

School report!

Some of you might have noticed a few children around the Eastney Lake area of the allotment on a Tuesday. They are pupils from Waterloo School and all of them live with foster carers or are in children's homes. Waterloo school is a school for pupils that can find it difficult to express their emotions which can result in their behaviour becoming very agitated or extremely withdrawn.



As a parent and teacher in both mainstream and special schools, I have always encouraged outside learning as it becomes apparent very quickly that there is always something to engage in whilst enjoying being outside relaxing in the fresh air, listening and watching birds and of course the obligatory bug hunt!

I have noticed my group love the whole process of preparation, sowing, planting and harvesting. They paint troughs, have made bamboo trellis, dug out a pond and are setting up a bug hotel. Each of them have a responsibility and have aims they work towards every session. Sometimes this could be going to the shop, purchasing something and engaging with others in a polite and sociable way. They always enjoy the drink and biscuit break because they deserve it!

However, the very best of all of this is the change in the pupils when they are here. They chat, smile, laugh and have fun. In other words, the peacefulness we all encounter when we walk through the gates seems to affect them too. Their world can be frightening and at times difficult to comprehend - but at the allotment all is well in the world for a while.

If you see us don't forget to say hello and hopefully a big smile and a polite hello will be returned to you.

Helen

The results are in

In July we told you how you could get involved in David Attenborough's Big Butterfly Count 2018. The [results](#) are now in – take a look online to see what happened.

Di

Onsite shop open and fully stocked

A huge thank you to the volunteers who helped with the new season's deliveries earlier in the year. The shop has a wide range of goodies at very competitive prices, including:

- Potatoes, beans, onions, shallots and seeds
- Compost, grow bags and fertilisers
- Gardening gloves, labels, twine and ground cover

Joyce

Have You Tried 'Root-to-Fruit' Eating?

It's the veggie equivalent of 'Nose-to-Tail' eating and means using all the edible parts of a plant we would normally throw away, including the leaves, peelings and skin.

WRAP ([Waste and Resources Actin Programme](#)), a government funded waste reduction charity is championing this approach through their [Love Food Hate Waste campaign](#)... Don't just eat it. Compleat it. There are tips and recipes for using up cauliflower or broccoli leaves and stalks and making crisps from the Sunday roast potato peelings. Not only are you helping the environment by reducing waste, but you're saving money with nutritional benefits as well.

DON'T JUST EAT IT. COMPLEAT IT

Compleating is simple. It's about eating the whole ingredient or food and letting no edible parts go to waste.

JOIN THE FEEL-GOOD FOOD REVOLUTION

Sarah

Gardening goes digital

These days there's an app for everything, so of course there are some available for planning your vegetable patch, identifying your soil type or identifying plants. Here are a couple..

[Growveg.com](#) will help plan traditional or raised beds, how many plants you need for the space, when to sow and when to harvest. Free trial then a small fee.

[MySoil](#) from the British Geological Survey and enables you to check the soil in your local area, in terms of soil type, depth, pH, soil temperature and organic matter content. You can also submit your own soil data.

[Garden Answers](#) is an easy-to-use and incredibly popular identification app that can instantly define over 20,000 plants. Basic service is free.

[RHS Grow Your Own](#) app is full of down-to-earth advice to help everyone grow fresh, healthy fruit, vegetables and herbs. Free.

[Gardena](#) – a quick and easy tool that enables you to plan out sheds, ponds, paths and growing areas. Free.

Di

Top Tips for April/May:

April is probably the first really busy month on the plot. With temperatures warming fast, it's time to get all your plans in place for the season ahead (but don't forget the frost, who can still catch you out!).

Successional Sowing: When it comes to vegetable sowing don't, do it all in one hit, this will simply lead to a glut of produce later in the year. Instead, adopt the successional sowing method - smaller batches of seed sowing done every two weeks or so, which leads to a constant supply of ready to pick produce through the season, with few gaps and no gluts.

Hardy vegetables to sow outside this month: Broad beans, Beetroot, Brussels sprouts, Broccoli & Calabrese, Summer and autumn cabbages, Cauliflower, Chicory, Carrots, Leeks, Pak Choi, Parsnip, Radish, Spinach, Spring onions, Swede, Swiss chard. Also plant out onions sets and seed potatoes.

