



## It's that time of Year

Since lockdown, many of us have had more time to look after our plots and that is obvious whenever I look around either of our sites. The warmer weather is now providing additional assistance by stimulating the activity of crops, insects and weeds. It's important to water regularly and to continue to hoe and weed.

In hot weather plants need protection 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.

Importantly, remember to protect yourself from the sun (see the advice below).

Onions will be ready from mid-July when they stop growing and the leaves turn yellow – if there are a few days forecast without rain, partially dig them up with a fork and allow to dry out for a few days in-situ before storing. There should be an abundance of crops so think about how to store any surplus: pickling, drying, freezing and preserving.

And there's still time to fill any gaps on our plots with late season seeds. Salad crops – lettuce, endive, radish, mustard and cress - can be planted and harvested within a few short weeks but beware of ants, aphids and slugs/snails.



## **Jobs**

July: Feed tomatoes and other fruiting vegetables. Thin out hard fruit if there are exceptional numbers of budding fruits.

August: Dry out onions/garlic, mulch the soil to retain moisture, pinch out growing beans (French and runners), prune summer fruiting raspberries

## **Plant**

July: Sow beetroot, French beans and peas. Plant out cabbages, cauliflowers and other brassicas for harvesting during autumn/winter.

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

## **Harvest**

July: Courgettes, onions, salad vegetables, cherries, strawberries, raspberries, currants and gooseberries.

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



## Coronavirus Update

We continue to be affected by Coronavirus and recommend that members work their allotments during the lockdown, either alone or with members of their families/household. The Government have now removed the limit on exercise time.

Members should practice good hand hygiene when working your plot and when using the locks when entering and leaving the site, and observe social distancing from other members.

Do not attend the plot if you have Coronavirus symptoms or a family member is self-isolating.

Please ensure that children and pets at our sites are closely supervised by the plot-holder.

National Allotment Society (NAS) guidance is available from: <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/news/covid19-information/>

## Other Updates

**Annual Barbecue:** Subject to coronavirus restrictions permit, we still hope to hold our annual barbecue in September. If and when this happens we will set the date and update members of any arrangements.

**LAA WhatsApp Group:** A WhatsApp group has been set up for LAA members across both sites to allow members to communicate without having to go through the committee. We think it would be useful for things like: asking for help; sharing plants, seeds and other things; giving/receiving advice and generally talking about the allotments.

If you would like to join the group and already have WhatsApp installed, you can scan this QR code using the camera icon within WhatsApp. Alternatively you can ask your site rep to add you to the group or use the following link:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/KtnsyXg91deAZygPjuDStT>.

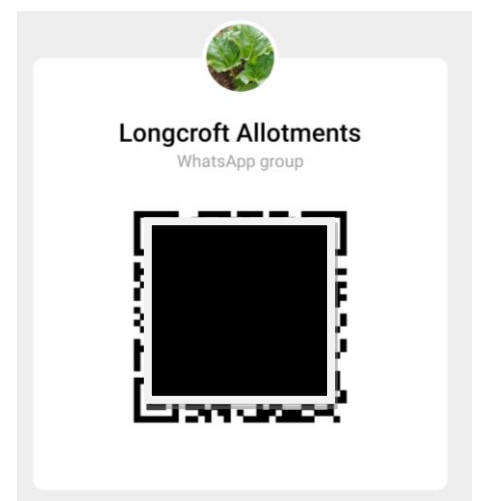
Two important points:

- Use email, rather than WhatsApp, to contact the Committee.
- Don't share this with non-member.

**Broadwater:** The mower shed has suffered some ground movement, resulting in damage to the asbestos roof. The council is responsible for the building and has arranged for the walls to be secured and for a new timber/felt roof to be fitted. This work is expected to begin on Wednesday 22nd July and be completed by the end of that week. Prior to commencement the contents of the shed will be cleared out.

**Digswell:** The next work party will be held on 25 July from 09:30-12:00. Please lend a hand if you can.

**New Members:** Since the last newsletter was sent out we have been joined by Jon and Lucy French and Ian Deal (who has had a plot here before). Welcome (and welcome back!) to the Association and let's hope you have many enjoyable and productive years with us.





