



## It's that time of Year

It's been another hot, dry start to summer and we still need to protect plants from the heat. Apply mulches around plants to reduce the amount of moisture escaping from the soil. Consider applying temporary screens where plants are exposed to directly sunlight for long periods of the day.

If you are planting out new seedlings, these can get some protection from the sun if located where they benefit from shading from established nearby plants or bespoke screens.

August is the month of plenty and, just as there is a wide range of fruit and vegetables almost every day: peas, beans, carrots, beetroot, sweetcorn, tomatoes, peppers, courgettes, potatoes, onions, berries, and early hard fruit.

It's a time of excess produce presenting opportunities for preserving: freeze beans and herbs, store squashes and convert other produce into jams, chutneys and pickles. It's the time of year to make jam, and this newsletter includes a recipe for one of my personal favourites: blackcurrant jam. There are many other recipes and tips on preserving fruit and vegetables on the LAA web-site- see link below:

<https://longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk/and-cooking-them>

And, when you've used all you can from your crops, any plant waste can be added to your compost heap to rot down over the winter, so it may be time to construct (or reconstruct) your compost heaps/bins.

It's also the time when most of us go on holiday so there's often a need to make arrangements with fellow allotment holders to take care of watering and harvesting while we (or they!) are away.



## Jobs

August: dry out onions/garlic, mulch the soil to retain moisture, pinch out growing beans (French and runners), prune summer fruiting raspberries, thin tree fruit and weed around the base of fruit trees

September: clear away any dead foliage and add as much as you can to your compost heap (a good time of year to build a new compost heap).

## Plant

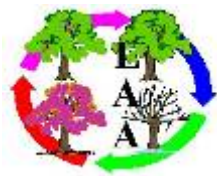
August: carrots (the last of the year), spring cabbage, new strawberry plants

September: overwintering onions and green manure

## Harvest

August: early sweetcorn, beans, courgettes, plums and gages, potatoes

September: beans, tomatoes, potatoes, apples and pears, squashes and beetroot.



## Update from the Committee

**Summer Barbecue** – Please join us at the 2022 Summer BBQ at the Digswell site on Sunday 11th September from 12:30pm. Burgers, sausages, vege-burgers and hot/soft drinks will be provided but please bring salad, fruit/dessert, cake, wine etc. to share with others, as well as crockery and cutlery for your own use. The cost is £6.00 per adult, £3 for a child, or £20.00 for a family of two adults and up to 4 children. Contact any Committee member by Friday 2nd September if you would like to come along to enjoy the food and drink, meet old friends and make some new ones.

**LAA WhatsApp Group** – If you would like to join the Association's WhatsApp group please ask your site rep to add you to the circulation list.

**Digswell**– There will be a work party on Saturday 10 September from 09:30-12:00. Please help if you can.

**Broadwater** – The working party of 21st May was a great success - the car park area has been transformed and the Association is extremely grateful to those who attended. The next work party on Saturday 10 September from 09:30-12:00.

The Committee are working with the Welwyn Garden City Society to help assess the potential impacts of the BioPark development adjacent to the Broadwater site. The WGC Society arranged visit to the site in late July for the Government Secretary of State's Planning Inspector accompanied by members of the Public Inquiry into the planned development.

**New Members** – Since the last newsletter was issued we have been joined by Marie Peters (plot B31). Welcome to the Association and let's hope you have many enjoyable and productive years with us.

## School Visit to LAA

On Friday 13th May, the Broadwater site had a visit from a class of Year 5 pupils from Templewood School. The 30 children, together with their teacher, teaching assistants and a few parents, spent just over an hour on site as part of their 'Sow, Grow and Farm' topic. They were keen to understand what was growing, how the soil type affected our choice of produce and how we maximised yields. They also had questions about the facilities on site and were rather impressed by the composting loo – once one went, they (nearly) all had to have a go!



They were very well-behaved, if a little noisy, and kept to the main paths between plots throughout. After they had obtained the answers they came for, we all enjoyed a drink and snack in front of the mower shed (thank you, Simon, for building the wooden benches) before they walked the 1.5 miles back to school.

