

# The FHS Grapevine

Newsletter of the Finchley Horticultural Society Spring 2012

## The Year Ahead

There are significant and important events lined up for the FHS in 2012. We expect to become a self-managed site running our allotments on a much more independent basis, having negotiated new site leases with London Borough of Barnet. We welcome the prospect of adding Brent Way, a small, new site to our allotment landholdings. The Raised Beds Project at Gordon Road will be completed. A number of less able gardeners have already signed up to cultivate the plots here. Watch out for the grand opening this summer.

We are delighted that the Southover Partnership School is taking over two raised beds previously let to Moss Hall Infant School. The Plant Sale in May and Autumn Fete in September promise to be bigger and better than ever. In preparation for this and for future plant sales, Terry Burling has been working hard to renovate our ageing greenhouses and polytunnels. We would like to more closely engage our non-plotholder members and will be considering ideas about how to do this. Please come along to the Annual General Meeting to hear more and have your say.

## Finchley Horticultural Society AGM

**Wednesday 28 March at 8pm**

Plans for Self Management

Report on 2011

Plans for 2012

Social with drinks and refreshments

Raffle

**Committee Room,  
St Mary's Church Hall,  
Hendon Lane, Finchley, London N3**

## FHS Events

### FHS Annual General Meeting

**Wednesday 28th March - Don't miss it!**

See below for details.

### VISIT: Myddelton Gardens, Enfield

**Saturday morning, 28th April 2012**

This very special garden was created by E A Bowles, one of the 20th century's great gardeners, who lived at Myddelton House all his life. He was an expert botanist, author, artist and Fellow of the RHS. Within the garden is the National Collection of Award Winning Bearded Iris, and over this weekend there is an Iris Show/Competition. We will have a 1hr guided tour of the new kitchen garden and other features. Travel is by own car (lifts available for those without), meeting near Rocklands Flats, Gordon Road, at 9.50am for tour at 11am. Cost £3.50. Please contact Valerie Marsh (020 8455 4143 or ppetere@aol.com) to confirm if you are coming. Should be a great outing!

### The Plant Sale: Gordon Road Allotments

**Sunday 13th May, 10am to 12.30pm**

Better and bigger than ever! There will be lots of top quality plants including vegetables, herbs, annuals and perennials, plus refreshments and bargains in the Allotment Shop. Come early to avoid disappointment.

### VISIT: Thenford Gardens & Arboretum

**Saturday, 9 June 2012. Coach trip**

This is Michael Heseltine's splendid 64 acre country estate, just east of Banbury, Oxfordshire, containing over 3,500 different trees and shrubs. In addition, there is an 18th century walled garden and extensive ponds and lakes. It will be a mid-morning departure, returning early evening. As this will be a popular outing please confirm your booking (cost £28) as soon as possible to Valerie Marsh (020 8455 4143 or ppetere@aol.com) who can provide you with further details.

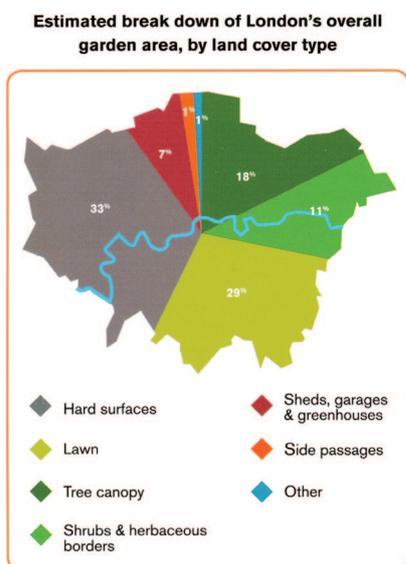
### Trading Hut

The Hut at Gordon Road will re-open **Sunday, March 18th, 10.30am - 12.30.**

## About London's Gardens

Private and domestic gardens cover nearly a quarter of Greater London: there are an estimated 3.8 million individual private garden plots and 2.5 million garden trees. Barnet has the second largest average size garden of all the London Boroughs. They provide a significant amount of London's open space and wildlife habitat. Climate change means gardens may become increasingly important as they also help to keep the city cool and prevent flooding.

But research has recently confirmed that the composition of London's gardens is changing at a significant rate, largely as a result of very many small changes made to individual gardens.



Between 1999 and 2008 there has been a 12% reduction in green cover, with lawns suffering a 16% loss. These losses are primarily due to changes in garden design and management. Hard-surfacing (patios, paving, decking) increased by 26% and garden buildings by 55%. On an individual scale, such changes can have a significant impact on the biodiversity value of a garden. Garden owners need to be aware that the decisions they make about how their gardens are managed can have long-term consequences for local environmental quality and the broader neighbourhood green space.

Visit [www.wildlondon.org.uk](http://www.wildlondon.org.uk) and [www.gigl.org.uk](http://www.gigl.org.uk) to download a full copy of the Garden Research Project by London Wildlife Trust upon which this information is based.

## Competition for the Tallest Sunflower in Finchley

To encourage Finchley's younger gardening enthusiasts we are running a competition for the tallest sunflower.



Young sunflower plants will be available for 50p at the FHS May Plant Sale and can be grown on in the garden at home or on the allotments (with permission of the plothead). Photographs and measurements will be

required in early September when the six tallest entries will be inspected. There will be a prize for the winning sunflower at our Autumn Fete on 9th September. Entry forms will be available at the Plant Sale and in the Trading Hut from 13th May.

