



# Bishop's Waltham Gardening Club

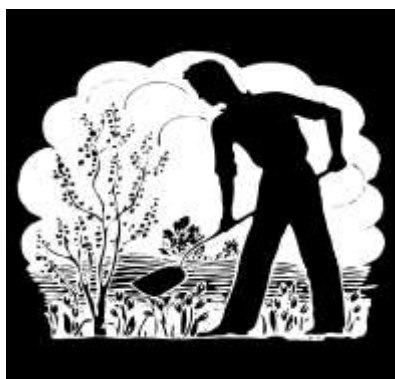
## Newsletter Summer 2024

*Ah, Summer, a time to relax!*



Well, not for long as there is always plenty to do in the garden and on the allotment, especially watering, mowing and keeping weeds down! Even so, there should be plenty of time in the long days to relax and enjoy some time for contemplation – especially if you are contemplating a few glasses of Prosecco.

Naturally, one has to write this by referring to the weather to date, rather than what may be current. So, I hope the weather is really good now, after one of the wettest Winters and coldest Springs for many a year. So, what's happening on the allotment or in your garden now, and what's the plan for the rest of the summer and early autumn?



On the plot – still plenty to do.

Looking around the plots, one can see the results of all that hard work earlier in the year (once the rain had let up!) and it's all lookin' good! The rhubarb has been rested after all the 'pulling' up until June, and now needs some TLC to set it up for the new year - yes, we are always looking ahead in our gardening lives – and some fertiliser with a good amount of nitrogen watered in, followed by a good dollop of our horse manure round the plant (not on the crown) should be enough.



Some plants will need a bit of pruning, especially ones that have already fruited such as blackcurrants, to leave space for new growth which will carry next year's fruit. The darker brown stems from which you picked those delicious berries can be removed down as far as the new growth. Leave the centre of the plant open for air to circulate and avoid mildew and it does deter the bugs as predators can get to them.

Other pruning can be from.....**Gardeners World..**

**Pruning plants in summer is just as important for some plants as winter pruning.**

**By pruning in summer, you can reap the rewards of better displays from ornamental plants. You'll also encourage bigger crops from fruit trees and bushes. Removing new summer growth before it turns woody reduces growth-promoting nitrogen, allowing potassium to build up - and more potassium means more flowers and fruit. You'll also keep plants, such as shrubs, climbers and rambling roses, within bounds and maintain an attractive shape.**

**Find out which plants you need to prune in summer, below.**

Fruit trees

Removing soft, new growth will promote fruit formation on: [Apples](#) ; [Cherries](#) ; [Pears](#) ; [Plums](#)

Many climbers need to be summer pruned to keep their growth under control and stopping them outgrowing their allotted space.

They include: **Wisteria; Jasmine; Honeysuckle; Campsis.** Rambling Roses usually flower once in June. They can put on 5m growth in a year. Pruning after flowering, will help plants to flower well and

avoid a tangled mess, with flowers high up



**Spring-flowering shrubs.** Shrubs that flower on stems formed in the previous year need to be pruned in summer, after flowering. They include:

- [Deutzia](#); [Flowering Quince](#); [Forsythia](#)
- [Philadelphus](#); [Lilac](#)

All evergreens are slightly tender and should not be pruned too early in the year, as stems will be vulnerable to frost damage. Early summer is the ideal time to prune them to maintain their shape, control their size and remove any frost-damaged stems. They include:

- [Camellia](#); [Ceanothus](#); [Rhododendron](#)

### Happy Christmas, Spud!

Sorry, but I suppose it won't be long - i.e. the middle of September- until the Garden Centres start displaying their Christmas wares, and we will start getting those songs that will resonate with us for the next three months. This year I am having a go at 'Spuds for Xmas' but they won't be on my plot, they will be in large tubs, possibly at home but certainly where I can keep them from really cold and frosty weather. Planted now – varieties such as Carlingford, Maris Peer or Charlotte- could be available from late October onwards. Whilst they might not grow much in cold weather, they can be kept dry, the tops removed and still be O.K. for the big day. Place drainage (corks or grit) in the bottom of a large pot (by 'large' I mean about 50cm+) and put about 10cm multi compost ( it's said that even used growing bag compost will do, but I prefer new..), place the tubers (3 will do) on the compost, fill with another 10cm and 'earth up' as the shoots grow through.



