http://horfieldanddistrictallotments.web
eden.co.uk)**

You can also get all the latest on what's
happening in H&DAA and where to
access manure etc

VOLUNTEERS WANTED on BIRCHALL.

Saturday Jan 30th and Sunday Feb 7th.
Meeting on Field at 10.30am.

We have these two dates for this winter's
working parties on Birchall for some
bramble, path and haulingway edge
clearing.

Please bring gloves, secateurs, loppers,
scythes, sickles and a strimmer could be
very handy too, but most importantly
muscle power!

An indication of how many might come
would be handy and would mean we
could let you know if we need to cancel.

Thank you.

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Working parties Golden Hill:

**Every Sunday morning 10.00am –
12md until the end of January.** The
hedge team is back in action with an
ambitious program for the winter. You can
join the team & learn about laying,
planting and maintaining hedges. You will
not be charged for the privilege. The work
will be along the top of Baptist Field
Wear good boots & gloves.

A Reminder to Plot holders.

Please remember to keep all the paths,
steps, hauling ways and hedges adjacent
to your plot under control and passable at
all times. This is one of the tenancy
requirements that tends to get lost in the
excitement of allotmenting! TA paras. 7
and 8.

Many Thanks, Sally

Could I add, while you are checking your
tenancy agreement, have a look at clause
32: *Tenants must yield up the allotment
garden and the hut, if supplied, on the
termination of this tenancy in such
condition as shall be in compliance with
this Agreement **and may be charged for
any remedial work.*** (This could include
the cost of rubbish removal).

Golden Hill community Garden

It's been a storming few months down at the Golden Hill Community Garden, our Wednesday's have been bustling with folks and the garden has been humming with people and bursting with produce. This year we've been working with more local people affected by dementia as well as running cooking and craft sessions for people with learning difficulties. We were also given a gurt big trophy from the RHS Britain in Bloom folks for being the best community garden in the South West and a finalist for the best community project in the Green Capital Awards. Whoop! Thanks everyone for your ongoing support by becoming Friends of the Garden and for making all this possible and if you've not been down in while come and say hello!

For information on all activities/events & how to become a Friend go to:
<http://thegoldenhillcommunitygarden.com>

URGENT APPEAL

The Community Garden is losing (imminently) the Secretary / Minute Secretary.

We could really do with a volunteer(s), to

- a) Take Minutes of the Committee Meetings (approx every 6 weeks), and
- b) A Secretary of the GH Community Garden.

So it could be one person or two.
Offers to Pete

Great news from Pete's water works: the results of tests from the well water on Golden Hill: *We were comfortably within safe limits for nitrates, nitrites, lead, chlorine, sulphates, phosphates and bacteria, but the PH is quite high at 8.5, so don't use our water on the blueberries!*

Celebrations & Events at Horfield Organic Community Orchard

All plot holders, their families and friends, are invited to celebrate local fruit growing at our three annual community events in the Orchard. The first of these is

Wassail

Saturday 16 Jan 2016, 2 - 4pm

All are welcome to

Toast the orchard for a fruitful harvest
Bring ribbons, clouties & shining things
to dress the trees

Homemade cakes and mulled Orchard
juice for sale

Make merry with Pigsty Morris

Later in the year look out for publicity for our **Summer Open Day** (June), and **Apple Day** (October).

Membership of the orchard is open to anyone, and new members are welcome to join us from January 2016. Harvest-share members enjoy a dividend of the harvest and learn specialist fruit-growing skill. This pioneering community food project is also financially supported by members who join the orchard as Friends.

See our website for more information:

www.community-orchard.org.uk

Contact Shannon Smith:

hocohello@gmail.com, 0117 373 1587

Important message from Pete:

Lucy told me that some fungi growing in the Community Garden polytunnel have been identified by an expert as 'Destroying Angel', a highly toxic mushroom which unfortunately looks rather like a closed cup mushroom. The worry is that it may have been in the compost the council delivered, whatever you may think DO NOT attempt to eat any!

Special Feature

By Susan Carter

Bees on Allotments

Honey bees, which are in good supply on both Horfield, and Birchall allotments, are not the only pollinators! Bees of all species are important for pollination.

Whilst many food crops, especially cereals, produce massive amounts of pollen, which is spread by the wind, and even apple trees can be moderately well pollinated, a good mixture of local bees and hoverflies will give higher rates, and thus better crop yields.

Bees come in many sizes, from rotund queens, which can emerge from hibernation on a sunny February afternoon, to small solitary bees. Only honey bees and bumble bees are social, and live in colonies. The rest of our 250 + species are solitary, though some will live close to each other, often in the middle of one's lawn! (Mark off their territory with canes, and leave the grass to grow over the summer).

Only the honey bee colony, queen and workers, survives the winter; even they eject the drones at the end of August. With other species, it is just the fertile queen which hibernates, in sheltered, well insulated and undisturbed places, like holes in the ground, compost heaps, and in piles of debris at the back of your shed. Our hedges and trees provide excellent habitat, with both forage and nesting sites. The tidy plot is less helpful to them!

Different bee species have different length probosces, and so will gather nectar, and thus pollinate, different plants. Bumble bees can reach into the relatively long corollas of lavender (varying lengths depending on the cultivar), Research (google "pollinator project") found a vast range of flower-visiting insects with a diversity of preferences.

Helping bees

- don't use insecticides (if it's unavoidable, dusk or dawn, before bees have emerged).

- leave mess for nests and hibernation; hollow stems, undug ground, unturned compost heaps.

- ivy, willow and mahonia are useful edge-of-season pollen sources.

- sow spare / fallow beds with green manure crops such as mustard or phacelia, which bees love. Let your comfrey flower. Grow 'cottage' flowers rather than ornate cultivars.

- bee hotels, wooden posts with holes (exit end slightly downhill for drainage) and inverted clay flowerpots on sunny banks offer a choice of nest sites.

And if you want to keep honeybees....

Join a beekeeping association, get some practical experience and go on a beginner's course first. Associate membership is under £20 a year. Becoming a beekeeper is a long process!

Whilst buying a nucleus in May is easy, by August, you will have 50,000 hungry, bad-tempered stinging insects on your hands. You need to understand how to manage them first!.

For more info, google;

BWARS (bees, wasps and ants recording society)

Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

Avon Beekeeper's Association

Pollinator Project

Editor's note:

If you are considering keeping bees on your plot please consult your field rep.

Permission should be sought from the Committee.

Membership of the Bristol Bee Keepers (<http://www.bristolbeekeepers.org.uk>)

is a requirement for Bee Keepers on the H&DAA fields.

The next "introduction to beekeeping course" is in January 2016

