

The Grapevine

Newsletter of the Finchley Horticultural Society



Winter 2018

Committee News

Planning for this year's **Plant Sale** has already begun. It will be held on Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th May 2018. This will minimise the amount of work involved in putting out the tables and plants. Put the dates in your diary!

Liz Thomson, our treasurer, has now moved to north Wales. She has kindly agreed to continue in the role until the AGM. We are all very grateful to Liz for her fantastic contribution to the FHS over many years. However, we must elect a new treasurer in March. It's not a huge role but regular input is needed. The Committee will support anyone prepared to take on this role. Speak to any of the Committee if you're interested. Details on the back page.

We have three RHS tickets giving 30% discount on entry prices to any RHS garden in 2018. Members may borrow these tickets for a visit and then return them. Jo Cuttell or Christine Williams will hold them for the Society. Why not take advantage of this attractive offer?

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 20th March 2018
7.30

Finchley Tennis Club
Brent Way

entrance between 45 and 47

Everyone welcome

wine and cheese and raffle

Happy New Year

Whilst writing this newsletter, I have been reflecting on what a successful year this has been for Finchley Horticultural Society. With all the terrible events of 2017, it's good to have some happy memories of our year.

The opening of the accessible path to the Piggery Tea Hut by the Deputy Mayoress, Mrs Val Duschinsky, was a highlight and the culmination of a lot of hard work by many ploholders, notably Felicity Nock, Liz Thomson, Philip Cuttell and Chris Ouseley. Evolving Landscapes carried out the groundwork.

Thanks to the clever idea of a Gordon Road ploholder, the FHS hosted two successful 'Have Your Say' meetings last year. Suggestions of improvements were made by members of all three allotment sites and many of these have resulted in changes for the better. Some issues are still being investigated. The next meeting will be on **Sunday 22nd April at 11am.**

The Plant Sale made a record £4,000 last year for the FHS and our National Garden Scheme Day made an impressive £800 which went to support the NGS charities.

Young people from Barnet Council's Volunteer Scheme 'The Challenge' spent a day on the Gordon Road site helping to weed the raised beds and clear the wildlife area.

FHS hosted a wonderful visit to Beth Chatto Gardens and Hyde Hall last summer and to Theobalds Farmhouse in September. More visits are planned for 2018.

The Plant Sale was a great success



How to prune an apple tree by James Robbins

Every garden or allotment should have an apple tree and most already do, though the care needed to ensure bountiful crops every year can seem like a mystery. Now is the time to prune.

Pruning an apple tree is fundamental to its health and longevity. The original Bramley Apple tree is still providing fruit after more than 100 years. If left unpruned trees can lapse into biennial fruiting (providing crops on alternate years.) Pruning encourages the production of new fruiting wood, whilst creating an open structure so the sun reaches all the apples, ripening them evenly.

Trees are grown in many forms. Most common is the 'standard', with a single trunk and a large top, pruned to form a domed shape so the sun reaches all the branches. Trees can also be grown as a 'cordon', with a single stem and short side branches. These produce a lot of fruit in a small space so are popular in commercial orchards. Trees can also be pruned to form 'fans', 'step-overs' or 'espaliers' (ladder forms).



*pruning
a
crossing
branch
using
sharp
loppers*

The first step is to remove dead, diseased and damaged branches. It is also good to remove crossing branches. These can rub, creating wounds and allowing diseases into the tree. Think about a small bird like a sparrow trying to fly through the tree. It should be able to do this without catching its wings on the branches. Use a sharp pruning saw and cut the branch near to the 'collar' (a raised ring of bark where it meets the larger branch) to ensure the wound heals

Before pruning the new growths it's essential to know the type of tree. Some are 'spur-fruited',



producing flowers on short side branches (called spurs). Some are 'tip-fruited', producing flowers at the end of the branch.

fruit spur

To identify which type you have you need to take a look at the buds. There will be two types of bud. The fruiting buds are short, fat and rounded whereas vegetative growth buds are long, slender and pointed. The aim is to reduce the number of vegetative buds, whilst preserving the flowering buds.



*vegetative
bud*

For spur-fruited types, this means using loppers

or secateurs to shorten the long, upright growths to just a couple of buds. This ensures the tree focuses its energy on producing more flowering wood next year. For tip-fruited types we need to leave as many fruiting tips as possible, so should instead thin out some of the longest shoots to encourage the tree to produce even more shoots next year.

Once the tree has been pruned the branches should be burnt and the ash returned to the base of the tree. The ash is potassium rich and will promote stronger flowering in the spring.

If you have just a few hours to spend caring for your apple trees this winter you will be able to ensure a bountiful crop for the future and preserve your trees for many years to come.

Grow your own Sweet Potatoes

This year Louis planted sweet potatoes for the first time. Her crop, which she was harvesting at the end of October, was successful. Here is how she did it.



First buy some sweet potatoes from the supermarket, either red or white, you may need to scrub the potatoes first as apparently they are coated with something to prevent them from sprouting. Use tooth picks, pricked into the potato on four sides about a

quarter the way up, to balance it on the rim of a jar of water so that the tip of the potato is in the water. Leave on a window sill and wait for them to sprout.

