

TRAP GROUND ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Spring Newsletter 2008.

Problems and Solutions.

1. Floods

Most of us are used to finding parts of our plots under water in winter, and have adjusted crop distribution to survive and even benefit from the soil gradations. Leeks, whilst greedy for nutrients are at least tolerant of standing in water for a few weeks and provide a welcome winter crop, but some allotments in the south and north of the site are flooded more or less every winter and their cultivation seems to be confined to summer gardening.

Three inundations within a twelve month period with the widespread loss of vegetables last summer seriously alters the ratio of effort to achievement, so let us hope that the calorific balance will swing the other way this year.

2. Security

Apart from water, fire destroyed two sheds over the autumn and winter and we are trying to find alternative accommodation for people who choose to sleep in them and [inadvertently?] burn them down. This, needless to say, is not a problem for which there is an easy solution, but social workers and others are doing what they can.

3. Access

Related to the above, our grant of £30,000 from the City Council for fencing and signage is due in the forthcoming financial year, and we are trying to make best use of the funds to achieve effective security. As we know, local people walk through to the meadow when the bridge path is under water, so if we were to ask for secure, locked gates from the railway and the meadow, this would cease and our own access would be more complicated. Raising the level of the bridge path is another matter in which various organisations have an interest and responsibility. We are trying to explore this again.

4. Paths

When wet and soft, and travelled by tractor drivers of uncertain directional orientation, our paths suffer serious dilapidation, and we have strengthened the Portmeadow entrance with 20 tons of hardcore, covered with soil, and seeded. When other areas become rutted, it would be very helpful if turves cleared from plots were to be used to fill the dips and gaps, so please feel free to patch paths. Summer mowers will have a more comfortable job of maintaining them if they are less bumpy.

Paths should also be kept free of obstructions like carpet, excavated debris and so on, and wide enough for the machines to safely pass through.

5. Predators

The TGAA Committee is sceptical of the City Council's proposal to surround us with rabbit-proof fencing; if only it acted one way to let them out it would be warmly welcomed. The shop, on the other hand, has various kit including wire-netting we can use on individual plots to deter hungry wildlife; black plastic nets and sheeting are also available.

6. Machinery

John Ashby has kindly offered to look after this for us. We will soon have a new hand operated petrol mower for people to borrow, the last one having had a short life of vulnerability to oil contamination and accidental collision with deconstructing obstacles. Please make John's life easier by using our machines as carefully as you can, and pay him the small fee we charge for petrol etc.

Plant Sale

Peter Jarvis writes:

Our annual plant sale in May was again a success bringing in a profit of £600, which makes a quite significant contribution to our funds.

Most of the business was done in the first hour and a half. We have become a well known local fixture and could certainly have sold much more had we had the stock.

After the ghastly weather of last season, 2008 has got off to a flying start with grass burgeoning and daffodils flowering in January, so if members are tempted into their gardens early would they please remember the sale. Clumps of garden perennials and overcrowded house plants can be split into saleable sections and self sown seedlings transplanted into pots.

Social Events

Stuart and Gillian Skyte organised the Harvest Supper and the Summer Picnic. Whilst the former was well attended, we thought the latter might be more popular if it became a barbecue held later in the day. Food at both events is always superb and both are popular gatherings for us to meet one another. Views at the AGM please.

Website

This has been set up by Jonathan Clark and Stuart Skyte and gives a clear and comprehensive account of the TGAA. We hope it will be a helpful guide for everyone with much useful information on the site and on gardening. Records of hits from Australia, India and other distant seekers after allotment wisdom, or maybe inadvertent electronic trespass, show it is actively used, although local use predominates and we welcome dialogue through the advertised webmaster channel. Details of Traptrading stock and a wealth of gardening information including topical advice are kept up to date. e.g. AGM is on Tuesday 18th March at 7.45pm in St Margaret's Institute. All members are very welcome.

Traptrading

Vibeke says that apart from the defences above, from February there will be seeds, seed potatoes and onion sets available at the shop.

Payment of Fees

The Treasurer asks that the Fee Request Form is returned with your payment and that you add or confirm your email address in the space provided. The latter is particularly helpful to the secretary for all our communications, and remember there are financial advantages in paying before 31st March.

Tony Hollander (Chairman) plot 69, John Porter (Treasurer) plot 71.