

It's that time of Year

...but things have been very different to other years. This spring has been the warmest and the driest in the UK for decades. Very different to last year when the cold, damp spring made it difficult to start our crops off and then, once they had, were largely attacked by slugs and snails.



But the dry weather brings problems of its own – the ground is harder dig and there is a need to water established fruit trees and bushes, seedlings and small plants at a time when there is a greater need to conserve water. We should all stay mindful of ways in which we can reduce the quantity of water we use – e.g. through crop selection and mulches and seek to recover as much rainwater as possible.

Hopefully the recent (light) rain is a signal that conditions are returning to normal and our crops will start to flourish. But those conditions will also encourage weed growth, so expect to weed, hoe and mulch our plots over the coming weeks for crops to thrive. The combination of summer weather and longer summer days provides opportunities to keep weeds at bay.

We're reaching the time of year when we can start to reap the benefits of managing an allotment – time to start harvesting early vegetables and the first soft fruits of the year!

Remember to ventilate your greenhouse on warm days and consider using blinds/shades/fleece to avoid excessive temperatures. If you or neighbouring plot-holders are going on holiday then make arrangements to look after each other's plots.

It can be a good time to share. If you have excess seedlings or spare produce, then consider exchanging those with fellow plot-holders – particularly any new members who may not have had an opportunity to fully cultivate their plots.

Jobs

June: Pinch out growing tomatoes and broad beans. Inspect plants regularly - water and remove pests whenever necessary. Thin out directly seeded beds.

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

Plant

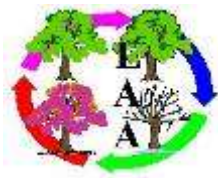
June: Sow salad vegetables, beetroot, carrots, cucumbers, peas, pumpkins and squashes, fruiting plants (peppers, tomatoes, aubergines). Plant out sweetcorn, brassicas and courgette seedlings.

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

Harvest

June: Chard, French beans, garlic and onions (if leaves are turning pale), early potatoes.

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



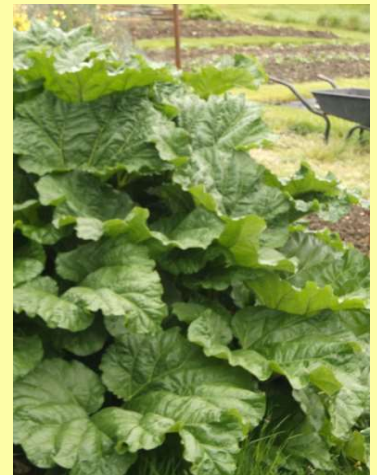
Update from the Committee

Annual General Meeting

The Association's 49th AGM was held on Wednesday, 23rd April, at the Jack Lee Hall, Woodside House, WGC.

It has been another strong year for the Association, with full occupancy at both sites despite a 10% turnover rate for plot-holders.

LAA Agreement - On the afternoon before the AGM, WHBC agreed (and has subsequently signed) to a new, 10-year agreement with the LAA agreements. Our new "allotment year" will run from November to end-October, allowing new tenants the chance to take advantage of a full growing year. Existing terms will continue to apply to members, whilst the new agreement will be adapted within tenancy agreements for future new tenants.



Finances - Sam Hayton thanked John Lavelli for his help in finalising the accounts - total income from all sources was similar to last year but expenditure had decreased resulting in an overall increase in the Association's balance. Copies of the accounts were available at each table during the meeting.

Shop and Seed Scheme - Shop sales for the year exceeded the previous year's record sales and the seed scheme had also helped generate some welcome income and Andrew thanked Barbara for running the scheme for all our members. A volunteer is now being sought to run the shop in the future.

Health and Safety - Andrew paid tribute to Ian Cocksedge, the Committee's health and safety representative who sadly died of a heart attack while working on his plot earlier this year. Matthew Hannah who has taken on Ian's role as health and safety representative and inspections have recently been undertaken at both sites,

Barbecue - Andrew thanked Sue and Peter Pillay and Dave Cocks for their help in organising and providing catering at the annual barbecue. Sue and Peter have now left the Association. Volunteers were invited to manage this year's barbecue and subsequent to the meeting Marc Terreblanche kindly volunteered to take the lead at the grill

Committee Members - All Committee members were prepared to continue in their current roles and there were no objections so the committee will continue with its current membership. At the time of the meeting there was a vacancy on the Committee which Charlotte has since volunteered to take.

