



Eastney and Milton Allotment Holders Association

The Plot Thickens Spring Newsletter No. 52

Allotment News

Welcome to all the new plot holders that have been allocated an allotment after waiting several years. If you need any help please take a look at the website or pop into the shop where they will be happy to advise you. Good Luck with your plot! Being an allotment holder is hard work but very rewarding and where else would you be able to enjoy the peace, quiet and birdlife etc. for very little money. It's also great to have chats with fellow plot holders and get advice on growing produce – plot holders are really helpful.

It's time again for planting and sowing, and after a hard winter everything seems to be a bit slow. The plant sale on Sunday May 20th will be a great success as usual. I have it on good authority that the plants in the poly-tunnel are off to a good start and there will be plenty for the sale. You can also get a cup of tea and a bacon sandwich or a piece of homemade cake as well. If you have any spare plants (vegetable or flower), please bring them along to the shop.

The shop is looking very good after a fresh coat of paint. You can purchase everything in there, compost fertilizers, seeds etc. All at very competitive prices. It is being well run by some very good volunteers and if you want any advice, it's free. Membership fees for this year are due before you can buy things in the shop. It is worth becoming a member as you will save money on purchases made. The fees go towards Association Membership of the NASLG and insurance etc. for the shop.

We have a new website, set up by Di, and very good it is too. If you have any good stories, pictures of wildlife found on the allotment then Di will be happy to include them. Contact her via the website. Its address is www.eastneyandmiltonallotmentassociation.co.uk

The Association has new Committee Members elected at the AGM. They include Annie, Di, Dianne, Helen, Michael and Rose. I wish them well, I enjoyed my years as Secretary and working in the shop.

And finally....

The Autumn Show will take place on the first Sunday of September, but more about this later or look online for more details. It is great fun to enter and even more enjoyable if you win a trophy. Try it and see you may be surprised! Meanwhile enjoy your plots and hopefully you will be growing lots of lovely vegetables and fruit. We hope you like our new look newsletter too!

Carole, Editor

Updates from Committee Shedquarters:

A number of plot holders have mentioned that the main entrance onto Locksway Road often has large vans parked right up to the lane, restricting visibility. Les will contact Portsmouth City council about putting up a mirror on the post opposite the entrance to make turning on to the main road safer.

There is a new PCC Allotment Inspector, who recently toured Eastney Lake, Hope Cottage and Milton Piece sites with Les as part of a formal inspection. Liz met Gail Baird from Food Portsmouth who is setting up a new project at the Community Allotment on Milton Piece, organising Allotment Buddies.

Stock in the shop has been selling very well – compost, bean poles, seed potatoes, onions and shallots. Helen has taken on the role of Shop Rota Manager and has already started meeting some of the volunteers that run the shop on Tuesdays and Sundays.

In May data protection laws are changing and the changes will affect the Eastney and Milton Allotment Holders Association. Contact details for members will have to be held securely. The National Allotment Society has produced some advice and templates for privacy policies that will be communicated out to members.

There will be an Autumn Show in September. It has been decided to concentrate on smaller scale show just for plot holders to show their produce in classes under RHS rules. Judging and prize-giving will take place on the day. Responsibility for different aspects of organisation would be taken on by Committee members. A schedule of classes will be available on the notice boards, in the shop and on the website.

The Association Committee

Garden Tools:

We now have a tool sale in the shop on the first Sunday of each month. If you need any tools, especially if you are new to the allotment, this is the ideal opportunity to get a cheap bargain.

We have a range of different tools – spades, rakes, hoes, forks, we have even been given a lawnmower and a four-wheeled trolley to sell.

Availability is strictly on a first come first served basis.

If you have any tools you no longer require, please consider donating them to the Association for resale. Everything is available at such a bargain price you could even use it and return it to us for resale.

Tools may be left in the shop on Tuesdays and Sundays and marked for our attention.

Geoff and John



Dates for the diary:

May 20th – Plant Sale

10am outside the shop on Milton Piece

May 22nd - 26th

RHS Chelsea Flower Show

June 3rd – Tool Sale

9.30am at the shop on Milton Piece

June 6th - 10th

RHS Chatsworth Flower Show

July 1st – Tool Sale

9.30am at the shop on Milton Piece

July 2nd - 8th

RHS Hampton Court Palace Flower Show

Jul 18th - 22nd

RHS Flower Show Tatton Park

August 13th – 19th – National Allotment Week

This year's theme is 'Living and Growing' and highlights the importance of growing your own food.

These dates are also on the website under the events section. Please check for new things being added.

**Our new
website has
launched!**



www.eastneymiltonallotmentassociation.co.uk

Take a look at our new website

We're really keen to get any suggestions or recommendations you think would be worth adding to the website. In particular, we'd like to add your wildlife photos, top tips, fun facts and stories.

Many of the pages have been updated over recent weeks, with new sections coming soon.