Happy Christmas from potatohouse.co.uk

**Well, that's enough** about wishing the summer and autumn away, so let's get back to NOW!

Actually it's pre-now, as I want to tell you about our main event so far.

Our Annual Plant Sale in May was a resounding success, helped by super weather, but mainly by the selection of plants provided by so many of you.

..and still to come is.....the 'biggie' for the year , yes our **Open Annual Show.**

Such a lot of work goes on behind the scene that we really must thank those members of the Committee who give up so much of their valuable spare time, and also their willing band of helpers, too, all under the direction of our Show Maestro, Colin Carter.

### Is now the Time for Lime?

The RHS states... *Liming garden soil reduces the acidity of the soil by increasing the pH level. Plants can't get the nutrients they need from soil that is too acid, and some materials such as aluminium can be at toxic levels in very acid soils. The pH level is a number that describes how acid or alkaline a soil is and from this it is calculated how much lime is needed to reduce acidity.*



**But Azaleas, Rhododendrons etc., like Ericaceous soil.**

What else? Well, we seem to have a very 'clayey' soil. Apparently, this is the best type IF ONLY one could unlock the benefits! That's where LIME can help – available at a really good price from the 'Shop at the Shed'. One way of improving the texture of a clay soil is to add lime. This raises the pH of acid clay soils, making them more alkaline and in doing so it encourages clay particles to stick together in small clumps. It is also possible that, by laying barrowloads of manure on your plot,- needed to break it down- you are raising the acidic level and the lime will help balance this out -and apparently, worms need a more limy soil structure, too.

This results in larger particles and makes the soil more friable and easier to work. Consult the internet for further advice as some plants don't like lime but, overall, a sensible dose will sweeten the soil. As you probably know, azaleas and its family don't like lime BUT they don't like clay, either! In our area, unless you are lucky enough to have a 'peaty' soil they are best grown in large tubs.



*Lime can sweeten the soil and unlock nutrients.*

These plants prefer a 'neutral' to slightly alkaline soil; artichoke, asparagus, beetroot, broccoli, cabbage, cantaloupe, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, lettuce, okra, onion, pak choi, rocket, spinach.

**A word of caution about 'green manure'** it's a good idea but I tried it and had a really good crop BUT, I couldn't distinguish the weeds from the 'manure' when I was ready to dig it in!!!



## Carrot Fly Crunch

I'm fascinated by many of the 'old' methods of gardening, and this one caught my eye. We all know the perils of the dreaded Carrot Fly, and build defences all around the rows of carrots so they can't scale the heights! So, maybe this old one might help from Kitchen Garden magazine. A market gardener would put on his biggest and heaviest boots and walk heel-to-toe along the line of carrots seedlings when they were 1.5" to 2" tall (that's 3.75cm -5cm -I think!), then back again. The seedlings then lie flat on the ground but, the next day, will be upright. The idea is that, by firming the ground along and around the seedlings, the 'fly' can't penetrate the soil. Powders and sprays can't do that! Apparently, the method is still used today. I thought the way the little plants were 'crushed' would spread the aroma and attract the fly, but maybe that are just not big enough to do that.

## Don't be afraid to be 'picky'

**There's so much to do on the allotment**, with harvesting, weeding, feeding and watering, but you will need to pick, pick, pick those beans (Runner or French) and keep them small and tender. The more you pick, the more they produce! In dry weather spray overhead to set the pods but do it morning or evening to avoid 'scorch'.

**If your tomatoes are looking healthy**, yet not bearing so much fruit as you hoped, maybe there's too much nitrogen in your feed. Cut down on the feed, cut back excess foliage and reduce watering so the soil is just damp. In any event, get rid of those lower leaves which are looking grotty, blotched and curled. More light should help the crop and a little bit of stress can help force fruiting. Don't forget that -and this could apply to most plants- if you water a lot, you may be washing away the beneficial goodness that you have steadily been feeding the plant!

