

Newsletter

Ash Road Allotment Association

The Newsletter

Anything for the newsletter? Please let me know. Chris Martin (Plot 59). Mobile 07939 559 424. Email: chris.e.martin@ntlworld.com

Coffee and Shop

You are invited for ***FREE* coffee on Sunday mornings**. Come along to the Green, by Hut, at 11 am. Listen out for the 'Air Horn' that announces coffee is served. It's a great way to meet your fellow allotmenters.

Remember that we also have an **allotment 'shop' at The Hut**. This is open every Sunday from 10.30am. We've recently increased the range of items we stock. Subject to availability there is a range of composts and growing media; mulches, fertilisers and feeds; a range of items for protection of crops and pest and weed suppression; as well as other sundry items such as bamboo canes, gardening gloves, garden twine, clips etc. All items are at reasonable prices. Come and take a look.

Copies of the latest price list are available in the Hut and a display copy is pinned to the site notice board on the outside wall.



Find us on:
facebook®

Our Facebook page has the name Ash Road Allotments Association. Follow the link - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1115906655100815>. To 'sign up' click on 'join'. Use the page to share ideas and news, ask questions or seek advice from other plot-holders or to contact the Committee.



Welcome to all, Welcome to Spring!

Later than usual the first signs of Spring are slowly appearing across the Allotment. This should be the start of the busiest time of year on the site, but the continuing cold and wet has been frustrating for all of us. Hopefully, forecasts suggest that warmer weather will arrive this week, so at long last we may be able to start catching up on lost time.

Despite the disappointing weather I have been really impressed that there is a real buzz of activity across the site. A lot of new plot-holders have joined us since last Summer and I think it's great to see the enthusiasm and energy that they have brought to Ash Road Allotments. Many of our new plot-holders have not been afraid to take on plots that were overgrown and neglected and a real transformation is underway. Welcome to all of you and to all plot-holders, let's hope for a great growing season in 2018!

Inside this Newsletter you will find more information to help newer members understand how the site works and to get their bearings. You will also find some guidance on working your plot and being good neighbours. There are some hints and tips on things to do on your plot in April and some pointers to things you may want to leave until later. Finally, there is some information on forthcoming events on the Allotment site during the year.

Allotment Events: Dates for Your Diary

Sun 13th May - Plant Sale

Sun 5th Aug - Barbecue

Sun 2nd Sep - Annual Show

Wed 7th Nov - Annual
General Meeting

May Plant Sale



We have our Spring Plant Sale on Sunday 13th May. This is a great way for plot-holders to get low-cost vegetable seedlings for planting out this summer. The sale also raises money for charity.

Could you grow some plants for the sale, or will you have surplus ones you are willing to donate? You could either grow seedlings at home and bring plants to the sale in May, or there is some space in the communal greenhouses that we are setting aside for growing for this purpose. Contact Malcolm at the Hut or email ash_road_allotments@aol.co.uk

We're also planning to have a 'book sale' for charity at the same time. If you have any spare books at home (**they must be in good condition**), please bring them along to the Hut in time for sale on the day, or beforehand provided that they are in bags to protect them from damp and dirt.



"SPUD IN A BUCKET"

OK, here's a fun competition for the summer that will be judged as one of the classes at the Allotment Show on Sunday 2nd September 2018. The idea is that everyone who would like to take part will grow the same variety of potato, from a seed potato provided by the Committee. **To give everyone a chance we are restricting entries to one potato and bucket per person.** The seed potatoes and buckets will be available from Sunday 15th April.

Please collect your potato and bucket from the Hut on Sunday mornings, or see a Committee Member. The cost is £1.

One potato grown in a builder's bucket is a great fun class and we encourage everyone to have a go. No one knows what weight of potatoes they have grown until Show Day, when the buckets are emptied, the crop weighed and the winner decided.

So come on, have a go - and Good Luck!

Plot Inspections

Plot inspections are underway, but have been delayed by the recent poor weather. These will continue through the season. The Committee is not looking for perfection, but expects that plot-holders should be making reasonable use of their allotments and that plots have not been abandoned, or left overgrown. In addition, the inspections will make sure that any safety issues have been addressed, such as removing broken glass and trimming any branches that overhang paths.

Allowance will be made for those who have only recently taken over a plot and for the weather and the state of the season. We understand that there may be particular personal circumstances that might cause difficulties for some in working their plot.

Work Party - Sunday 29th April

There will be a 'work party' on Sunday 29th April, starting at 10.00am, with free coffee afterwards. Meet at the Hut. 'Work parties' are where we ask plot-holders to volunteer an hour of their time to help carry out a maintenance task on site to benefit everyone. They are a great way to meet other plot-holders.

Manure & Wood-chip



Fresh supplies of manure have now been delivered. It can be found in two locations, alongside both of the car park areas.