A special thank you to Nikolai for patiently answering the children's questions and to Rachel for showing them the Pak choi and Oka inside her polytunnel, and even donating some tubers for the class to grow. For my part, it was great to wow them with a close-up view of a rather large slowworm that I found just under the lid of my compost bin.

Sam Hayton (Broadwater Site Rep/LAA Treasurer)



## Crop Planner

	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
key:	sow						
	plant						
	harvest						
Broad Bean	harvest	harvest	harvest		sow	sow	
Runner Bean	sow	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Pea	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Potatoes	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Leek			harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest
Onion / Shallot		harvest	harvest	harvest			
Garlic	harvest	harvest	harvest		plant	plant	plant
Beetroot	sow	sow	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Carrot	sow	sow	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Swede / Turnip	sow			harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest
Courgette		harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Pumpkin / Winter Squash			harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	
Tomatoes		harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest		
Chilli / Aubergine		harvest	harvest	harvest			
Chard/Leaf Beet	sow	sow	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	
Cabbage	sow	sow	sow	sow		harvest	harvest
Kale	sow				harvest	harvest	harvest
Black/Redcurrants	harvest	harvest	harvest		plant	plant	plant
Raspberries	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	harvest	plant	plant
Strawberries		harvest	harvest		plant		
Fruit Trees			harvest	harvest	harvest	plant	plant



## A Quick Guide to Fertilisers from our Shop

**Bone Meal** is a source of phosphorus which helps plants to flower and produce strong roots. It is good for rooting vegetables such as alliums and root crops.

**Chicken Pellets** are an organic fertiliser which can be used from February to November. They should be applied every 4-6 weeks during growing season but are not suitable for use on acid loving plants.

**Fish, Blood & Bone** provides the major nutrients required for strong healthy growth. It provides immediate & slow release nitrogen & feeds most types of flowers, fruit and vegetables.

**Sulphate of Ammonia** is rich in nitrogen and gets food to the plants quickly and is particularly suitable for leafy vegetables such as cabbages, spinach, lettuce and rhubarb.

**Sulphate of Potash** contains high levels of potassium which boost growth for legumes, fruit and root crops and boost resistance to pests & diseases.

**Garden Lime** provides improves soil texture and convert other soil nutrients into usable forms. It contains nutrients including calcium and magnesium and encourages growth of peas, beans, corn, brassicas, lettuce, spinach & other greens.

## Get With the Beet

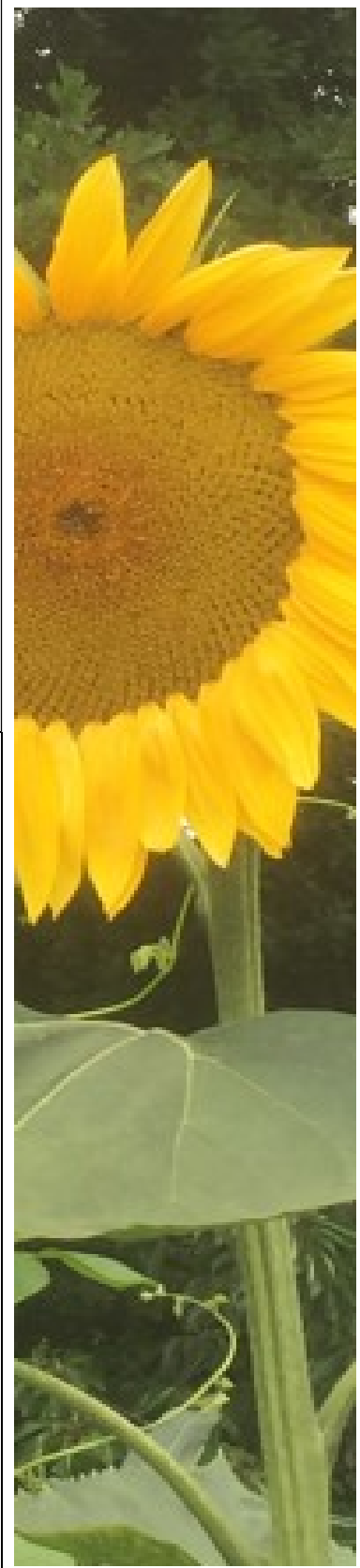
It's the time of year to harvest the sweet-tasting roots of beetroot plants.