## Sweetcorn? Sweet!

Funny, isn't it – the tomatoes can have too much nitrogen, and yet sweetcorn loves it! That's gardening for you..... Talking of sweetcorn.....

**Harvesting Sweetcorn advice from [John Harrison](#) via his weekly Allotment Garden Newsletter.....**

- It's a fine line between under-ripe and over-ripe, when the corn hardens.
- Sweetcorn is ready to harvest when the tassels hanging from each cob turn brown. Double check by carefully peeling back the leaves and pinching a kernel - if the juice is milky then they are ready to pick. Just twist the cob away from the plant.

## Pests and Problems with Sweetcorn

- Pigeons can be a pest, pulling away the leaves and eating the kernels.
- Earwigs are partial to sweetcorn. Try stuffing plant pots with hay or shredded paper and placing them in and around the plants. The earwigs will hide in the pots - just shake them out, well away from your vegetable garden.
- Poor pollination can cause some or even all of the kernels not to develop on the cob. The pollen forms on the flower head tassels at the top of the plant and drops down onto the silks - the fine long hairs - growing on the forming cobs.
- Planting too closely can prevent the pollen reaching target. To assist pollination tap the stalks so the pollen sheds down to the silks on calm days.

You can also grow 'Babycorn', similar to 'normal' Corn so, have a look at the RHS website for instructions.





## Garlic Grumbles.

If you haven't had a lot of success, perhaps the Kitchen Garden mag can help. The following is adapted from their advice. Onions and garlic have a defined growing season. The cloves put down their roots when the soil is warm, put up small shoots, then sit out the winter, ready to 'spring' (that's my pun by the way!) into action until mid-late summer when the foliage begins to turn yellow and, however big the bulb is, that's your lot! With heavier soil they can get stressed -they should try writing a newsletter!!!- and this can be due to very wet/waterlogged condition. It also happens on poor dry soil, so that's the hint that a midway course is ideal. Try planting in ridges to lift the cloves above any water troubles, and add an onion fertiliser (a couple of doses of a liquid fertiliser can replace the more usual granule form) in the spring. Adding a bit of the old "well rotted" a couple of months before planting can also help, especially on poor soil. To hedge your bets, maybe start one clove in a 9cm pot under glass in January, to plant out later.

# THANK YOU

It is so easy to forget those who voluntarily give up time, effort and -quite often- expense, to provide you with a great Gardening Club. Every Trustee is dedicated to promoting and improving the allotments, shop and -most importantly- the ENJOYMENT of everyone, young and old, experienced gardener or a novice newcomer. You can also help by keeping things safe and tidy on your plot -your allotment neighbours would also appreciate it. Plant Sales, Annual Shows and Social Evenings together with BBQs' and Outings don't just happen. There is always a place for those dedicated to furthering the Club's appeal and smooth working. In turn the Trustees are most grateful to those who are always willing to 'lend a hand' when needed. Whilst you may mow around your plot, there is an awful lot of grass around the site generally, and the tractor doesn't drive itself -yet!! So our grateful thanks to John

for spending the time to keep the whole area neatly mown and pleasant to walk around.



## Yes, Kate, I know it will mow much quicker ..... but what are the brakes like??

On the subject of mowers, it does seem counter-productive when people mow the long grass very short in damp conditions. The mower gets jammed with all the wet grass, stones and debris are 'mowed' because they are hidden under the grass and damage is caused, plus YOU are responsible for cleaning the mower on its return to the shed. How much better to set the wheels higher, mow much easier, and then go over the grass again. It looks better, causes you less backache when pushing the mower, and there is less wear and tear. With brand new mowers recently purchased you really do have a 'duty of care' to the Club's (and, by that, I mean YOUR) equipment. Never forget that it might be you who needs the mower next! Thank you.



