



Ian watering peas

Emergency Contacts

Water
 Polsted Rd supply: Mark Digweed
 52 Armour Hill 0791 9166700
 Armour Hill supply: Rod Mills
 5 Wendover Way 0778 9765652
 Chapel Hill supply: Mike Geater
 07768 902634

Vandalism
 POLICE for EVERY incident:
 0845 8 505 505
Call 999 for trouble in progress
 The landlord's agent, Oliver Jenks,
 can be contacted On 9428186

Diary Dates

Saturday 11th June
 Friends of the Royal Berkshire Hospital Show
 Victoria Recreation Ground
Saturday 6th August Tilehurst
 Horticultural Society Show: Village Hall
Saturday 13th August Tilehurst Village
 Show: Victoria Recreation Ground
Thursday 29th Sept Our AGM:
 Village Hall

Dig It

Shows

The Friends of the Royal Berkshire Hospital Show is on **Saturday 11th June** at the **Victoria Recreation Ground**. This is a well organised, popular all-day family event with lots to do for all ages.

We will have a stall. This is a major fund raising event for us; raising money to pay for things like grass cutting and Dig It. Please help reach our target of £150. We sell any plants that new or experienced gardeners would like. There will be sections for herb, vegetable and flower plants, and a children's section. We will also sell rhubarb (always popular, so bring us a few sticks.) Drop off any donations at our stall on the Victoria Recreation Ground; any time after 10.00am.

We will also have a stall at the Tilehurst Village Show on the Victoria Recreation Ground on Saturday 13th August. This is another chance to raise some cash by selling surplus plants and produce.

Bicentennial

The Tilehurst Pools Lands Charity (our landlord) is celebrating it's 200th birthday this year. There will be a display in the library early in June or look at their updated website: www.tilehurstplc.org.uk

Health and safety

The trustees' inspection went well, showing up a few problems, but no very serious ones. The main issue that emerged was that we need to keep working at the paths. Whilst there has been some excellent progress there are still far too many areas where paths do not exist. The trustees are pleased with the general state of the site but want to see significant improvement on this aspect. There should be a path round the edge of every full-size plot (not essential between half plots). Please plan to tackle yours during the next twelve months.

Plot Holders Committee 2009/2010						
Chair	John Butt	AA1a	9416944			
Secretary	Jenny Cottee	AA8	9425169			
Treasurer	Ken Phillips	AB14				
Committee	William Macphee	PC2	Kate Jones	AB9a		
	Richard Buckingham	PD13	David Griffiths	PB10	Karen Fidler	PB12
			Colin Robinson	AA20	Mick Geater	CH

Water

Good news. Oliver tells us that the bill for water from the Polsted Road supply has been revised; there is no mystery leak problem, but please continue to be careful. High bills will come back to us as rent rises. Many thanks to Ken, William and Peter Lucek for sorting out the water taps and posts over the winter months.

Vandalism

Recent damage to the roof and structure of the large shed on the KOG (accessible) plot was repaired by Peter, Trevor and Cyril. The shed is again water-tight and we will be applying anti-climb paint (and notices) to keep it that way.



Waiting list

The list is shorter now that only half plots are let. Some intrepid people have taken on previously hard to-let patches of land. There are now 28 new families waiting. It is likely that they will all get plots by summer 2014.

There is one chair-height plot vacant on the Keep on Gardening (KOG) plot. Please tell anyone who likes gardening and needs a small accessible plot to contact Jenny.

Bees

Martin has moved several hives to a new location. Ian now has his own first colony on the edge of the Whithies. We hope all will continue to benefit from the good pollination and better yields that bees bring.

See the main notice board for information about bees and contact Martin or Ian if you have any concerns.

Grass cutting

Many thanks to Joe for taking on the task of cutting the grass on the main paths again this year.

You can help by not throwing stones on the path; they make cutting much more tricky.



Bill Fryer



Bill was one of our longest standing plot-holders. Sadly, he died on 17 March 2011. Bill had had an allotment on our Polstead Road site since he and Iris moved to Reading in 1973. He was a founder member of the plot-holders committee. He was talented, sensible and persistent. You could always ask Bill and get lots of advice about growing fruit, vegetables, propagating etc. Lots of us have skills gleaned from chats with Bill. He is very much missed on the allotments and at the Tilehurst Horticultural Society.

Seasonal Reminders



What a year! Hardly any rain for 10 weeks, wonderful hot summery temperatures even in April. Lots of us have planted out tender plants much earlier than ever before. Will the gamble on no frosty nights pay off? Or will some of us have to re-sow the beans, sweet-corn, tomatoes and courgettes? Usually your secretary reckons on no frost after 20th May and even that is a bit risky.

You can sow crops like carrots, and french beans into July; carry on sowing salad crops into September and there are lots of late sown veg, like oriental greens. Hint; late sowing is a good way to beat carrot fly. Also, don't forget to plant up your winter stuff like leeks and greens.

Has anyone else been following the week-by-week guide in 'Garden News' on growing veg for all year round eating? It is an excellent reminder about how to grow just enough and is full of useful ideas.

Rubbish

All households have domestic rubbish collections. Please take your rubbish home. Only stones and green stuff can be left on the on-site land-fill areas.

Mulch

Don't wait for your plants to wilt before you water. Wilting plants are already stressed, it's not too late to save the plant but it is too late to prevent growth interruption and some side effects you may not find out about until harvest.

When you water, water well and at the roots. Overhead watering is wasteful because most of the water that ends up on the leaves is lost to evaporation. The earlier in the day you water, the more will be lost to evaporation, but if you water late in the evening, plants may stay damp all night and be more susceptible to diseases such as blight, mould or rot. Tomatoes, peas, beans, melons and marrows are all especially vulnerable in muggy or humid weather. I prefer to water in the late afternoon, however local weather conditions or other factors may mean another time is ideal. For instance, if it is very humid I may water in the morning instead.

Evaporation happens. You can't stop it but you can certainly slow it down and at the same time saving yourself a chore and water. Not a bad idea with a hosepipe ban looming and plenty more to do in the garden. One of the best ways to keep your plants and the water meter happy is to mulch. Mulch, mulch, mulch.

The mulch you use depends on the needs of your garden and what you have got. Grass cuttings are good, but can be scarce in times of drought.

To keep the soil cool apply a layer of grass cuttings, straw or newspaper (well anchored). To keep the soil warm use plastic mulch. For additional nutrients, if your crop is a heavy feeder, use compost. Water your plants well before mulching, and again when laid to thoroughly wet the mulch. This done it should not be necessary to water every day, just a few times a week.

You can greatly reduce evaporation water loss by thinning plants that tolerate close spacing so that mature plants just touch their neighbour, thus shading the ground below. Or plant in shallow indentations so that water does not run off in all directions and is directed to the roots.

