



Allotments Newsletter

Welcome



This is the first issue of your new format Allotments newsletter. The committee and site representatives have contributed to this issue of the newsletter but we look forward to hearing from you with any news or allotment tips as the year progresses. Don't be shy, you would be surprised at how the simplest of tips can help others!

It has been a challenging time recently with the retirement of the old committee and the new blood picking up the reins but the signs are that we are now looking forward to great year.

Enjoy your allotments and all it produces!



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Special points of interest:

- Park Road Water supply resolution
- Hutton Trading Hut eligibility
- Shows and Meetings
- Jobs For March

Keith's Ramblings

This weather is making gardening rather difficult with the wet conditions we are having and I feel really sorry for plot holders with limited time it is going to be hard start to the season for them.

On the other hand you can always find something to do. The two poly tunnels I spoke about last time have both been recovered and door frames made so the zip doors have been done away with and I have planted some winter density lettuce plants, radish and carrots seeds in one of them. The second one will be used for early potatoes planted in bags. I use black polythene planters and fill with a mixture of multipurpose compost and manure, one potato to a bag and I will plant twenty bags which will be done after the 1st March. Once they are growing I will cover with fleece to give extra protection from frosts. You do have to be careful with the watering as

they can dry out quite quickly. The peas and beans in the cold greenhouse are in flower; let us hope for some sunshine to get the pollinators out so we get some crops off them.

We have finished harvesting the Arctic King lettuce that was growing in there. The onions, garlic and broad beans are all doing well and there are some daffodils coming into bloom.

We still have some Brussel sprouts to harvest as soon as they are finished the ground will be dug over. I was on site when a free load of manure arrived so I was able to get enough for my runner bean trenches so I have dug that in and I will be putting up the framework for the sweet peas and climbing French beans.

At home general tidying up has taken place in the front garden and the bed of crocus gives us some early colour when the sun comes out. It is

time to prune the roses both at home and on the plot. In the green house a new cover has been made for the heated bench which now has a variety of seeds planted in half sized trays and small flower pots. My main front bed will be planted out with Geraniums which I buy in as plug plants about 140 are needed to fill the bed. These will be planted in three and a half inch pots when they arrive to grow on.

The onion bed in the back garden needs to be dug and compost added and I will also have to put a fence round it and a net over the top to stop the cats getting on it. As soon as the weather is suitable the grass will be cut but only a high cut the first time in case we get more cold weather.

Good gardening from Keith and Wendy.

Hutton Trading Hut



Following on from successful discussions, the committee have negotiated affiliate membership to the Hutton Horticultural Society for all Brentwood Horticultural Society members.

This membership enables you to use the Hutton Trading Shed.

You need to pick up your membership card from your site representative before you can make any purchases—remember to bring it with you

as you will need to show it.

If you have the technology a price list can be found at:

www.huttonhorticulturalsociety.org.uk/page12.html

The shed can be found at:

**Birkbeck Road,
Hutton,
Essex CM13 1JP**

The shed is open for trading between 09:30 and 12:00 every Sunday.

Additional benefits of membership include being able to attend their talks and shows.

Upcoming Events include:

Wednesday 14th March
“Flowering Shrubs” by Brian Wickenden Get to know the flowering shrubs that would suit your garden.

Wednesday 11th April
“Wisbey Bees” An In-gatestone based enterprise will talk about bees in your garden, how it all works together from making honey to the jar on your breakfast table. Items for sale.

Composting

Following the article in last month’s issue we received the following from Neil Hornsby.

The answer to your problem with plastic tea – bags and those containing strings and tags is simple use loose “proper” tea

These are the four main benefits (1) you have unadulterated tea grounds to put in your

compost; therefore no “foreign” material in your compost. (2) There is much less packaging in loose tea therefore it is better for the environment: (3) you don’t get a scum around the top of the cup: the tannin is left in the teapot: (4) Most importantly, quality for quality, loose tea makes better tea!