## Let's mow carefully

## Thick Onions!

It seems that the thicker the neck on an onion, the greater the possibility of suffering from rot. It could be due to applying a fertiliser too late (maybe in June) when the plant has finished growing and causing it to restart, with little green shoots. It may be due to planting the 'bulbs' too deep, they really need to sit on the soil. Another possibility is the weather, which may have caused a check earlier in the year, and the plant has started to grow again. Yellow or White varieties seem to be the worst hit. Now the technical bit from Andrew Tokely, Seed Purchasing Manager of [www.kingsseeds.com](http://www.kingsseeds.com) Autumn and Spring onion sets are different types. All onions are photoperiodic (yes, I thought so!!!) and thus sensitive to temperature and day length (well it's obvious isn't it!!) Sets for spring planting are 'long day' onions, requiring 14-15 hours daylight to 'bulb'. Non-heat treated spring sets, if planted too early and then subjected to a

cold spell, can suffer a growth check and may well 'bolt'. Autumn onion sets are 'short-day' onions and only require 10 hours daylight to 'bulb'. Ideally, these should not be planted before September 15<sup>th</sup>, and not after October 15<sup>th</sup> to ensure they don't 'bolt' and run to seed the following spring. Before or after those dates, and they may well do so. Our 'Shop at the Shed' will stock a variety for you to choose from.



**Incidentally, WHY do we bend over the tops of the onions?** Well, this should be done when the tops naturally start to die back so the sun can get to the bulb and help ripening. **Why not just chop the tops off?** It would mean losing all those nutrients in the leaves as they couldn't go back into the bulb!

**He works underground and he is a real Fun-Gi.**

Yes, the old ones are best, and here's more.. he's Irish and his name is Mike O'rrhiza.

No, let's be serious, mycorrhiza is a soil-living fungus that has a symbiotic relationship with plant roots. It helps them extract water and nutrients from the soil, and the symbiotic bit concerns the carbohydrates (sugars) that they, in turn, are able to use. It's like an extra root system with advantages all round.

You have probably heard of it through the commercial product called 'Rootgrow'. It is also heralded as an alternative to fertilisers when planting, especially on bare-root plants. It MUST come into contact with the roots, as it hasn't got a sat-nav to find the nearest plant. According to the East Malling Research departments in Kent -yes, they of the MM6 etc for providing dwarfing rootstock for apples, pears etc.- the advantages are numerous. For instance, if strawberries are grown in coir bags which really need lots of irrigation, the presence of mycorrhizae can reduce the amount of water needed by up to 40%, yet the plant still gives equivalent yields. I am getting a couple of dozen new strawberry plants in the autumn and, as they will be bare rooted, I will certainly get some Rootgrow. The plants are placed in such a spot that

they do need watering regularly but, here again, mycorrhiza is said to increase the plants' ability to withstand -and recover from- quite serious drought.



**Rootgrow. A popular choice and more well known but other mycorrhiza products are available such as Vitax Q4 Rootmore and Rootmax etc..**

When choosing articles for the Newsletter, I try and find items that are not 'run of the mill'. Of course, I could include a planting guide, but they are available everywhere, and the seed packet inform you of everything you need.

So, have you seen one of those interesting but not well-known bits of information that gardeners, old and new may find interesting. Please let me know via the website. You may also have a gardening question that we could help with. So, let's hear from you.

**Most people probably don't remove the flowers on potatoes** as they are small and fairly insignificant. Thinking of how we DO remove them from other plants so that the goodness goes into the plant rather than the flowers and seeds, then wouldn't the result be the same for spuds?



### **Calabrese -the correct name!**

We normally call this Broccoli -unless you are posh, I guess- but the correct name IS Calabrese, though the two are closely related. Many years ago I went on a cruise, and the Master was introduced as 'Captain Calabrese' (the final 'E' was pronounced) but I never called him 'Captain Broccoli Head' as I couldn't swim back from the Caribbean!!