Top Tips:

Making good compost

You can't have a big enough compost bin. If you can, make it as big as possible with planks or pallets. Insert green ingredients, garden/kitchen waste, chopped, including egg shells. Add to this mixture some spent hops (if you can get them), leaf mould, old grow bags, nettles (before they go to seed) comfrey, soft wood cuttings, grass cuttings, used bedding plants, seaweed – all chopped. Egg boxes, loo and kitchen rolls, cardboard, paper bags etc. All ripped up. Spent coffee grounds/tea leaves (not the bags as they are plastic and don't rot down). The more you can chop and mix the ingredients the quicker it will all break down. Check fortnightly and keep your heap moist, that way worms will stay there and do their job. You don't need to turn your heap as that's the worm's job!

Carrot Fly

Grow your carrots in a raised bed if possible as Carrot Fly only fly along the ground. Apparently the fly can detect the smell of carrots from quite a distance. If you wet the row before and after thinning this also helps to lessen the scent. When thinning get rid of all your thinnings, don't leave them on the bed as this will attract the fly.

After thinning, firm the soil along the row and draw the soil over the shoulders of the carrots. The main period of damage is May, June and July. Parsley is also a member of the carrot family and will also attract and suffer from fly damage.

Site security

There is a book in the shop for entering any vandalism or theft from the allotments. If anyone has had produce stolen, please record it in this book.

It is imperative that the gates are closed and locked when entering or leaving the allotments. This will make it harder for any opportunistic thieves. It doesn't take a moment to do so.

Luckily after the last spate of sheds being broken into it has been fairly quiet.



Carole

Recipe suggestion:

Soda Bread

This only takes a few minutes and is delicious served warm with lashings of butter and chutney/jam from last year.

Ingredients:

250g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
2 tsp salt
2 ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
250g wholemeal flour
150g jumbo oat flakes
1tbsp clear honey
1 tbsp black treacle
500ml buttermilk (or milk)

Method:

Heat the oven to 200c/390F/gas mark 6. Line a baking sheet with baking parchment.

Mix all the dry ingredients together in a bowl. Make a well in the centre, then pour in the honey, treacle and buttermilk, working the mix together lightly to obtain a loose wet dough. With floured hands, shape into a round and lift on to the baking sheet.

Mark a cross in the top with a knife and bake for around 45 minutes or until the loaf sounds hollow when tapped on its base. Transfer to a wire rack, drape with a slightly damp cloth and leave to cool.

Carole

Allotment Buddies

Are you struggling with your plot?
Do you just need a little extra help to get you back on track?
Going on holiday and would like your plot to be watered and weeded?
Or would you like a long term co-worker?

Allotment Buddies may be able to help. Support can vary depending on your requirements – maybe one-off help or continuous support e.g. planting and sowing.

We're based at the Community Allotment on Milton Piece (down the tarmac track from the Shop towards the toilets and Langstone Harbour).

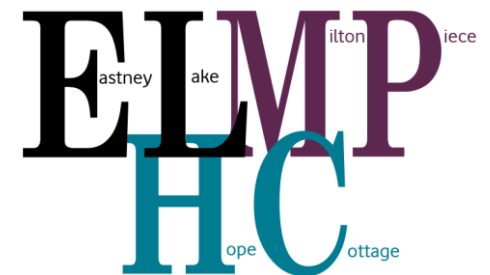
Anyone interested in the scheme can either contact Gail directly:

023 9289 2022

[Gail.baird@johnpoundscentre.co.uk](mailto:gail.baird@johnpoundscentre.co.uk)

Pick up a leaflet from the shop, or visit the community allotment at Milton Piece on a Wednesday afternoon – 12.30-3pm.

Liz



Trish

Do you need help with your allotment? Are you struggling to keep up with the weeds?



Or find the plot a bit too big to manage? Then an Allotment Buddy could be for you. The Island City Garden project finds keen volunteer gardeners to help support those who need an extra hand.



Support and advice will be on hand from our community gardeners as well as plenty of tea, coffee and chat.

Based at Milton Piece Community Allotment on Wednesdays 12.30-3.30pm

Happy growing!



To find out more contact Gail on 02392 892 022 or email her at gail.baird@johnpoundscentre.co.uk

Don't forget to renew your Association Membership!

Pop along to the shop on either Sunday or Tuesday mornings to renew your membership for 2018. The cost remains at £4.50, the same as last year, as agreed at the AGM in January.

Eastney & Milton Allotment Holders Association 2018 Committee Members:

Chairman – Les

Trading Manager – Joyce

Committee Member – Dianne

Secretary – Liz

Website Manager – Di

Committee Member – Michael

Finance Secretary – Trevor

Committee Member – Helen
(manages shop volunteer rota)

Committee Member – Rose

Membership Secretary – Trish

Committee Member – Anne

Please check our website for new information, events, and updates. We will also be sending more regular emails to our members in addition to newsletters and posters on noticeboards. Please check that we have your email address.

Contributors: Carole, the Association Committee, Liz, Trish, John and Geoff. **Template and Design:** Di

www.eastneyandmiltonallotmentassociation.co.uk