

LEYTONSTONE ALLOTMENT HOLDERS ASSOCIATION AT RODING FARM - SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Schools back, summers arrived !

As everyone with schoolchildren knows it's the golden rule of summer – as soon as the children go back to school the weather improves – and so it has with some very warm sunny days early September. Perfect for ripening many of the late summer crops especially tomatoes, which, so far this year have mostly avoided blight. Now is the perfect time to harvest and clear the ground ready for Autumn and Winter.

Committee Update

Since the last Newsletter, the Committee has met on two occasions.

Our main focus has been on planning and preparing for the Annual Show together with all the essential day to day tasks necessary to ensure the site is well managed and cared for. A skip has been provided to enable new members to remove inherited rubbish from their plots. Unfortunately, along with all other allotments in the area our supply of free manure has dried up. The delivery lorry has had a major breakdown, and as it is the only one in the fleet, deliveries cannot recommence until it has been repaired. At present there is no date for this.

Annual Flower and Vegetable Show

The annual show took place on Sunday 3rd September in the presence of beautiful sunny weather.



Over 60 members and their families were in attendance and over 40 different members entered exhibits for the show. Standards were very high this year making for a difficult set of decisions for the judges. 22 different members 'podiumed' and achieved a rosette for a first, second or third place in the respective class. It was great to see so many members attend and congratulations to everyone who entered. Our thanks also go to Linda and Sharron who arranged, organised and judged the show. No small task with 26 different classes to assess. Thanks also to Antoinette for managing the raffle which raised £152.00 for the Association's funds.

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Apple (and pear) Pressing

Wondering what to do with your apple and pear crop this year? Got too much fruit to eat or store? Then you're welcome to come along to our juicing session on Sunday 15th October between 12.00 -3.00pm when we will be making delicious juice from your surplus fruit.



All you need to bring are your buckets of fruit and some suitable juice containers, such as old milk plastic milk bottles or glass bottles with screw top or spring lids, which have been thoroughly washed and dried.

You will be welcome to lend a hand on the day. We will be using a special 'hydropress' which just uses water to inflate a rubber bladder against a perforated stainless steel drum to extract juice cleanly and quickly. We will first pulp the washed fruit using a large 'scratter' - a bit like a giant food processor which will be powered by a generator - so that we can extract the maximum amount of juice. Two kilos of apples should produce about a litre of juice. Depending on quantities we will probably need to mix different batches of fruit.

We won't have the facilities to pasteurise the juice on the day but without pasteurising it will last in the fridge for 3-4 days or it can be kept for several months if frozen. It doesn't come much better than freshly squeezed apple juice!

If you need a hand to pick your fruit please let Neil Sinden know by texting 07496 805354 with your plot number and we will try to collect it from you in advance.

Dates for the Diary

- **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.

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- **Annual General Meeting** - will take place in mid to late January – the final date is still to be arranged – please come along if you possibly can. It is important as many members as possible attend as we are self-managed allotment association and we need your input to the choices and decisions which must be made if we are to continue to flourish and be successful.

Topical tips and Cultivation Advice

- 1) After a slow start to the year we have probably reached peak harvest time.
- 2) The last of the potatoes and onions should be harvested before the Autumn rains. Any surplus can be stored – potatoes in a cool, dark, frost-free place to prevent them going green, and onions in similar temperatures but in full light to prevent them shooting.
- 3) It's an excellent time to clear up the plot as weeds tend to slow down and any cleared ground stays clear.



- 4) There is time to plant a 'nitrogen fixing' silage crop such as clover. This will add nitrogen to the soil and prevent other nutrients from leaching out in the Autumn rains. Alternatively use 'ground cover' to protect the soil and prevent weed seeds from germinating in the vacant area.
- 5) Some crops can also be planted. Broad beans are hardy and less prone to black fly if sown in the Autumn and will provide an early harvest next Spring. Garlic and Autumn onion sets benefit from a period of 'cold'. Any time from late September through to late November is a good time to plant them. Just make sure they are planted in a 'raised' area to avoid them rotting off in any Winter wet.
- 6) And if that sound like a lot of hard work, you can always curl up with the seed catalogues and decide what to grow 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