## Out of Season

The RHS has been flooded with reports about plants flowering out of season. Top of the list are apples, exochorda ('pearlbush' – a shrub from China), and primroses, all of which have been producing flowers since December. These plants are taking advantage of favourable conditions, trying to flower and set seed but this is unlikely if the weather turns colder.

If the milder winter continues we are likely to see earlier flowering of spring plants. Snowdrops can often begin to bloom in early January and crocus in early February rather than later in the month. The RHS often gets reports of very early flowering daffodils but these are usually regular early flowering species and cultivars such as 'Rijnveld's Early Sensation' which often flowers outdoors around Christmas.

The Woodland Trust is asking the public to report observations on the effect of the milder winter weather on native trees and flowers. For more information see the Woodland Trust's website at: [www.naturescalendar.org.uk](http://www.naturescalendar.org.uk)

## News

### Progress on Self Management

On 2 February 2012 Brook Farm Allotments became the first Barnet site to formally take on a self management lease. Following the overwhelming wish of Members at our special meeting in October, the FHS has formally requested to be included in the next 'second tranche' of sites to be progressed to self-management and this request has been provisionally accepted. This process will include detailed site inspections to record the state of the sites at handover and identify any health and safety issues which may be the Council's responsibility to rectify. We very much hope that the new arrangement will be in place by October this year. The new lease will be for a 38 year term and includes a number of changes to the current version. There will be a new tenancy agreement for 2013 and ploholders will be consulted about this. We will keep you informed on progress.

### Works at Nethercourt Avenue Allotments

Some essential works were carried out at Nethercourt: a large overhanging ash tree has been lopped to reduce shade affecting a number of plots, the track has been tidied and levelled, a small area of scrub cleared and over 4 tons of rubbish removed.



## Notices

### Can You Help?

The Society urgently needs more people to help with some key jobs (not hugely time consuming but important). Ann Brown or June Brookes would love to hear from you if you can take on any of these roles:

#### Publicity:

Producing and distributing posters, notices and flyers, contacting the press.

#### Events:

Organising events at Gordon Road (not Plant Sale) such as socials, autumn fete, Guy Fawkes.

#### Piggery:

Maintenance and management of this communal area including its surrounds.

#### Treasurer:

Is there anyone interested in taking on managing our money?

#### Assistant Trading Hut Manager:

To help Beverley Perkins with running our shop at Gordon Road.

### Life Members

Ron and Sylvia Elkington have been jointly awarded Honorary Life Membership for their huge contribution and long service to the Finchley Horticultural Society.

Please inform Christine Williams, [chrysw@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chrysw@hotmail.co.uk) if you received a paper copy of this newsletter and are now able to receive it by e-mail. This saves us time and money.

## Recycled Compost

### For all gardeners:

A load of free compost will be available at the Civic Amenity and Recycling Centre, Summers Lane, North Finchley, N12 0RF on Saturday 7th April. Get there early to avoid disappointment – it may be gone by Sunday mid-day! Ask for more deliveries if you are disappointed not to get any or not enough: Telephone 0208 362 0752.

## The Finchley Horticultural Society

1 Princes Avenue, Finchley, London N3 2DA

For all Finchley gardeners and for plotheolders  
at Gordon Road and Nethercourt Avenue.

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### Next Newsletter: Summer Issue - June 2012

Member of  
Barnet Federation  
of Allotment and  
Horticultural Societies



**Remember you can get a 10%  
discount off seeds and plants  
at Finchley Nurseries Garden  
Centre if you are an FHS Member**

## Coming Attractions

### Federation of Middlesex Horticultural & Allotment Societies - Spring Show -

**Perivale Community Centre, Horsenden Lane  
South, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 7NP**

**Sunday, 1st April, 2.30-4.30pm**

Flowers, handicrafts, domestic and floral art.  
If you wish to enter, contact: John Slater, 33 Drake  
Road, Harrow, Middx HA2 9DZ. Tel: 020 8868 3254.

### - Bothy Garden Open Days -

**Avenue House, East End Road, Finchley, N3 3QE**

**Sunday, 1st April, 3.00-4.30pm**

**Sunday, 6th May, 3.00-4.30pm**

A chance to visit this delightful 'secret garden' in  
the grounds of Avenue House.

### - Long Lane Pasture Pond Day -

**Off Long Lane, Finchley, N3 2RN**

**Saturday, 14th April, 10am-12noon**

The ponds here will be alive with tadpoles and  
other water creatures. This is a great event for  
children (and adults) to discover underwater life.  
Nets and trays provided.

### - RHS National Gardening Week -

**16-22 April 2012**

There are events throughout Britain to encourage  
everyone to get gardening. For information go to:  
[www.rhs.org.uk/nationalgardeningweek](http://www.rhs.org.uk/nationalgardeningweek)

### - Coppetts Wood Nature Reserve -

**Colney Hatch Lane, London N11 3DG**

**Sunday 20th May**

Woodland Festival.

### - Save Our Butterflies Week -

**19th-27th May 2012**

This year's theme is rare and threatened species.  
During the Week you can go on a guided butterfly  
walk, take part in a work party, attend a talk  
and download an ID chart. Further details from:  
[www.butterfly-conservation.org/events](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/events)



**Butterfly  
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats