

# LEYTONSTONE ALLOTMENT HOLDERS ASSOCIATION AT RODING FARM - JUNE 2023 NEWSLETTER

## **It's rarely too late but it's often too early**

Although we are almost at the Summer Solstice it has been very cold and dry throughout most of Spring so everyone is feeling a bit behind. With nighttime temperatures only recently into double figures lots of seeds have failed to germinate and growth on frost sensitive plants like tomatoes, potatoes, sweet corn has only just started to 'take off'. My advice is it is almost never too late to sow seed or transplant vegetable seedlings. You might get a smaller crop but we are often harvesting late into October. So, if your plot is looking a little sad and empty don't give up – sow some seeds, pop to the garden centre, search the internet there are bargains to be had and you'll be amazed how quickly your plants will catch up.

## **Committee Update**

Since the last Newsletter, the Committee has met on three separate occasions.

In addition we have :-

- 1) Held a Working Party tidy up Portacabin and surrounding car park areas – the portacabin was given a good clean up, slabs were laid to increase the area of hard standing, some of the brambles were cut back, and the notice board was replaced. The drainage ditch at the back of the Portacabin was also cleared of debris and scoured. A grateful thanks goes to the 12 or so members who supported this activity.

Site plot inspections have commenced to ensure plots are being cultivated and maintained in 'good order'. Generally the site is looking good, however, if you have any concerns or if you anticipate having temporary problems cultivating your plot due to illness or working away from the area for a while, please advise the Secretary [laharodingfarm@gmail.com](mailto:laharodingfarm@gmail.com) so we can consider these issues and advise on actions to manage the situation.

## **Housekeeping**

In a similar vein there are some issues which would help everyone with the smooth running of the site so it benefits all members :-

- 1) Rubbish is once again starting to be dumped in the marginal areas of the site and the car park. Please don't do this. It is not neighbourly or helpful. Please only bring down materials which are suitable for use on an allotment and please take away all your rubbish. Anyone seen dumping rubbish will have their tenancy withdrawn and have their membership cancelled with immediate effect.
- 2) Now the hot weather has arrived please use the dip tank water sensitively and consider other members especially at weekends when demand is at its peak. Plants need water when first transplanted, to support seed germination, and when fruit or veg is forming – outside these times if you plant well and incorporate organic matter in your soil plants will be fine and seek out their own sources of water. Growing naturally this way your crops will taste better too. So think hard before watering. Also please remember hoses and pumps must never be used in the dip tanks. Obviously if you have your own well or harvested rainwater you can pump away to your hearts content.
- 3) Grass paths between plots need to be maintained in 'good order' and the grass cut on a regular basis to enable members to walk around safely. If you need a mower or strimmer they are available for hire from the Trading Hut most Sundays.

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- 4) We have received one or two complaints from members who have had items 'borrowed without permission' from their sheds and plots. This is totally unacceptable and unfortunately any members seen doing this will have their tenancy cancelled with immediate effect.

### Spring Plant Sale

On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May we held a very successful plant sale raising just over £300.00 for the Association. Thanks to everyone who came along, especially those members who donated plants and seedlings.



### Dates for the Diary

- **Annual Flower and Vegetable Show – Sunday 3rd September** – a similar date to last year to maximise the bountiful harvest whilst avoiding the late summer bank holiday - everyone is free to enter, no expertise required, always an enjoyable day. It's very much about the taking part and you never know you might win
- **Apple Pressing Day - Sunday 15th October** - bring along your apples and we will juice them for you.
- **Mince Pies - Sunday 17th December** - we shall be serving coffee, mince pies and perhaps a glass of mulled wine - stop by and reminisce on the successes and near misses of the growing year.

### Topical tips and Cultivation Advice

- 1) As mentioned earlier there is still time to order and plant seeds for sowing this year – use the code SUGD170K – to enjoy the discount the Association has arranged with Dobies – order 'on line' at <https://www.dobies.co.uk/>
- 2) Salad crops grow quickly and well from seed – lettuce, radish, beetroot, spring onions – to name but a few can be sown and will be ready to eat within 5 to 6 weeks.
- 3) Beans and peas can also be sown. Dwarf French beans germinate particularly well in the warm temperatures. They are great for children to grow as they are big seeds which germinate in around seven days after which they can watch them grow and help you harvest them.
- 4) Potatoes planted earlier in the year are growing well. Once they start flowering they will benefit from a good water maybe once a week. Potatoes will have formed once flowering has commenced and can be harvested immediately or left in the ground to grow larger. WHEN the tops die back is the time to complete the harvest as the potatoes will have reached their maximum size.
- 5) Potatoes can still be planted – select quicker growing 'first early' varieties if you can – they will grow well and be ready to harvest in October hopefully before the first frosts.

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- 6) Outdoor tomatoes are now growing strongly – don't forget to take out side shoots and stake the plants firmly – unless you have a bush variety which can be left to scramble and roam about.
- 7) Squashes are great for covering any spare ground you might have. They will grow through less well cultivated areas, suppress weeds with their large leaves, and only require watering when the fruits form later in the season.
- 8) Any uncultivated ground is hard to dig at this time of year – purchase some ground cover from the Trading Hut and peg it down – it will suppress and kill and weeds after a couple of months, prevent any new weeds germinating and retain the moisture. When you take it off later in the summer it will be easy to lightly fork over and be ready in plenty of time for next year.

### **Finally ...**

If you have any suggestions, or concerns regarding the site please do not hesitate to contact a Committee member – we are all volunteers – so offers of help as well as suggestions for improvement are needed if we are to action your ideas.

LAHA Committee