Please arrange payment BEFORE taking anything. The cost is £1 per barrow-load. Speak to a member of the Committee, or ask and pay at the Hut on Sunday or email ash_road_allotments@aol.com.

Payment can also be made by placing your money, together with a piece of paper or envelope stating your name, plot number and what you are paying for, in the mail box under the awning to the rear of the Hut.

Bags of dried manure are also for sale in the allotment shop in the Hut.

The supply of wood chips, for mulching or creating paths, also at £1 a barrow is in the same locations but has nearly run out. We hope to have fresh supplies delivered soon.

Please note that the gravel material piled close to the main access road/trackway and car park is not to be taken. This material is for use by the Committee for site maintenance only.

Things to do in April

Here are a few suggestions for 'things to do' this month. However, if the weather is not fit for planting, then please delay until it is. Remember frosts can still occur even into May.

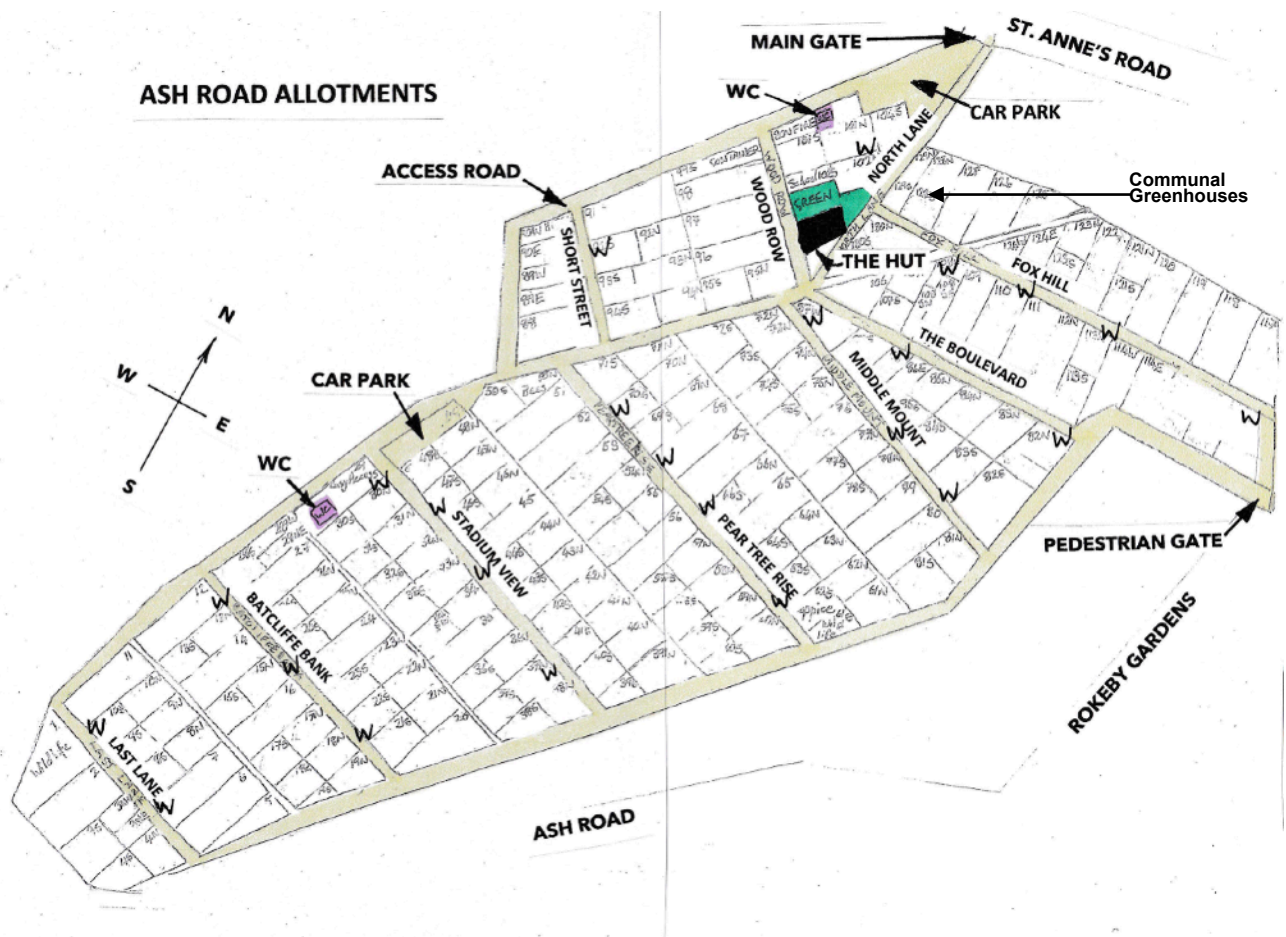
Sowing and Planting

- Plant out your seed potatoes if you haven't already. Remember to 'earth up' and cover shoots as they emerge to protect them from frost. For new plot-holders potatoes are an excellent crop for clearing rough allotments - the digging and earthing up helps improve the soil and the foliage can shade emerging weeds. Potatoes can be grown in bags, although they are a lot of work, requiring frequent watering.
- Another top crop for beginners is shallots and there is still time to plant these out.
- Strawberry plants can also be planted out now. If you nip out early flowers you will get more strawberries later on.
- If you have been growing seedlings at home, hardier veg can be planted out now (e.g. peas, and broad beans). But stand by to protect with fleece etc. if frost is forecast.
- Most rootcrops (carrots, beetroot, etc.) can be sown outdoors directly later this month, though for carrots the heavier soils and slugs on our site can be a challenge and some people plant them in containers. For carrots you will need to have a fleece or other barrier with edges buried in the ground to guard against carrot root-fly.
- Check your other seed packets to see what can be planted directly outside in April. Sow outdoors once the soil is warm enough and the ground not too heavy or wet. Cloches and fleece covering the soil can help warm it up before planting. Remember to check whether the seedlings need protection from frost/or covering with a cloche or fleece to germinate.
- Make sure you 'harden off' (acclimatise) any seedlings or shop-bought plants. This means placing them out in a sheltered spot during the day and bringing them indoors at night, or using a cloche/mini greenhouse for 7-10 days, gradually increasing exposure to the weather before planting out in the ground.
- If you're growing tender seedlings under cover don't plant these out until after the last frost in May. This includes sweetcorn, but also some crops that are great for beginners, including climbing and runner beans, squash and courgettes.

Watch Out For.... the enemy!

- **slugs and snails** eat seedlings overnight. Plant more than you need or plant larger plants that can outgrow attacks.
