

The Grapevine



Newsletter of the Finchley Horticultural Society

Summer 2019

**Community Meeting
Sunday 21st July at 11am
in the Piggery at
Gordon Road Allotments**

**All FHS members are very
welcome**

**Meet other plot holders and
Finchley gardeners for a chat
and refreshments. We aim to
share advice and support.**

**Bring along ideas for looking
after your garden or allotment
when you are on holiday.
What do you do with summer
gluts?**

**BARBEQUE
SUNDAY 28th JULY 2019
1.30pm
IN THE PIGGERY**

£5 FHS member and £7 guests
children under 7 free
Donations of a salad or a sweet
are welcome
Soft drinks provided
Bring your own alcohol

Please give cash or cheque to
June Brookes
Gordon Road Secretary

FHS News

Happily, it was another successful year for our Plant Sale and after expenses we hope to clear about £4500. Thanks to everyone who helped and bought plants. The Committee feels that holding it over the Bank Holiday weekend was a successful formula.

The FHS now has planning permission from Barnet Council to erect the new, higher fence along Dollis Road, which will make the site safer. We are hoping that this work will start in mid July. Before that the strip alongside the existing fence will need to be cleared so that the fencing team can get access and we expect this work will take place at the beginning of July. The planning permission includes provision for a new fence along the Gordon Road perimeter and we will be applying for a grant from Barnet Council to replace the existing chain link fence. The new fence has to be more open and neighbourly than the one round the rest of the site.

The damage caused by the break in at Gordon Road is covered by our insurance and a new garage door will be installed in the next month or so. The Committee is considering installing CCTV around the buildings at the top of the site as a deterrence. The new fence should help too. Many thanks to John Scotchford who has repaired the wall that was damaged in the Green Room.

The coach outing to Pashley Manor Gardens and Great Dixter Gardens on Saturday 22nd June was a huge success. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it and photographs will be displayed on the website.



WATER CULTURE

We all have to become smarter and more careful when we water our plants this summer and into the future. There are several reasons for this. I'm sure we all remember the heatwave last summer and that many of our flowers and especially vegetables suffered from the lack of water. The water bill at Gordon Road more than doubled last year to over £2,000. The water on all our sites is metered so simply from a financial point of view we need to be vigilant about not wasting water. Sir James Bevan, head of the Environment Agency, told the Waterwise Conference in London last month that 'within 25 years England will not have enough water to meet demand'. He said, "**We all need to use less water and use it more efficiently**" He wants everybody to use 40 litres less water every day.

The Royal Horticultural Society has been looking at the most efficient ways to water our plants and there is a wealth of information on their website, which I urge you to visit. It helps to understand the needs of plants and use techniques to prevent water loss from both plants and soil. I have made a brief summary of their recommendations.

When to water

Ideally water plants early in the morning, to avoid evaporation loss during the day. On warm summer days, evening watering is effective, the dry soil soaking it in readily and low humidity at night reducing the risk of disease and evaporation. To see if you need to water, inspect the soil at a spade's depth. If the soil feels damp there is probably no need to water, but if it is dry, then watering may be required for some plants. Getting to know your soil and growth rates of your plants is really the best way to assess whether you need to water or not.

How to water

Water can be saved by applying it to the base of the plant rather than over a wide area.



Once the soil has become really dry and drought conditions have set in, it is futile to try and remedy this by light watering over a wide area. Light watering may encourage surface rather than deep roots, leaving plants more susceptible to drought. Instead, make a single thorough watering of the plants that are suffering. Heavier, clay-based soils can be watered less frequently, but need greater applications of water because they hold more water within their structure. As a general guide, up to 24 litres of water per square metre every 7 to 10 days will be sufficient to maintain plant growth.

Methods of watering

Sprinklers: These have only limited use, mainly to water the lawn where this is essential.

Hoses and watering cans: Most garden and allotment watering should be aimed specifically at the stem bases beneath the leaves, leaving



the surrounding soil dry. This helps to limit weed problems and ensures all the water goes where it is needed. The FHS rules require plot holders using a hose to have a spray gun attached and to be hand held at all times. Hoses must turn off when the lever is let go and detached from the tap after use.

Seep Hoses: These hoses or pipes with holes in them deliver water accurately to established plants and plants in rows. The use of the drip pipes on the raised beds at Gordon Road is currently under discussion as it is thought that, perhaps, they are contributing to the rotting of the wood in the raised beds.

Tips to avoid wasting precious water

Herbaceous perennials often need watering to look their best in hot, dry spells. Choose plants carefully if you want a drought-proof border. The yields and quality of edible produce are greatly improved by watering at times when drought stress affects the part of the plant that is gathered. Leafy crops should never be short of water. Onions require little or no watering. Most other crops need watering at sowing and > *continued on the next page*

transplanting time, then again as the fruits, roots or tubers are developing. It is also a good idea to give a single thorough watering about two weeks before harvesting.

