

Newsletter Spring 2017

Gardening Tips – Getting The Best From Your Plot



This is an exciting and busy time at the allotments. We hope that you have not been badly affected by the late frosts and that the crops you have already planted are growing well. As the soil has warmed up now a wide range of seeds can be sown outside in prepared beds including: beetroot, brassicas, carrots, french and runner beans, peas, salad vegetables and spinach. Many seedlings which have been grown indoors can also be planted out now but for more delicate plants, such as courgettes, squashes and tomatoes, it is best to wait until June.

Here are some tips for getting the best from your plot this growing season.

- **Keep an eye on the weather.** Hopefully the risk of frost is past but be ready to protect tender plants with cloches and/or fleece just in case.
- **Water regularly.** There was little rain in April and the soil is very dry. Young plants and seedlings are particularly vulnerable to dry conditions. Early morning and evening are the best times for watering.
- **Keep on top of the weeds.** Weed frequently throughout the growing season to prevent your crops being crowded out and starved of resources. Weeds that have

developed seed heads and pernicious weeds, such as horsetail, bindweed and couch grass, should be removed from the allotment site for disposal.

- **Protect your crops from pests.** Slugs, snails, aphids and saw flies can cause devastation at this time of year. Inspect crops regularly so pests can be dealt with before they become too numerous and too much damage is done. Net fruit bushes to protect them from birds. Cover carrots with insect proof mesh to prevent carrot root fly.
- **Improve your fruit crop by thinning.** Reduce the number of raspberry canes to let in light and air by pruning out less vigorous shoots. Thin gooseberries if you want large fruit.
- **Try succession planting.** This involves sowing a small batch of seeds every two or three weeks rather than the whole packet in one go. It will maximise your chance of success and spread out your harvest.
- **Maximise your growing space by intercropping.** Planting fast and slow growing crops together, for example, radishes with parsnips or lettuces with leeks will increase the yield from your plot.

KHS news



The **KHS plant sale** will be held at 2.00-4.00pm on Saturday 20 May at the Park Road site. There is always a wide variety of vegetable plants and flowers on offer – an ideal way to stock up your allotment.

The **KHS annual show** will be held on Saturday 22 July at Forward House. Information and schedules will be available shortly. This is a friendly, informal event and you don't have to be an expert to get an award for your fruit, vegetables, pickles and jams.