## Crop Planner

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
	key: <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black;"></span> sow					
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFD700; border: 1px solid black;"></span> plant					
	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FF0000; border: 1px solid black;"></span> harvest					
Broad Bean						
Runner Bean						
Pea						
Potatoes						
Leek						
Onion / Shallot						
Garlic						
Beetroot						
Carrot						
Swede / Turnip						
Courgette						
Pumpkin / Winter Squash						
Tomatoes						
Chilli / Aubergine						
Chard/Leaf Beet						
Cabbage						
Kale						
Black/Redcurrants						
Raspberries						
Strawberries						
Fruit Trees						



## Give Peas a Chance

Peas are a nutritious and sweet legume, which are easy to grow. Delicious both cooked and eaten raw (as I prefer them), they are a versatile accompaniment to most traditional meals and if, there is a glut, freeze well and taste as good as eaten fresh.

Unlike many other crops, peas can be planted and harvested at several times throughout the year: hardy varieties can be overwintered; undercover spring sowings can be made as early as February; and they can be planted directly outdoors as late as July.

As for climbing beans, the young plants need supporting – either using netting, wires, canes, or hazel branches (often known as ‘pea sticks’).

Outdoor seeds should be protected from pests, particularly during the spring ‘hungry gap’ when there are few crops that are available to harvest. Frustratingly, birds and mice are able to locate the seeds just as they begin to sprout.

But peas are most vulnerable to the maggots of the Pea Moth. The moth lays its eggs in mild weather when the plants are in flower. Overwintered peas and early plantings tend to be less prone as they flower before the moths are prevalent. For later plantings the damage caused by the maggots can be minimised by spraying the pea plants when they are in flower.

As for other legumes, the roots of pea plants have nitrogen fixing properties and can be dug into the soil at the end of the season.



## Down at the Shed

Having closed the shop during the early stages of the Covid-19 outbreak, we opened again in June.

We have now restocked and plan to open once a month from July through September, dates to be advised. Members will be contacted by email once these dates are known and the news section of the web-site (<https://longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk/news-and-events>) will also be updated.

The numbers allowed in the shop at a time will be controlled and usual distancing rules will apply.



### Polite Reminder – Use of Water Tanks/Troughs

With the current coronavirus outbreak it is especially important to observe good hygiene practices.

Please remember that water tanks are only to be used for drawing water, using watering cans or other containers. They should not be used for washing hands, tools or vegetables.

### Sun Protection

Gardening is generally a healthy outdoor pursuit, but exposure to the sun's radiation has the potential to be very damaging as well as prematurely aging your skin.

Time spent outdoors in high summer temperatures can cause heatstroke with various symptoms including: severe headache, cramp, dizziness, sickness and confusion. The chances of suffering heatstroke can be reduced by wearing loose clothing, drinking plenty of fluids, and not exposing yourself to sunlight between 11am and 3pm.

The long term risks of regular exposure to sunlight are more serious and include skin cancers known as melanomas: Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC) and Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC). Wide brimmed hats can provide shading for our faces, but sun block should be applied to arms, legs and other exposed skin. Sun block should have a minimum sun block factor (SPF of 30), and its label should indicate protection against radiation across a 'broad spectrum'.

Sunburnt skin becomes more vulnerable to radiation so it is particularly important to apply sun block if you are suffering from sunburn.

'Watch Your Back' is an awareness campaign for gardeners launched by the Melanoma Fund. Gardeners are at risk because we spend a lot of time outdoors, often without sun protection. This year is an important year for the campaign as the Coronavirus outbreak is causing more people than ever to spend spending time in the gardens and allotments.

For more information, including advice on skin checking, see <https://watchyourback.co.uk/advice-for-gardeners>.





## Dig for Victory

Early this year we celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day, and who would have thought that vegetable gardening played its part in that victory?

Food rationing had been introduced during WW2 to ensure that the available supplies were available to all. Supplies to Britain from overseas were limited because of U-Boat attacks which could have starved the country into submission. And so, the Dig for Victory campaign was introduced to encourage the entire country to use all available land - particularly gardens - to grow fruit and vegetables. This not only supplemented the nation's diet but, growing our own food, also meant that there was more space available on merchant ships to transport weapons and other essential materials that were needed to keeping the armed forces supplied. In fact *"the public were, in general, healthier and better fed from a nutritional standpoint than they are today"*.



Public and private spaces, including London's Royal Parks, were used to grow produce, and by the end of WW2 the numbers of allotments in Britain rose to around 1,300,000 (currently there are approximately 300,000).

The dig for victory campaign is remembered to this day and is celebrated and applied on allotments and garden vegetable plots across the UK.

<https://dig-for-victory.org.uk/>

<https://www.allotment-garden.org/book/dig-for-victory-guides/>

## Comments and feedback



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 :Newsletter Editor: [email@longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk](mailto:email@longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk)

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