Hand pollinate early fruit trees: Early flowering fruits such as cherries, greengages, nectarines and peaches will benefit from hand pollination, as it may be still too early for most pollinating insects to do the work for you. Use a small artist's paint brush to gently transfer pollen from one flower to another.

What to prune in April: Stone fruit trees such as cherries and plums can be pruned now that the risk of contracting silver leaf disease has passed (it enters plants on winter rain). Fig trees can be pruned to keep their shape and size. Check all shrubs and hedges for bird nesting activity before carrying out any pruning. If nests are spotted, wait until summer before trimming your plants – it is illegal to intentionally damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use.

Soft fruits: All soft fruits, eg strawberries, raspberries, redcurrants, blackcurrants, and gooseberries, will benefit from a mulch. Garden compost, leaf mould, organic manure, straw, hay and spent mushroom compost can all be used.

Harvesting: Here's what you could be picking and eating this time next year or, if you're an old hand, already are. Brassicas: red & green cabbages, kale, forced sea kale, cauliflower and Cima di Rapa, purple and white sprouting broccoli, spring cabbages. Roots: Jerusalem artichokes, parsnips, first radishes. Salad crops: salad leaves, over-wintered lettuce, pea tips. Leafy greens: chard, perpetual spinach and true spinach.

Weed control: By mid spring weeds start to grow rampantly, annual weeds will be germinating freely in unworked soils, and perennial types will be setting down roots to really take hold. Ideally dig out perennial weeds by hand, but be thorough. Many perennial weeds, including dandelion and couch grass, will regrow from the smallest piece of root left in the soil.

Salad and herbs: If you want to get going with some salad, sow now undercover or in gutters in your greenhouse or conservatory, e.g. corn salad, rainbow chard, mizuna, rocket, winter purslane, mustard and plenty of lettuces. Direct sow chervil, chives and coriander or sow dill, fennel and French sorrel under cover.

Last but not least: Don't panic, take things one step at a time and you'll get it all done. It's important to take a few moments to sit in the sun, listen to the birds and enjoy the fresh air.

The Committee

PLEASE KEEP THE GATES SHUT & LOCKED

It is really important for general site security, as well as for the safety of those children who spend more time on the site with parents and grandparents during the Easter holidays. The only exception are the main gates when the onsite shop is open – Sunday & Tuesday 9:30 – 11:30am.

Ashley, PCC Allotment Inspector

Popular Slug Control Banned

DEFRA have announced that [popular slug control metaldehyde](#) will be banned from Spring 2020. The ban includes all home garden/allotment use. The Government decision followed advice that metaldehyde poses an unacceptable risk to birds and mammals.

Alternative controls include: Nematodes; Traps, such as scooped out half grapefruit or jars part-filled with beer and sunk into the soil near vulnerable plants; Barriers such as copper tape, bark mulch, eggshells, sharp grit or wool pellets.

Encouraging wildlife that eat slugs e.g. birds, frogs, toads, hedgehogs, slow-worms and ground beetles eat slugs.

Citizen Science – Swift watch

Swifts are on the decline and the RSPB would like your help. There has been a 51% decrease in their breeding numbers in the UK between 1995 and 2015, making them an amber-listed species. Visit the [RSPB website](#) to record what all your sightings of swifts or swift nest sites.

Association Member

Allotment Association Membership

Free entry to the Autumn Show. Membership of the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners. Access to the competitively priced shop.

Pop along to the on-site shop on either Sunday or Tuesday mornings to renew your membership for 2019. The cost remains at £4.50, the same as last year, as agreed at the AGM in January.

Trish

Need help with a spring project?

Don't forget the Allotment Buddies Scheme.

Support can vary depending on your requirements – maybe one-off help over the holidays or continuous support e.g. planting and sowing.

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

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

Liz



Eastney & Milton Allotment Holders Association 2018 Committee Members:

Chairman – Trevor	Trading Manager – Joyce	Committee Member – Anne
Secretary – Liz	Website Manager – Di	Committee Member – Bill
Finance Secretary – Micheal	Committee Member – Helen	Committee Member – Dianne
Membership Secretary – Trish	(manages shop volunteer rota)	Committee Member – Rose

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: The Association Committee, Sarah, Ashley, Liz, Trish, Joyce and Helen. **Template and Design:** Di

www.eastneyandmiltonallotmentassociation.co.uk