**Potty Training for Gardeners....** With so much going on in a busy Summer, it's so easy to overlook those plants in pots but they will need MORE, not less, attention both to watering and feeding. Don't let them dry out (but don't drown them either) and do feed fruit and veg weekly with a liquid feed high in potash (potassium) as this will boost flower development and, consequently, fruiting and also improve ripening.

### **In praise of Bellis.**

**Who? Well, look at the picture.** Does it ring a bell (Bell—is??). These brave little plants suffer most of what Winter can throw at them -including hard frosts and inches (sorry, cms) of rain, and they still come up smiling. So, what to do?



**Bellis Perennis Enorma, A real picture in early Spring, to brighten up the day.**

Photo from Nika Seeds, Via Ebay.

Choose a 'single' if you can so that early fliers can get much needed nectar.

I can't be bothered with seeds, so I order plug plants in late August -cost, around 30p per plug.

When they arrive, I give them some water and plenty of air and, within a few days, plant them into troughs giving enough space between plants for growth as one never knows when the summer/autumn plants will be finished. In 2023 the Autumn carried on so late that the Bellis were flowering and jostling for space. They only grow a few inches high so need the front of the border or around the outside of a hanging winter basket. They make an ideal foil for tulips with their different colours but flower spasmodically through the winter and start going in February and can last into June when the summer plants need the space. Another plant than can also enhance the beauty of tulips is the grape hyacinth -white or blue shades- they will enhance your compost heap. Then sow in April using seed trays indoors for best results or, as I do, order your plugs in August.

and these are bulbs. Wallflowers mixed in with the tulips also hold the tulip stems and create a real picture. Being a biennial, once they have flowered, and these are bulbs. Wallflowers mixed in with the tulips also hold the tulip stems and create a real picture. Being a biennial, once they have flowered, Another beautiful biennial is the Sweet William. The only problem is that they are flowering -albeit at rather a 'dull' time in the garden when most spring flowers have faded-+ and the summer ones are waiting to be planted. That's the problem! When you have cleared the beds for your summer show, the Sweet Williams are in their glory.



**Sweet William —** pic from [jparkers.co.uk](http://jparkers.co.uk)

### **Tool tribulations.....You never know.**

If you leave your garden tools on show, then opportunists may well steal them so keep them away from view and, if valuable, take them home.





**Watch out, watch out...!**

**There are also vandals about!. Ann Magrath** writes....

#### **Vandalism in the Community Orchard**

Newcomers to Bishops Waltham and/or the Gardening Club may not be aware of the Community Orchard. It was a project undertaken by the Gardening club in 2015. In November of that year 25 fruit trees were planted in the five-acre Priory Meadow, land owned by the Parish Council.

In the nine following years the orchard has experienced highs and lows, growing in challenging conditions and the changing climate, not to mention the usual pests and diseases! Many trees were lost, some replanted or replaced with alternative varieties. There are now nineteen left, a mix of apples – eating and cooking, pears, a quince, a damson, a gage, two crab apples and a mulberry. Last year a difficult decision was taken – mainly due to costs – not to replace any further losses but to concentrate on caring for the remaining trees.

Our diminishing group of volunteers has recently swelled by a further seven, thanks to a plea sent out to Club members.

Currently the Orchard is looking good. After an exceptionally wet winter most of the trees were covered in blossom and some have set fruit. One or two have aphid and fungal problems and are ‘under treatment’ but otherwise all seemed well – **UNTIL** - a visit made just before the Bank Holiday weekend revealed some vandalism. Wooden posts and rails around the trees were pulled out and used to make a fire inside the ring of log seating. It is saddening and disappointing to discover this kind of damage to something that has had so much work done by volunteers for everyone living in our lovely area.

We appeal to everyone using the meadow to look out for anyone causing damage to **any** of the trees planted there and to report it.

**Would you like Salt with your Beetroot, sir?**



**Yes, it could happen! In fact it already has.**

Sugar beet producers use salt to increase leaf growth leading to increased root size. You can benefit your beetroot by adding one teaspoon of salt to 4.5ltrs of water and this would cover about 3.5 metres of your beetroot bed... but **ONCE** only!

