



# Highgate Allotments Winter Newsletter

**Happy New Year everyone!**

## **Annual plot rental invoices**

Haringey Council is aiming to send out invoices for plot rental (Jan-Dec 2023) around the end of January. Where Haringey has an up to date email address for the invoiced tenant, invoices will be sent by email, otherwise they will be posted to your last known address. If any tenant wishes to change from postal to email delivery, or to update their relevant postal or email address, please contact Geoff at [highgateallotments@outlook.com](mailto:highgateallotments@outlook.com). Any tenant who has not received an invoice by late February should also email Geoff.

## **This year's AGM**

**Our Association AGM this year will be on Saturday 18 March from 2-4pm at Highgate Primary School.** We hope to see you all there.

## **Shed Shop news**

The Trading Shed is currently open from **12 noon to 2pm on Sundays**. For the rest of January there will be some **discounted items** (bamboo canes, wooden plant labels) so come and get yourselves a bargain! We have now 'gone modern' and can accept payments by phone, as well as cash.

If you lost **broad beans** during the cold snap, we can still supply some

replacement beans. Hurry while stocks last! We have sold out of **manure** but a new delivery is expected on 27th January.

Once the seed sowing season starts in earnest, please consider participating in our **SEED SWAP SCHEME**. If you open a new packet of seeds and decide you don't need them all, why not donate the remainder to our seed swap and see if there is anything there you would like to sow. Only freshly opened packets of seeds, please.

We look forward to seeing you in the Shop. Come and have a browse and a chat. No obligation to buy anything...

## **Tool Sharpening workshop**

By popular demand, there will be another Tool Sharpening Workshop on **Sunday 5 March between 11.30 am and 1pm**. Bring your secateurs and loppers and skill share with fellow tenants.

## **Equipment hire**

Strimmers (battery and petrol), woodchippers, mowers (manual and petrol) are available for hire from our equipment store. You can email in advance on [HAAequipment@outlook.com](mailto:HAAequipment@outlook.com) to book for the following hire sessions:

**Sunday 26 February 11am - 1pm**

**Sunday 12 March 11am - 1pm**

**Monday 20 March 2-4 pm**

**Sunday 9 April 11am - 1 pm**

**Monday 17 April 2-4 pm**





## Jobs for the winter

Now is the time of year for fruit tree pruning, but only apples, pears and quinces - not the stone fruit, such as plums or cherries, which should be pruned in the growing season to help seal the cuts. The aim is perhaps to reduce the height (many of the site's apple trees are too tall to pick). Remove damaged, crossing- over or cankerous branches. Whippy water shoots should be removed, but some thicker ones can be left but shortened. Then there is thinning - some say you should be able to throw your hat through the tree's branches! Bear in mind that less is more - less fruit but higher quality.

We discourage burning the prunings - hire one of our chippers to produce chipping for mulch or use the twigs to make a wildlife habitat. You might like to try [biochar](#) to turn the twigs into charcoal to improve your soil.

Excellent quality chippings have been delivered by our friendly tree surgeons so do help yourselves to mulch for your fruit trees and bushes or to make paths on your plots. Don't forget you are also responsible for the paths next to your plots.

New pond for the HAA communal orchard



*"Almost any water body, whatever its size, will have some wildlife value."* RSPB

We are working with Highgate Primary School to create a new wildlife pond in the communal orchard behind the Shed Shop. The children have even offered

to help with the digging!

The plan is as follows:

- The pond will be modular i.e several mini ponds in an arrangement, not exceeding a water depth of 45 cm.
- It will be made from recycled materials..
- Pond water can be topped up with rain water collected from the Shop roof.
- Light for the pond will be increased by trimming the overhang of the apple tree to the right of the wheelbarrow.
- The approximate location of the new pond is marked by the wheelbarrow below



Ponds are an effective way to increase biodiversity in any environment. They provide a haven for all sorts of plants, birds and animals. They are complex habitats full of algae and plants, scavengers, predators, herbivores, decomposers and parasites. Some species spend their whole life in the pond - for instance, water snails and small crustaceans while others use it for part of their life cycle - e.g. pond skaters and dragon flies.

## **HELP NEEDED: do you have any of the following?**

### Old Vessels

The new modular pond will be built from several reused items. We are looking for the following:

- An unwanted metal bath tub or a galvanised steel vessel
- a barrel
- an old plastic builders trug (broken handles no problem) or a sturdy council recycling box (which has been put out of use through the new council wheelie bins).

### Lining

Any leaking vessel will require a waterproof pond liner. Larger pieces of PVC packaging, for example packaging for a mattress or flat packed furniture.

### Edging fabric

Fabric in pieces of no smaller than 40 cm in colours of greys, browns and greens. Pieces can be stitched together before laying them around the pond edges. This would bridge the pond edges and the surrounding earth. It would camouflage glossy and shiny edges and enable plant, roots and algae to attach and soften the pond surround.

### A spare water butt

A water butt or barrel would be useful to collect rain water from the shop roof. It would be positioned in the orchard near the dead hedge to allow easy top-up of the pond.

Please, contact the [committee](#), if you think you may have something suitable.

## **New map of our site**

A member of the Committee has drawn up a new map of the allotment site, which many of you may find useful (see below).

**Compliments of the season from your Committee.**



**SITE PLAN - HIGHGATE ALLOTMENTS**  
**VERSION 13 JAN 2023**



