

CPAA NEWSLETTER

March 2020

Dear Friends

Our allotment has weathered storms: Dennis and Ciara. We've had an incredibly wet winter but hopefully spring is just around the corner and we're on the brink of yet another great year of cultivating fabulous fruit and veg.

In January we voted in a new Committee. In the last month (while the rain lashed outside and battered our sheds), they've been busy planning ahead!

STOP PRESS! - NEW EVENTS for 2020

Not only will there be the summer BBQ (with Laurence and Kate's wonderful cooking), and the Fireworks Party, they'll also be some new events to look forward to. Please join us, meet your neighbours and help build a great community:

QUIZ NIGHT WITH FISH & CHIP SUPPER

What do you call a group of owls? How many bones are there in the human body? In which year did the Titanic sink? Get together your team of 4 to 5 and join us for the CPAA Quiz and Fish & Chips supper. Points mean prizes! Your neighbour may grow better potatoes, but can you beat them in the History round? Invite your friends. Tax your grey matter. Date to be confirmed.



COLE PARK ALLOTMENT BAKE OFF

Use your Great Grandmother's recipe (or Nigella's), and bake your cake or biscuit entry for the CPAA Bake Off. All entries will be judged blind. Prizes will be awarded for originality, flavour and presentation.

Once judging is completed all cakes and biscuits will be shared out. Bring your own sandwiches and enjoy your own afternoon tea! Try each other's cakes and biscuits and pick up some baking tips. Look out for the posters in the summer.



CREATING A LEGACY

Each year we sadly say goodbye to some allotment holders who have been with us for many years and welcome others. Yet there is no document that records who we all are. To rectify this (with your permission), we would like to create a photographic record of all plot holders for 2020. Photos of you that will be kept for prosperity, a record of those that have worked the ground and made it an allotment (all dogs & allotment cats will be included)!

MEET THE EXPERTS

Ever wondered how to graft an apple tree, weave with willow or care for chickens? Here's your chance to learn how from our own resident experts, for free!



WEAVING WITH WILLOW - A TALK & DEMO. WITH ELLIE MORGAN

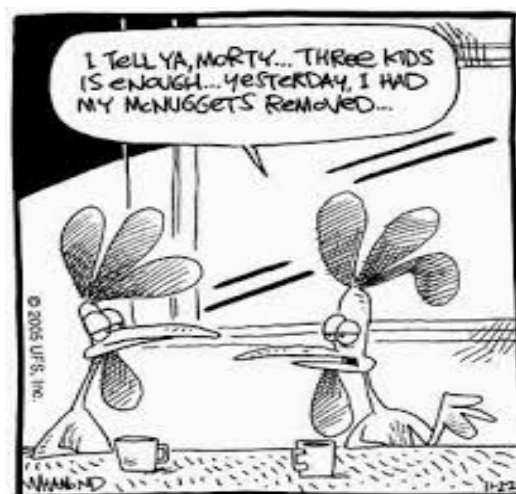
Ellie a multi-talented weaver will show you how to weave with willow. Learn how to grow it, cut it for weaving and create something really unique. Watch, listen, learn and then try it yourself on your own plot. Date to be confirmed in the next few weeks.

GRAFTING APPLE TREES -TALK & DEMO. WITH MARCO FREITAS

You may have seen in the garden centres apple trees with several varieties grafted onto one. Ever wondered how it's done? Why not learn from our own expert and Marco will show you the different techniques to graft one variety onto another. Watch, listen, learn, and then try it yourself. Date to be confirmed.

CARING FOR CHICKENS - SPEAKER TO BE CONFIRMED

There's nothing better than fresh eggs from your own chickens, but what are the needs and commitments required to keep your own birds? How should they be fed, housed and bred? When do they lay or stop laying? What are the potential costs? How long do they live for? Learn the answers to all these questions and much, much more. Date and speaker to be confirmed.



AN ALLOTMENT UPDATE, WHAT'S NEW...

THE POLYTUNNELS

The Polytunnels are now designated 'A' (spaces 1 - 10) and 'B' (spaces 11-20). We believe this makes for easier identification. If you are interested in having a space in a polytunnel, the list of applicants will open on November 1st, (closes November 30th). Put your name down and enjoy growing undercover the following year.

For those of you who haven't done so yet, please have your say and vote to decide whether you feel an additional polytunnel is currently needed. Details and voting forms are on line and can also be found in the Community Meeting Room (between the two containers). Voting closes Monday 9th March.