The meeting ended with discussions about potential improvements for members and ideas/examples of good practice from the floor before the time-honoured raffle.

The minutes of the AGM are available from the members' area of the web-site:

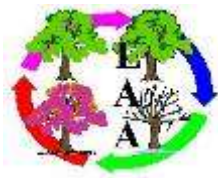
<https://longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk/m/login?r=%2Fagm>

Woodchip Deliveries – We have started to receive deliveries of woodchip from a new supplier:

<https://aceoftrees.co.uk/>

Summer Barbecue – The 2025 Summer BBQ will take place On Sunday 7th September. Please try to come along to enjoy the food and drink and meet fellow plot-holders. 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 to get your ticket.

New Members – Since the last newsletter was issued, we have been joined by Juan (B10), Nigel and Heather (D162), and Marilyn (D139). Welcome to the Association and let's hope you have many enjoyable and productive years with us.



Hazel Coppice at Broadwater

You may be aware that we have a sizeable Hazel coppice adjacent to the mower shed at the Broadwater site and another at the northeastern corner. The coppices have a large amount of material suitable for plant supports etc., so please bring a saw and help yourself.

Hazel branches are ideal supports for peas and climbing beans – they are long and straight, tough enough to support runner beans, and have a surface that allows legumes to grip as they climb.

Freshly cut branches are relatively flexible, and smaller shoots can easily be woven into structures that can be shaped to reflect the layout of your plot whilst enabling your climbing plants crops to grow and enjoy protection from neighbouring crops.

(For Digswell Members, the BW site is at the end of Corals Mead, off Broadwater Crescent. The padlock combination is the same at both sites).



New Compost Heaps

Two recent work parties have resulted in a revived compost heap at our Digswell site and a brand-new communal composting facility at the Broadwater site.

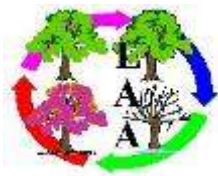
Three separate areas were created using pallets at Broadwater at a 26th April work party at Broadwater. Plant waste is now being stored within the section on the right-hand side. Once full this will be covered and, from next spring, should be well-rotted and available for use by all plot-holders on the site. The other section will be filled and used in future years.



Two weeks later, on 10th May the Digswell work party renovated the existing composting facilities, reinforcing them and extended the storage capacity.

All members are reminded:

- to deposit any material as far back into each heap as they can, and
- that bindweed, couch grass and other pernicious weeds should not be added to the compost heaps as these are not likely to achieve the temperatures required to kill them off.



The LAA Shop

The LAA shop at Digswell will open once a month from 09.30 to 12.00 on the following Saturdays:

June 21st, July 26th, August 16th (*), September 20th, October 25th

(*) change of date

Members should have received the latest pricelists by email (sent Friday 13 June 2025). If you haven't received one please let us know at:

email@longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk.



Summer Recipe

Greek Lemon Potatoes

A full-flavoured accompaniment to roast, grilled or barbecued meats.

- 1kg (2 lb) waxy potatoes, coarsely cut (slightly thicker than "chunky chips")
- 2-3 cloves garlic (crushed)
- Juice of a lemon
- A generous pinch of oregano (or mixed herbs)
- Half a cup of olive oil
- One cup of water and/or vinegar (cider or white wine vinegar)
- salt and pepper to taste
- Medium sized onion (optional)

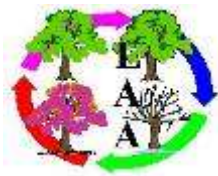
Pre-heat the oven to 200°C.

Place the potatoes in a baking pan. Add the garlic, lemon juice, oil, water/vinegar mixture and seasoning. The level of liquid should come approximately halfway up the potatoes. Roughly stir so the potatoes are coated in some of the oil mix.



Cover with foil and cook for an hour until the potatoes have softened. Remove the foil and baste or turn the potatoes and cook, uncovered for another half an hour or so. For slightly sweeter tasting potatoes you can peel and coarsely chop the onion, add to the pan and baste.

The potatoes are ready to serve when they start to go brown (but they should not be crispy!).



Comments and Feedback



With thanks to Simon and Matthew for images taken during the work parties at our allotment sites.
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.

Visit the Longcroft Allotment Association website: www.longcroftallotmentassociation.org.uk

