



Seed potatoes, shed shop and planting and growing tips

## Highgate Allotments Association Newsletter

### April 2018

*Spring has arrived at last! Let's get to work!*

*If this newsletter doesn't display correctly, please download from the Association website:*

<http://www.highgate-allotments.org/documents>

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#### Seed Potato Orders

If you have ordered and paid for seed potatoes, these are now in stock in the Shed Shop so please collect from Jim as soon as possible – remember to bring your invoice listing what you have paid for.

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#### Shed Shop

Thanks to Jim, Angelo and kind volunteers the Shed Shop is now open every Saturday and Sunday between noon and 1 pm. The bell is rung on opening.

**We need more volunteer helpers!** Have you an hour to spare one Saturday during the spring or summer? If so, could you occasionally assist Chairman Jim in the Shop between noon and 1pm? He will show you the ropes, and it's a good opportunity to get some free advice and/or allotment gossip while you are waiting for customers.

Fill in the Doodle Poll at <https://doodle.com/poll/xmcgvit74zgkegag> or email [maggy.meadeking@icloud.com](mailto:maggy.meadeking@icloud.com) if you can help.

#### Advice on fertilisers and manures

Please show your support for the Shop and the volunteers by spending what you can afford! The small profit we make goes straight back into improving site facilities for all tenants. We sell a good range of soil-modifying fertilisers and manures. You may wonder which of them might be of help to you.

If crops won't germinate from seeds or do very badly straight after transplantation, it may not be an issue

with fertility, more a question of bad weather or soil conditions. Watering and water retention, or even over watering, are the more likely culprits at that stage. You could try planting in a different spot, or adding potting compost to the seed drill to give the seeds the best chance of imbibing water and to prevent crusting. This has been found to improve the germination of carrots and parsnips.

Preparing your soil and conditioning your soil with **manure**, **6X Fertiliser** or a slow-release fertiliser such as **fish, blood and bone** may help in the long run. Many farmers reach for artificial fertilisers or single nutrient fertilisers such as **sulphate of ammonia** or **superphosphate**. **Pelleted chicken manure** is an excellent supplier of nitrates.

**Growmore** is a good all-round, balanced fertiliser containing the main nutrients - N nitrogen, P phosphorus and K potassium. Deficiencies in these will show as poor growth when a plant gets going, although cold temperatures, watering problems and pest attack on the roots can simulate this situation too. A scattering of **Groworganic** will also help.

From flowering onwards, additional potassium in the form of **Tomorite** or **sulphate of potash** can ensure higher yields of fruit.

Don't forget **lime** or wood ash for your brassicas, but lime-hating plants need dressings of **ericaceous compost** and special fertiliser. Raspberries are not too sensitive, but blueberries are - even tap water may be harmful. Potatoes need potash and onions need a source of sulphur.

Just as different plants demand different treatment, one gardener's best practice may be anathema to another. You will find something for everyone in the Shed Shop. And chat to your neighbours about their successes and failures. They may well be able to suggest a diagnosis and a remedy.

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### Next Eco Compost Delivery

The next lorry load of FREE Eco Compost is booked for **Friday May 25<sup>th</sup> at 10am**. All tenants are requested to observe a limit of FIVE barrow loads per plot. Make a note of the date in your diary, because the Eco Compost pile is usually gone within a few days. There will be one or two more deliveries later in the year.

### Wood Chippings

These are very popular at this time of year and often disappear almost as soon as they are delivered. Be assured - we request fresh chippings from local tree surgeons as soon as we run out.

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### Spring Plot Photographs

Many plots are outstandingly pretty during April. If you take any good photos you would like to share with other tenants, please send them to [highgateallotments@outlook.com](mailto:highgateallotments@outlook.com). Simply walking round the site in mid-spring can be very interesting and inspiring – why not set aside half an hour to wander the paths and see what others are up to?

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### 2018 Plot Inspections

We expect two inspections by Haringey during 2018. So far we have not been told when the first is likely to take place but, in any event, April is the perfect time to tidy your plot and get it ready for the growing

season.

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#### **HAA Summer Barbecue and Plant Sale**

The Summer Barbecue is scheduled for **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July, Noon-4pm**. There will be a dedicated veggie-only BBQ as well as one for carnivores. HAA welcomes donations of plants for sale in aid of charity, so please get germinating.

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**Don't forget to follow us on Facebook.** You can find us here: <https://goo.gl/fCw7Dy>

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***This newsletter has been produced by the Highgate Allotments Association Committee. You can contact anyone on the Committee via [highgateallotments@outlook.com](mailto:highgateallotments@outlook.com)***

*The minutes of our meetings and many other useful documents about the running of the allotments (inc application forms) - as well as some inspiring photos - are available on our website: <http://www.highgate-allotments.org> . Please let us know if you didn't receive this email directly but would like to do so in future.*

**Please print this for any of your neighbours who haven't email.**

