



Acle Allotment Association (AAA) Member's Newsletter

Welcome Fellow "Allotmenters"

.... to this, the second edition of our AAA member's newsletter. First of all, a big thank you to those members who provided suggestions and valued feedback for future editions of the newsletter. The "Tales from the Potting Shed" proved to be a big hit and we will try and expand this article in future editions; so any tips from the allotment "experts" would be most appreciated.

Well, we started the planting year with typical optimism and sad to say it has been all downhill ever since. First the dry cold winds and now the wet cold winds. Not sure what happened to spring, but it defiantly seems to have passed us by here in Acle.

Given the poor start to the growing season, it is a credit to member's ingenuity and perseverance that so many allotments are thriving. Hopefully nature will play catch-up in June and we can at least enjoy the fruits of our labour before the days once again start to shorten. Just think, I had the audacity to suggest in the previous newsletter that we could look forward to "a more stable and productive year in 2013".

As we mentioned in the first edition; the main aims of the newsletter are twofold:

- Firstly to provide members with details of activities and events (general and social) which impact on the Acle Allotment Association (AAA).
- Secondly to provide a forum for members to express their views and share suggestions for improving allotment life for one and all.

So once again feedback from members will be a key factor in making future editions of the newsletter a success.

It was agreed during the last committee meeting (more on that later) that the newsletter would be published three times a year. Firstly in February to cover the main agenda items from the AGM, then in June to publicise the main summer social events and finally in October to close out the main part of the allotment year (I know that work on

an allotment never stops but we needed a period that reflected the end of the season).

Events for Your Diary

The two key social events in our 2013 AAA calendar are the family BBQ and the open day so:

- Just a gentle reminder that the **annual barbeque** for members and their families will be held on **Saturday 13th of July between 4:00 & 6:00 pm.**

As on previous occasions, if you are planning to attend could you please bring your own meats, drinks, glasses and chairs. As usual, volunteers under the able direction of Pat (Weavers) will provide mixed salads, paper plates and the all important deserts. They will also ensure there are plenty of barbeques available on which you can cook/burn your meat.

I would like to say that we can guarantee a nice day but after my earlier attempts at weather forecasting I will not even try!

On a more serious note; if you would like to donate a raffle prize for the event it would be most appreciated. Prizes can either be left in the allotment shed for Cliff (Weavers) to collect or alternatively they handed to him directly prior to the event. The raffle is a key source of additional income to the AAA funds and also adds a further level of fun to this annual social event, especially if you win!

- Just to confirm that the **allotment open day** will, this year, be held on **Saturday 10th of August between 2:00 & 4:00 pm.** Again raffle prizes would be most welcome as would any produce (vegetables, flowers, jams, cakes est.) which will be available for sale on the day. This year we will be able to stage the event on our new picnic area (see later article) so all the stalls and refreshments should be located within the same area, which will be good for trade.



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The Committee Meeting Revisited

The first AAA committee meeting of 2013 was held on 25th March. We welcomed one new member (Adam Fisher) and said goodbye to another (Sue Utting) who has moved to a house with a bigger garden and no longer needs her allotment. Our thanks to Sue for her support and also her offer to help out at the social events.

It was agreed that a work detail would rework the area near the allotment shed with the aim of extending the existing picnic area for member's use (see later article). It was also confirmed by Cliff that a new lock, with the same combination, had been fitted to the shed. All allotments are now taken with the allotment vacated by Peter (Barrall) being split into three.

Given the increase in communal grassed areas it was agreed that the committee would issue a "call to arms" for volunteers to take a turn to cut the grass paths and communal patches such as the picnic area and car park. On the subject of grass cutting; members are reminded that the lawnmower located in the allotment shed is available for use by all. Last year, the burden of grass cutting fell to Cliff (Weavers); so if you can spare some time and the communal areas need a trim please feel free to rev-up and start mowing. The grass cuttings make a good base for composters so there is some tangible reward for your efforts!!

It was agreed during the meeting that we would produce a "welcome pack for new members. This would include a copy of the AAA rules, events and contact details of committee members.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for 1st July, so if you have any issues you want discussing please do not hesitate to contact any one of the committee members.

The Picnic Area

The open plot adjacent to the existing picnic area was reworked by a small band of

volunteers during late winter and early spring; with Cliff finally being able to sow the grass seed in April. Whilst germination and growing conditions have not been ideal, the area has been transformed and should make a great setting for the summer BBQ in July.

Tales from the Potting Shed



The first tip from the "Potting Shed" concerns the use of washing-up liquid as an alternative insecticidal when you mix it with water. Take 1 to 3 tablespoons of washing-up liquid and mix it into 4 litres of water, add a tablespoon of vinegar too, put it in a spray bottle and mist spray the entire plant. Small left over soap bars, you remember the ones that clutter the soap tray in the bathroom, and no one likes to use, can be utilized also and easily dissolved using warm or boiling water. Of course always remember to let it cool before applying to your plants. Soapy dish or bath water can also be collected and used effectively.

The next tip comes from Roy (Tate) and concerns the planting out of brassicas such as brussel sprouts. In addition to the club-root prevention tip given in the previous edition make sure you "heel in" the plants well so that they do not fall over in the high winds and the individual sprouts do not bolt whilst growing.

The final tip concerns the use of peat pots. Many vegetable are grown in peat pots, also called peat moss pots. This is very handy, because these pots can go right into the soil which makes it easy to plant large numbers of transplants quickly. But there is one catch - when planting out a seedling grown in a peat pot, you need to tear off the top edge before planting! This should be done because you don't want any part of the pot poking up higher than the soil surface. If you leave the pot up in the air, it will dry out and act as wick, pulling moisture up and away from the plant's roots.



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Miscellaneous



It may be a little too late to think about manure for this season but if, like me, you leave things to the last then I suggest you look at the notice board near the allotment site entrance for a good source of horse manure.

If you have any items or produce for sale, exchange or any that are wanted please let me know and I will include details in the next edition of the

newsletter. As always, a small voluntary contribution to AAA funds for successful adverts would be appreciated.

Just one final mention concerning any issues preventing, in the short term, the regular cultivation of an allotment. If for any reason (heath, family commitments, change of job, est.) you are unable to cultivate your allotment please let Cliff know sooner rather than later. This will allow us to provide, if necessary, any short general support to at least keep at weeds down and the walkways cut.

REVISED COMMITTEE MEMBERS - 2013

Clifford Weavers (Plot 15) – Chairman
Roy Tate (Plot 16) – Secretary
Robin Cushing (Plot 30) – Assistant Secretary
Wendy Cushing (Plot 30) – Treasurer
Adam Fisher (Plot 2)
Gwilym Foulkes (Plot 6)
Brian Harris (Plots 5/14)
Michael Hewitt (Plot 25)
Gala Speed (Plot 29)