STOP PRESS! - VACANT PLOTS

Great News! An Allotment Working Party has cleared nine plots ready to be let by the council. Our thanks go to Jim Buchan (from the council), who has been very active on this initiative. New tenants will be appointed shortly, please take a moment to welcome them.



WORKING PARTIES

During the year we'll be encouraging you to join us to complete a variety of maintenance tasks on the allotment e.g. Clearing the pond, tidying the woodchip pile, cutting back the hedges. Please consider joining us. Working parties are a great way to meet other plot holders and have some fun. Your work will also help to keep the allotments a great space for us all to enjoy.



STOP PRESS! - NEW TOOL LIBRARY

All the equipment has now been numbered and catalogued, producing a 'Tool Library'. You are most welcome to hire equipment (strimmers, cultivators, lawnmowers), at the fabulously low cost of £5 (£3 for strimmers). All that we ask is that you use the equipment respectfully and return it clean and in full working order. You will be asked to sign a disclaimer.

Interested? Contact digcolepark@gmail.com

STOP PRESS! - NEW SEED & SUNDRIES DISCOUNT NEGOTIATED



Plot holders can now purchase seeds from Kings Seeds at any time taking advantage of a 50% discount (you will need to register to qualify). Discounts of 50% have also been negotiated with Dobies & Suttons on seeds and 15% on sundries. These offers are **only open** to CPAA members.

Link for King Seeds for CPA members:

www.kingsseeds.com/Secure/Register?ur=KA120

For Suttons and Dobies: register, order and then use the appropriate code:

The Suttons code: GS4006F

Dobies code: GD4014F.

You can also order by phone:

Suttons 0344 326 2200 Dobies 0344 967 0303

The CPAA will continue to process annual seed, potatoes etc. orders usual

THE SHOP

Our expert Shop Manager, Peter Blake is there to help you with your purchases. Peter is usually on the allotment most mornings (on the immaculate plot 119), and around at weekends. For new plot holders he's also got some great advice about growing fruit and veg if you need it.

RUGBY PARKING

Our main stream of income comes from the Rugby Parking, but we can't open the gates without the commitment of volunteers. Namely YOU! We will notify you of the next match as they come up in the calendar, please consider giving up even an hour of your time.



Amongst other things, no income means no BBQs, Fireworks, an unpaid water bill (the cost will be passed on to you), money to pay for new equipment, toilet hire.....the list goes on.

JOBS FOR FEBRUARY - MARCH

Although the allotment is sodden, planting is difficult and we're all waiting for a patch of drier, warmer weather to arrive. There are still a few jobs you might contemplate doing. For newcomers here are a few ideas...

PRUNE AUTUMN RASPBERRIES

By pruning the old canes of autumn-fruiting raspberries now, you'll give the new, developing shoots plenty of time to grow, strengthen and able to hold the fruit crop. Prune old canes back to the ground, avoiding any new shoots that may be emerging. Now is also the time to plant raspberries.

PLANT RHUBARB

For the best crop of rhubarb, choose a bright, open position and prepare the soil by digging deeply and incorporating plenty of compost. Plant the crowns so that the buds are at the same level as soil surface (you may need to dig quite deeply to achieve this). Firm in well. Let the plants establish for two years before harvesting. In order to keep the plants healthy and productive, rhubarb should be lifted and divided every five or six years during the winter, (when the plant is dormant). Each plant can be split into three or four separate crowns with a spade, and replanted.

CLEAR OUT YOUR SHED OR GREENHOUSE

It's still pouring with rain and the ground is just too wet to dig? Take a morning to have a spring clean. Wash out flowerpots, oil all your tools, and sharpen your secateurs. Start the year with a spring clean. Keeping tools and greenhouses clean also helps to limit the spread of plant diseases.

And finally... A BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Had your fill of the usual books on growing fruit? Need all you need to know about pruning blackcurrants? Why not try this recommendation: 'Minding My Peas and Cucumbers', by Kay Sexton (Published by Summersdale). One woman's story of life on an allotment. Full of tales about hosepipe standoffs, arcane rules, and the dark arts of competitive vegetable growing (sound familiar?)!

Witty, well observed and with mouth-watering recipes. Recommended.

Available from Amazon and some independent bookshops

HAPPY GROWING!