- **Wood pigeons** love to feast on new shoots of beans and peas, so keep your crops covered with netting or a cage.
- **Weeds** will grow rapidly after this wet weather - so start hoeing to stop the weeds in their tracks.

For more information look at the 'Allotment & Garden' website at www.allotment-gardening.org the National Allotment Society website at www.nsalg.org or the RHS web-site at www.rhs.org.uk



Getting to Know Your Allotment Site

Access to the Site

- Main gate and vehicle access off St. Anne's Road. Pedestrian access also from Rokeby Gardens
- The main gate is open on Sunday morning. At ALL other times, please lock it and ALWAYS scramble the gate padlocks!

Car Parking

- There are two car parks, one inside the main gate and the second further along the main access road. Please keep your speed below 5mph.
- On-street parking is also possible on Rokeby Gardens and at weekends only close to the main St. Annes Road/Batcliffe Mount entrance.

Toilet Facilities (WC) (marked on the map)

- Two composting WCs. Instructions posted inside.

Water Supplies

- There is a water supply to the various 'bath tubs' across the site in the summer season (approximate locations marked 'W' on the map). There is also a water tap on the northern outside wall of the Hut.
- If you have a shed it should have gutters and a water butt to collect rain-water for your use.

Wheelbarrows

- There are wheelbarrows for you to borrow. They can be found alongside both car park areas or along the front wall of The Hut. Please return your barrow to one of these locations after you have finished with it.

The Hut (marked on the map)

- 'Allotment shop'. Open Sunday mornings. Sunday coffee mornings and other events are held on the Green. Some 'Lockup' space may also be available, please ask at the Hut.

Manure and Wood Chip

- Manure and Wood Chip (when available) can be found by the car parks. £1 per barrow-load.

Communal Greenhouses (marked on map)

- Space may be available to 'rent'. Enquire at the Hut.

Being a Good Neighbour

- Respect other plot-holders. Don't go onto anyone else's plot without their permission. Stay on the 'official' pathways that cross the site between plots.
- Don't dump rubbish by car parks or gates. Take it home.
- Bonfires of dry, combustible material are permitted, but from 1st May to 30th September only AFTER 5pm. Consider your neighbours. Extinguish bonfires before you leave. Compost any green material.
- Dogs are allowed on site, but they must be on a leash and not allowed to wander onto other plots.
- Ask for permission BEFORE erecting a shed/greenhouse.
- The main paths around the site are maintained by the Committee (pale yellow on the map).
- Other paths are your responsibility. You must cut the grass and maintain the path to the right of your plot (when facing north - see map) and also the path on the north side of your plot (if you have one). You can borrow a 'push' lawnmower (located in the toilet by the 'easy access plot') or rent a strimmer from the Hut. Keep branches and other obstructions trimmed back so that they do not overhang paths and inconvenience others.
- Children are welcome, but must be supervised by an adult at all times and must not run onto other plots. There are potential safety issues.
- Volunteer for 'work parties' that are organised from time to time and contribute to improving the allotment site.