Unfortunately 96% of tea sold is in teabag form; it just therefore proves that most of the people can be wrong for most of the time.

An open and shut case or rather tea-caddy.

Good things to compost include vegetable peelings, fruit waste, teabags, plant pruning's and grass cuttings

Event Calendar



Brentwood Guild of Gardeners

Spring Show

16th March

Staging 6-7pm Meeting 8pm.

At St Georges Church Hall, On-gar Road

There will be a gardening question and answer session.

Shenfield Garden Soc.

Meetings

20th March The history of Copped Hall

17th April Weeds Bane or Bed-fellows?

£2.00 for non-members

Held in the Parish Hall

Hutton Horticultural Soc.

Meetings

7:30 St. Peters Church Hall, Cloughton Way, Hutton, CM13 1JS

Park Road Water Supply

There has been an historic issue with a leak to the water supply to the Park Road.

After the support of various Allotment holders, site representatives and committee members and countless meetings with the Water Board the problem has been identified and a solution identified.

The solution includes terminating the existing supply due to the difficulty and cost of repairs and the re-provision of the service from a different

access point.

As you may imagine, these things don't happen by themselves and some names should be commended for reaching a solution to a difficult problem

Keith Petty who's knowledge of the site helped identify the leak.

Ian Palmer who negotiated with the Water Board and sourced the new tanks and piping.

Last but definitely not least Chris Smith who single handed dug out a 10 metres long 750mm deep trench for the new pipe work!

Over the next few weeks the water board will inspect the trench and lay in the new supply.



Bryan's Weather

Rainfall for January was 2" (50.25mm) and so far no plots underwater on the Hartswood Site.

Our Apricot on the plot is already at the pink bud stage, as are the cherry plums in the hedges.

Will the blossom survive this cold spell and produce a good crop?

It's a good idea to lift some parsnips and leeks before the ground freezes solid as predicted by the weather forecasters.

Proverbs

**If March comes in like a Lion
it will go out like a Lamb.**

**When March blows its horn
your barn will be filled with
Hay and Corn**

Working Parties

Ongar road site have recently had a working party organised when they cleared several plots and also did some road repairs

On the Park Road site work is underway laying the new water main. On March 12th once completed we then have the

job of connecting it to the rest of the system so we will be asking for volunteers to help with that part of the operation. Contact your site reps for details



MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY CONTACT

Membership Secretary, PO Box 12582 Brentwood
CM14 9QR
Email: membershapsec.brentwoodhs@gmail.com

Get Digging!

[/ /www.brentwoodhorticulturalsociety.org.uk](http://www.brentwoodhorticulturalsociety.org.uk)

If you are enjoying your allotment why not let others know about the benefits?

Brentwood Horticultural Society manages eight allotment sites within Brentwood on behalf of Brentwood Council.

The sites are Hartswood, Park Road, Ongar Road, Bishops Hall, Honey Pot Lane, River Road, Middle Road, and Crescent Road.

During the year a few allotments become available. So, if you know someone who would enjoy outdoor exercise, fresh produce and good company give them the details of our membership secretary.

Jobs for March



Depending on the weather 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 month. 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

Transplant any early peas, broad beans, cabbages or lettuce you may have started off earlier.

Sow the seed of Brussels sprouts, summer cabbage, broccoli, onions and leeks in

short rows on a "nursery seed bed". These will be grown on to be transplanted in April.

Plant out onion sets, shallots and garlic before they start to produce shoots. If you are buying any from the shed or garden centres reject any that are shooting they will only bolt during the summer.

Transplant any onions that were grown from seed sown last summer into rows. It is best to treat these as a sacrificial crop to be harvested and used from August onwards.

If you can offer the protection of a greenhouse sow the seed of celery, celeriac, French beans (they are hardy enough

to be planted out before the runners), cauliflowers to transplant on the open soil next month

When the weather conditions allow it, complete the preparations of seed beds for direct seed sowing. Spread the job out over several days to allow the surface of the soil to dry out.