#### *Larrys Log..*



Larry is our Trustee who deals with the ‘Shop at the Shed’ which is open every weekend from February to October. He does his best to ensure that prices charged in the shop are fair, and also assists on many other items for the benefit of the Members. Here are his notes; **Here are some dates for social events on the allotments: -**

#### **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June - Vegetable tray competition;**

Bring a seed tray with 5 different vegetables (grown by yourselves!!) between 10 and 11am, to be judged after 11am, with the result announced 11.30ish. Prize of £10 shop voucher will be awarded to the winner.

#### **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July - Demonstration on how to prepare for the show;**

Come along to the shed at 6pm for light hearted instructions and help on presentation of fruit, vegetables and flowers for the show. Wine, soft drinks and cheese will be available.

#### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July – Bishop’s Waltham in Bloom –**

**Hidden Gardens;** Make sure your plot is looking its best for this day! We hope to be able to open the shed some Friday evenings prior to this, for extra time for the mowers to be available

#### **13<sup>TH</sup> JULY BWGC ANNUAL SHOW – at the Jubilee**

**Hall;** It’s a great day, and fun to be involved.

Schedules available online or at the shop

**20<sup>TH</sup> July - Potato weigh-in;** Due to the wet start to the season and delay in getting crops into the ground, the weigh in will be delayed until Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July, at the shed between 10 and 12. If you are unable to make this date, please let Larry or Anthea know and we will make alternative arrangements for you. **MANY THANKS, LARRY.**

## Tapping our resources.



Many of us use the taps situated throughout the allotments, and maintained by Kate Cassell and her 'Maintenance Department'. However, you are asked to fill the container placed by each tap as a courtesy to the next user -who could be you, of course!

Also, please Turn the darned thing off when you have finished!! You will be shocked how many times this doesn't happen and the consequent cost to the club -i.e. YOU- is quite substantial.



**If only they had turned the tap off!!**

## Extra Dates for your diary

**Wednesday 26th June;** June Social Meeting.

This month's Theme is HEAVENLY HOSTAS with John Baker. Plus our Members June Show.

**BBQ Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August** at the shed. (Tickets from the Shed Sat/Sun 10am-12noon.

**21<sup>st</sup> September** See us at **St Peter's Fayre on.** (incl Childrens' bulb planting)

**25 September's** Speaker Anthony Powell on his special subject of "The Scented Garden". at our new venue, St Peter's' Church Hall, Free St, Bishop's Waltham SO32 1EE

**Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup>,** Our Annual Social Evening. Details to follow on our website.

*Always, see our website for more updates/ details.*



"HolmeHenge" at the 'Holme' of Gardening!  
The Gardening Club's coach visit to West Holme Gardens at Wool. Photo -and our thanks- to Nicole Jones who arranged this very enjoyable and much appreciated visit. Not too far away, but far enough to make us feel as if we had an 'awayday'.

**And also.....**



Photo from KATE CASSELL

**TWO NEW MOWERS**, to add to our existing stock which is being renovated. Let's **LOOK AFTER THEM!**

**Another safe way of keeping slugs away is to bring a sprayer to the Shed and using our trial GRAZERS concentrated Slug and Snail liquid. It's perfectly safe, you can eat crops immediately and there's no problems for children or pets. Grazers have several products including one that should keep the white butterflies and other pests away. Again, a very safe and organic way to protect your crops.**

**Most Important, IN CASE YOU MISSED IT EARLIER..**

We are moving..... our monthly meetings to..

ST. PETER'S CHURCH HALL, FREE STREET SO32 1EE  
FOR OUR SEPTEMBER + NOVEMBER MEETINGS.

Usual times, usual refreshments and raffle and, of course, brilliant GUEST SPEAKERS.

You can always find out more information from our website: [www.bwgc.org.uk](http://www.bwgc.org.uk)

and on our facebook page. 

**ENJOY YOUR GARDENING!!**

NOTE; The views, information or suggestions in this Newsletter are for interest and discussion, and do not necessarily represent the policy, intentions or actions by the Bishops Waltham Gardening Club.