Mulching with a layer of organic matter or gravel at least 5cm (2in) thick reduces moisture loss from the upper layers of soil. This may amount to as much as the equivalent of 2cm (0.75in) of rain. Removing weeds is vital, as weeds use up valuable soil moisture reserves.

Planting new plants between autumn and spring gives them the best chance of growing deep roots before the dry weather begins.



Lawns require great quantities of water for thorough irrigation, and this is a questionable use of a scarce resource. Instead of watering in dry periods, mow less closely and less frequently. Brown patches will usually recover when the rains return in the autumn.

Good luck with reducing your water consumption and your bills.

SUMMER GLUTS While all of us are enthusiastic about making our plots productive, we can be too busy to actually make use of it. Here are some ideas to spread the goodness and vitamins far beyond.

4 tips on how to not let food go to waste:

1. When you go away, ask someone to harvest as well as water your vegetables for you
2. Speak up about your extra produce whether it's spinach, herbs or berries
3. If you have a smart phone, you can start by installing the Olio app, they call on users to 'Join the food sharing revolution'. <https://olioex.com/>
4. Most vegetables can be frozen and will retain all their flavour and nutrients. Plunge the prepared vegetables in boiling water for a few minutes then place under cold running water. Blanching neutralises bacteria present in foods delaying spoilage. Preserving foods in syrup remains one of the oldest and most effective preservation methods. All you need is sugar and some sterilised jars.

Community Meeting 28th April 2019

Community meetings are for all FHS members, whether they are plot holders or not. It's a chance to get together for a chat and share information, and it's also an opportunity to raise and sort out any possible problems.

For our next get together I'd like people to share ideas for looking after their plots when they are away over the summer. I'd also like members to discuss the best ways of sharing excess produce.

The minutes of the April meeting are on the FHS website, click on the members tab and go to meetings. The minutes have a fuller report of the discussions which took place. During our last meeting we talked about:

- The state of the raised beds and how to prevent further decay of the Jarra wood sleepers. They could be lined or rebuilt
- The new fence being installed and the fence boundary needing to be cleared
- The brook banks which are being eroded and need strengthening
- Poly tunnel refurbishment - dates in June were set and volunteers requested to carry out this work
- New plot holders needing more information about how each site works. Allotment Secretaries will organise a system to induct new members
- Costco was suggested to buy cheaper, better sundries for the sites. Replies from Costco members to date suggest that they don't consider this to be significantly worthwhile
- Eric offered his shredder for members to borrow at their own risk
- FHS member Sophie would like to run children's activities at the plant sale and on open days in the future. The meeting liked this idea as long as safety requirements were met
- New member, Fiona, has taken over care of the wildlife garden and she would like some help digging out a new pond and bringing the whole area back under control. Use the Society email to get in touch with her.

The Finchley Horticultural Society

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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

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Member of the Barnet Federation of Allotment and Horticultural Societies

Affiliated to the
Royal Horticultural Society



Newsletter

If you received a paper copy of this newsletter and are now able to receive it by e-mail, please inform
Christine Williams,

finchleyhorticulturalsociety@gmail.com

This saves us time and money.

Events Diary

21st July 2019

Community Meeting

Log Cabin, Gordon Road Allotments
11am

All FHS members welcome



1st- 7th July 2019

RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden
Festival

Monday 5pm - 10.30pm

Daily 10.00am - 7.30pm (5.30pm Sunday)



23rd - 25th July 2019

RHS London Art and Photography
Show

RHS Lindley Hall, SW1P 2QW

Tuesday: 5pm - 9pm £10 in advance £12 on day

Wednesday and Thursday: RHS members free,
non-members £5 in advance and £8 on the day



31st July - 4th August 2019

RHS Garden Hyde Hall Flower Show,
Chelmsford, Essex CM3 8ET

Daily 10am - 5pm



18th August 2019

BAF Horticultural Show

See website for details:

<http://www.barnetallotments.org.uk>

Rathbone Allotments, Ryalls Road,
Oakleigh Road South, N20 0RY

Federation allotment holders and their families
may enter produce in any of the 150 different
classes



3rd - 8th September 2019

RHS Wisley Flower Show

Woking GU23 6QB

Tuesday to Saturday: 9am - 6pm

Sunday: 9am - 5pm

Free entry to RHS members - borrow our
membership ticket from FHS



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

Members of the RHS get discounted entry to shows

Next Grapevine - October 2019

Winkworth

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