

HAA Autumn newsletter



News from the Shed Shop

New winter opening hours

The Shed Shop will revert to Sunday opening only once the clocks go back at the end of October. Sunday hours have already returned to lunchtimes (12 noon - 2pm).

Autumn planting

Don't forget to get your seed potato orders in by **Monday 9 October** - order forms can be downloaded [here](#) or are available on the door of the Shop and on the Shop counter. Completed forms can be emailed to highgateallotments@outlook.com or placed in the Shed Shop postbox.

There are still some Autumn broad beans available at just a penny each!

New pruning saw

We have a new pruning saw on order - the Samurai 330mm which is super sharp for pruning thick branches. This can be borrowed - first come, first served - from the Shop during opening hours.

Equipment Hire Dates

The following kit is available for hire (charges by the half hour):

Lawn mower (petrol driven) £3

Lawn mower (manual) £1

Strimmer (petrol driven) £3

Strimmer (lightweight battery powered) £2

Small woodchipper (green fresh cuttings only) £3

Large woodchipper (all cuttings) £4

Payment is by online banking (via your phone) on completion of the hire (sorry no cash accepted).

Please email in advance

on HAAequipment@outlook.com to book for the following hire sessions:

Monday 9 October 1-3pm

Saturday 21 October 11-1

Monday 30 October 1-3pm

Saturday 11 November 11-1

Monday 20 November 1-3pm

Saturday 2 December 11-1

Monday 11 December 1-3

Hirers will be inducted into the use of equipment. Do bring your own eye protection and ear defenders if you have them, though you can borrow some on the day.

Autumn gardening tips from Dan



October: the equinox has passed and autumn is upon us.

It is time to clear up this summer's crop leftovers, such as bean and maize stalks and potato haulms, which will all make **good compost**. It's your choice whether to add weeds that may have viable seeds on. Ideally any organic material can be composted, preferably reaching high enough temperatures if the right materials, air and a helping handful of Garotta or nitrogen containing material such as sulphate of ammonia, even urine, is added. All this may not be to everyone's taste but compost recycles nutrients, and builds soil, fertility as well as structure. Alternatively a **wormery** also works where chopped up material is processed into marvellous paste- like plant food and almost any greenery can go in . There are special (tiger) worms in compost and you don't need to add soil since earthworms in the soil don't really like hot acidic compost conditions, so will be elsewhere.

These days we should find ways **not to burn** things on the allotment, particularly weeds which, unless managed in a hot fire produce lots of smoke. The other point is aiming wherever possible for carbon sequestration, (storage in organic materials), so any creation of smoke or releasing carbon dioxide can or should be avoided wherever likely. One answer to one's waste woody material (twigs and small branches) is to make a **dead hedge** or bind twigs up into bundles, which may form overwintering places for the frogs and newts (no toads seen yet) that abound on the allotment site. We have hedgehogs here too which need hibernation places for the winter.

Winter pruning of apple trees, of which there are many and large (some over-large >3m- so the fruit is unpickable and they are shade- generating too) can be achieved when the leaves fall off- until March. Apple trees are very tough and recover in most cases - even if quite large boughs are sawn off. Cuts should be treated with a sealant to reduce the chance of pathogens getting in and in due course, thinning may well be needed. The point is to get less but better quality fruit. Don't prune your stone fruit trees now (cherries, plums, apricots)- that is a summer job around harvest- time Otherwise you may be in for Silverleaf- a fungus disease that will weaken and probably kill the tree.

As you will be aware, there are a massive array of **small habitats** created by an allotment system. From sheds where butterflies may hibernate such as the Peacock or and Small tortoiseshell - these are nettle feeders so it's a good job if we are not too "scorched earth" in our plant management. There are a number of biological control agents, bugs, mites and parasitoid (small wasps) which dwell part of the time on nettles, brambles and wild plants (so- called weeds). So moderation is a good attitude to keep in mind.

Dan Hackett

Recipe for apple cider vinegar



Apples with codling moth or windfalls with bruising may not store through the winter. Neither are they appealing as gifts to neighbours, friends and family. But plotholders can take comfort from the the windfalls returning the goodness to the soil and acting as compost accelerators or food for wildlife.

Alternatively, here is a recipe to make apple cider vinegar (from Alys Fowler's gardening column):

Fill a Kilner jar, fermenting crock or plastic bucket (depending on the volume you wish to make) three quarters full with chopped fruit. Top up with water and use some sort of weight to keep the floaters down, otherwise they will rot. Cover to keep the fruit flies out. Leave for a few months. When it smells like vinegar and tastes like vinegar, it is vinegar!

Rita Drobner

Co-worker scheme reviewed

The Co-Worker scheme has been in operation at allotment sites in Haringey for about five years. It was originally introduced with the intention of enabling tenants needing short-term help to have an official helper (Co-Worker) who could be registered with Haringey. Recently the Haringey Allotment Forum (HAF, consisting of reps from nearly all the allotment sites in the borough) reviewed our experience now that we have had several years to look back on.

A common finding is that while some Co-Worker arrangements terminate naturally after a short time when the need for help no longer applies, other arrangements “bed in” and become semi-permanent, sometimes even with the Co-Worker looking after their own corner of a plot. These latter semi-permanent arrangements are clearly enjoyed by both sides but were not what was envisaged when the scheme was set up - the ruling idea on all allotment sites is that it should always be the tenant(s) who are responsible for cultivating a plot, except for an agreed short time. Otherwise, a Co-Worker could be seen by others as enjoying a “back way” onto an allotment plot, although this is very unlikely to be the intention. In addition, site associations have varied in the extent to which they have monitored the original arrangements.

After extensive discussion with HAF, Haringey have now revised the guidance covering Co-Workers (and other helpers) and it can be read [here](#). It has been made clearer that Co-Workers can only be a short-term arrangement, and also that Co-Workers should not take over cultivation of part of a plot. In addition, Haringey have introduced an [application form](#) for new Co-Worker enquiries so that both the reason for the help and the expected duration are agreed in advance: no maximum time is given but the intention is that new arrangements should not last more than three months, or in exceptional cases, six months. At Highgate we are happy to consider new applications for a Co-Worker using the new form, as we do think the scheme can be extremely useful.

What does this mean for existing Co-Worker arrangements? This was also discussed at HAF and it was agreed that the “tightening-up” of the Co-Worker system would NOT be immediately and retrospectively applied to existing arrangements, as in general all involved have “played with a straight bat” with no intention to bend any rules. However all site associations have been asked to confer individually with their tenants who have existing Co-Worker arrangements to ask (a) if they are

still using Co-Workers; and (b) to discuss the best way to revert to the principle of short-term help only. Your Highgate site association aims to get in contact with such tenants in the coming weeks, but if you are in this group you can of course get in touch directly with Geoff at highgateallotments@outlook.com to start a discussion.

The Co-Worker Guidance and Application Form documents and many other items of information may be found on the HAA website Documents Page: <https://www.highgate-allotments.org/documents>.

Geoff Kemball-Cook, Site Secretary

PS This is also a good time to maintain the paths beside your plots - they are your responsibility and there are plenty of good chippings available for you to use.