When the 'slips', the new shoots, have a stem with leaves on, detach the stem from the potato and put it in a glass of water until roots form. One potato will produce several slips. Plant them out after frosts have finished. Grow the plants using supports so that the stems

don't touch the ground as then they will form roots, thus depriving the plant of energy to grow the tubers.



Newsletter

If you received a paper copy of this newsletter and are now able to receive it by e-mail, please inform Christine Williams, chrysw@hotmail.co.uk. This saves us time and money.

Make your Compost heap work

An excellent booklet by CramlingtonTown Council and recommended by Eric Hess explains how to make your own compost heap. [http://www.cramlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/Compost_Booklet%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.cramlingtontowncouncil.gov.uk/Compost_Booklet%20(1).pdf)

Compost makes your garden and allotment grow, it saves you money, reduces pollution and contributes to a cleaner environment.

If it will rot, it will compost, though some items such as food waste and glossy magazines are best avoided. Use a mixture of grass mowings and soft young weeds, older, tougher plant material and shredded woody items.

How Much Compost to Use

As a rough guide, use one wheelbarrow full of compost per 5 sq.m. (6 sq.yds) of ground. This should be ample for one season, or for a crop that likes a rich soil.

When and How to Use Compost

Compost should be applied in the spring and summer. It is either dug into the top 15-20cm of soil (no deeper) or applied as a surface mulch. It can be spread over the soil and around established plants. Compost can be used on all soils where feeding and conditioning is required.

Using Compost on Vegetables

The lion's share of any compost should go to beds growing potatoes, tomatoes, brassicas (and other leafy crops), leeks, pumpkins and courgettes. If crop rotation is used, this means that the whole vegetable plot will have received compost over the course of the rotation.

Using Compost on Fruit

Strawberries: add compost to the soil before planting them in the ground or in pots
Apples, plums, pears, cherries, redcurrants, gooseberries: mulch with compost every four to five years or more frequently if growth is poor
Blackcurrants, raspberries and hybrid berries: mulch with compost every three years.

This issue of the Grapevine has been generously sponsored by Winkworth Estate Agents.

Winkworth

T: 020 8349 3388

www.winkworth.co.uk

The Finchley Horticultural Society

43 Oakdene Park, Finchley, N3 1EU

www.finchleyhorticulturalsociety.org.uk

twitter.com/finchleyhort

www.facebook.com/FinchleyHS

For all Finchley gardeners and for plot holders at
Gordon Road, Nethercourt Avenue and Brent Way

President

Catherine Schmitt

Chairman and FHS Enquiries

Claudine Fear: 020 8346 0353

Allotments Secretaries

Gordon Road: June Brookes
020 8349 2253

Nethercourt Avenue: Janine Limberg
07535 720691

Brent Way: Elaine Wright
020 8346 9975

Treasurer

position vacant

Membership

Christine Williams: 07984 935668

Trading Hut

June Brookes: 020 8349 2253

Website & NGS Liaison

Judy Woollett: 020 8346 5107

Allotments Security & Break-ins

Tony Ingram 020 8349 1265
or 0796 727 4739

Newsletter Editor

Jo Cuttell 020 8922 0241

To contact any committee member by email
please use this address:

finchleyhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com

Member of the
Barnet Federation of Allotment
and Horticultural Societies



Affiliated to the
Royal Horticultural Society

Next Grapevine April 2018

Events Diary

The Trading Hut at Gordon Road is now closed

12th - 14th February 2018

RHS Early Spring Plant Fair

The Lawrence Hall will feature a
recreation of the planting at RHS

Garden Wisley's Winter Walk

RHS Lawrence Hall & RHS Lindley Hall,
London SW1P 2QD

Monday 12th - 5pm until 9pm

Tuesday 13th - 11am until 8pm

Wednesday 14th - 11am until 6pm

Tickets are now on sale £5 for members;

£8 for the public in advance, £9 on the day



19th February 2018

Barnet Allotment Federation AGM 8pm

Rathbone Allotment Society, Ryalls Court,
Oakleigh Road North, N20 0RY

Following the formal business there will be a
talk from an external speaker. The speaker and
topic have not yet been finalised.

20th March 2018

FHS AGM Finchley Tennis Club,
7.30pm

All welcome

Cheese and wine Raffle prizes



5th - 7th April 2018

RHS Orchid Show and Plant Fair

RHS Lawrence Hall and RHS

Lindley Hall, London SW1P 2QD

Monday 5th - 5pm until 9pm

Tuesday 6th - 11am until 8pm

Wednesday 7th - 11am until 6pm

Tickets are now on sale £5 for members;

£8 for the public in advance, £9 on the day



22nd April 2018

Have Your Say 11am

Gordon Road Site



19th - 20th May 2018

FHS Plant Sale

Gordon Road Site

Please let Christine Williams or
Claudine Fear know if you can help



27th August

Bank Holiday Monday 2018

NGS Day



To book tickets to RHS shows, visit
rhs.org.uk/shows or call 0844 338 7539