Beetroot grows best in open, sunny site with good drainage. Like most root crops they will fork if grown in well-manured soil. Typically a row of beetroot plants will yield 1.5-3kg per metre run (1-2 lbs per ft.).

Whilst most roots tend to be purple there are white and yellow varieties, and others that combine two different colours.

Beetroot is commonly boiled until tender and eaten when cold but can also be grated and eaten raw, e.g. with carrots in coleslaw. The leaves can also be eaten – raw in salads when young or cooked as “greens” when older.

Sowing from March to mid-summer should result in steady cropping throughout summer and into early winter. They keep well and can be stored raw throughout winter in sand or cold potting compost or preserved when cooked in pickles or chutney.





## Summer Recipes

### **Blackcurrant Jam**

My personal favourite jam - tasty and the high pectin of the blackcurrants makes it one of the simplest to make. The following ingredients will make 8 standard jars of jam but can be adjusted pro-rata to make more or less.

- 1.3kg (3 lb.) blackcurrant fruit
- 0.75 litres (1.5 pints) water
- 2 kg (4 lb.) white sugar

Wash and drain the fruit and simmer in a pan with the water for 30 minutes to an hour so that the fruit has softened and the mixture is reduced by approximately a third.

Add the sugar slowly and stir until fully dissolved. Raise to the boil until a drop of the mixture wrinkles when left on a chilled saucer for a few minutes.

Transfer to sterilised jars, cover with waxed paper and seal.



### **Paella**

A superb summer dish which uses some of the first legume crops.

Ingredients:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 500-750g (1-1½lb) meat/fish (choose from chicken, lean pork, prawns, squid, mussels)</li><li>• 8 tablespoons olive oil</li><li>• 2-3 large carrots, sliced</li><li>• 2 onions</li><li>• 4-5 garlic cloves</li><li>• 1 smoked sausage, sliced (chorizo is ideal)</li><li>• 1 red pepper, sliced or chopped</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2-3 tomatoes</li><li>• 100-200g (4-8 oz.) mixed legumes (broad beans, peas, French beans)</li><li>• 1 cup rice (long grain is fine but a Spanish paella rice produces better results)</li><li>• 2 cups water (for a richer paella include stock and/or wine)</li><li>• 2 teaspoons smoked paprika</li><li>• pinch of saffron</li><li>• salt to taste</li></ul> |
|---|--|

Gently fry the carrots and onions in the olive oil until the onions have softened. Add the meat/fish (reserving the prawns/mussels), sausage and half the red pepper and cook until the meat starts to brown.

Add the garlic, smoked paprika and saffron and stir for 5-10 minutes. Add the rice and water/stock and simmer gently for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the remaining red pepper, legumes, chopped tomatoes (and prawns/mussels if reserved) and continue cooking gently until the mixture has thickened. If the rice is still firm then add some more water and cook for a bit longer (I like to slightly caramelize the rice).

Serve with slices of lemon, crusty bread and a green salad.





## Down at the Shed

There are still a few chances to stock up with compost, canes and other bits and bobs - the LAA shop will open on the following Saturdays between 09.30 and 12.00: August 13th, Sept. 10th, and Oct 15th.

Preferred payment is via card, ideally touchless.



## Polite Reminder

### Weed Control

At this time of year our plots and the surrounding areas can contain a lot of weeds and grasses, many of which are now going to seed.

It is the responsibility of all plot-holders to ensure that their allotment and surrounding pathways are kept “reasonably free from weeds” (condition 3.1.1 of the Association’s Tenancy Agreement). Seeds that are dispersed now can become a problem on neighbouring plots for years to come.

## Comments and Feedback



With special thanks to Sam for the article on the school visit (and also, of course, for hosting the visit).

If you have any news, tips, features, recipes or photographs that you would like to submit for future issues of the Newsletter please send them to...

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Visit the Longcroft Allotment Association website: [www.longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk](http://www.longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk)

