

View from the Chair

Good day fellow Allotmenteer's

Although it has been a wet start to the year, the weather is improving and it is that time of year to get the boots out and work on our plots to get them ready for planting and tending our crops. I have recently been meeting with the events committee and they are working hard on planning for future events. Since 2009, we have held an annual show and this year being our 10th Anniversary year it would be good to see new and old hands entering the fruits of their labour.

Myself and other trustees regularly inspect plots and an ongoing concern is the rubbish that is accumulating on some plots. Rubbish attracts vermin and also let's face it where there is rubbish you will not be able to grow your fruit and vegetables. We need those tenants who have accumulated rubbish to clear the rubbish off the plots and to take it off site. Happy digging

Maria (MRALGA Chair)

MY Harvest (Measure Your Harvest) is a new project in which gardeners can be involved, to help estimate the contribution of home-grown fruit and vegetables to UK national food production. Finding out how much food is grown at home is key to providing evidence to support the use of land for growing in urban areas, and promoting benefits to food security, healthy diets and wellbeing. Jill Edmonson and Roscoe Blevins (from Houghton Conquest), researchers at the University of Sheffield, are working with the RHS and the **National Allotment Society** to ask gardeners and allotment holders to provide information on the space given to edibles, and their yields. This will help them understand how much allotment and garden space is needed to ensure access to suitable land and food growing for UK cities and towns' increasing populations.

Take part at myharvest.org.uk You can also follow the project's progress on Twitter (@MYHarvestUK), Facebook (/MYHarvestUK) and Instagram (@MYHarvestUK).

NAS Update As from 1/4/2018 New NAS membership benefit

The National Allotment Society ("NAS") is introducing this new member benefit in conjunction with Shield Total Insurance who already operate the NAS discount insurance scheme. The benefit is being created via an insurance policy purchased by the NAS to give personal liability cover to all member plot-holders.

Who will benefit from this scheme?

This benefit will be enjoyed by all plot-holders who have either paid their subscription of £3 per member via an Association to NAS, or are paid up Individual Members of the NAS.

What is this product?

This is a liability insurance product purchased by the NAS but designed to provide protection to member plot-holders accused of accidentally causing injury or damaging property. The benefit is worth up to £50,000 and will pay for defence costs and the cost of any award made. As a member plot-holder you would be protected both at your allotment plot but also if you attend shows / events which are allotment related.

The Trustees are currently discussing how and when we will be able to support Tenants who wish to opt into the Insurance scheme and will update you shortly

Events

What a wonderful time we all had at our last two events

There were about 40 of us at the gardening Talks with the Compost King and a further 60+ at our Easter celebration. The feedback we've had from both is all very positive, so we have much more planned for you and your family for the rest of the year.

We have a Quiz Night 6th April 7pm, so if you fancy a great night's fun and a good bite to eat come and put your name on the list, this is followed by our superb Plant sale .This year we have extended the range of plants for you to stock up on.

I really hope to see you all at one or our wonderful events this year.

All the best

Dave Oz

For further information or if you would like to help at events please contact us at the shop or email events@mralsa.org

Tips of the Month

Prune soft fruit and feed with a general fertilizer along with being mulched with compost or manure to preserve moisture when summer arrives.

Early Rhubarb is always well appreciated. Even early stems can be produced by covering the crown with a bucket or container once the crowns begin to sprout.

Sow in rows in the open ground seeds of round seeded spinach, Swiss chard, early types of beetroot, carrots, parsnips, lettuce, Spring onions, peas, broad beans and turnips .All will benefit from a covering of fleece to aid germination and protect from bird damage.

Plant out early cultivars of potatoes as soon as possible and follow on planting out at regular intervals with the second earlies and first main crops until the end of the April. A little bit of forward planning, don't be tempted to plant out more potatoes than you can protect from any frosty weather further down the line.

HEALTH & SAFETY

While carrying out a survey of the MRALGA allotment site, we noticed that there were many plots using corrugated iron for fences and compost bins. Although corrugated iron is useful, it can also go rusty fairly quickly. When this happens, it becomes dangerous and a cut from rusty corrugated iron can cause life-threatening sepsis (blood poisoning) and the iron is likely to be contaminated with rat's urine which harbors Weil's disease (Leptospirosis). This is usually a mild disease with flu-like symptoms but at its worst, it can affect the major organs of the body. Please remember that each plot holder is responsible for public safety on their plot.

Plot-holders should start removing rusty, damaged corrugated iron from their plots as soon as possible and dispose of it safely off-site. It MUST NOT be dumped on our allotment site as this is classed as fly-tipping and anyone doing this can be removed from MRALGA.

The MRALGA Health & Safety Policy, 2010, is being updated in line with the requirements of English law so there will be periodical updates.

Mac Painter

Health & Safety Trustee

Enjoy your plot!

MRALGA Trustees.