



Edition Four – August 2020

Welcome to the Slopefield Sunflower, the newsletter from Slopefield Allotment Association.

Covid-19

Little did we think at the start of another growing year that a global pandemic would come along and affect all our lives so greatly. We are grateful that the government classed working our allotments as a form of exercise and allowed us to continue tending our plots. Whilst Corona virus has meant some changes on site such as the cancellation of community days and no access to facilities like the community tool shed the restriction in our “normal” daily lives meant positively for many more time to spend on the allotment. As a consequence our little piece of green heaven has never looked so good.

Plant Sale

Thank you to everyone who donated to and attended the plant sale held on the site back in May. Thanks to the generosity of those who purchased plants over £190 was raised for Slopefield Allotment Association to help fund the running of the site and pay for day to day necessities such as fuel for the lawn mower.

Due to its success the committee are thinking of making the plant sale an annual event however we need your help. Would you be prepared to grow some extra plants to donate for sale or help with the sale on the day? Also let us know what plants you would like to see for sale? Fruit, flowers or vegetables? Speak to a committee member or e-mail slopefieldallotments@gmail.com

New Gate Locking Procedure

As you are aware the Association has implemented a new gate locking procedure following previous failures with the padlock. The gate should continue to be closed after every entry and exit but not locked between 8am and 6pm, hanging the padlock on the sliding bar to help protect it from damage. Between these hours if you believe you are the last person on site when exiting then please err on the side of safety and lock the gate if you are unsure. Outwith these hours the gate should be locked at all times on entry and exit.

The new gate locking procedure will be reviewed at the next committee meeting on the 12 August. If you have any feedback on the new procedure then please speak to a committee member or e-mail slopefieldallotments@gmail.com

Pat Wilson – Retirement

Many of you will know Pat Wilson of Aberdeen City Council who is responsible for letting vacant allotments and is our point of contact for any issues or queries related to our plots or the site in general. After many years working for Aberdeen City Council Pat has decided to retire at the end of August and we wish her well in her new adventures. At this time Pat’s replacement is not known however you can still contact the council about any plot related queries by e-mailing allotments@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Green Flag Award

Hot off the press we have been informed that now that lockdown has started to ease we will be inspected again for our Green Flag Award. Remember to play your part by keeping your plot and our site in tip top condition!



The Allotment Market Stall (TAMS)

The Allotment Markets Stall (TAMS) has started again this year from the 24 July and will run through to 3 October. TAMS was set up in 2013 to sell the excess produce from the allotment sites across Aberdeen. Allotment holders are asked to donate their spare crops which will be collected every Thursday afternoon and then sold with some of the profit donated back to allotment sites to allow us to maintain and improve our sites. This includes Slopefield. This year TAMS will be running three stalls every Friday morning at Duthie, Seaton and Victoria Parks.

If you have any excess produce you would like to donate to TAMS then please harvest your crops and leave them in the blue container opposite the notice board by 1pm every Thursday. Remember by donating your excess produce you will help invest in the future of Slopefield. Any unsold produce is donated to local foodbanks or community projects.

Terry's Tips

You can still sow plenty of crops at Slopefield in August but it is better to do it sooner rather than later. It's an ideal time to sow leafy crops, particularly those that tend to bolt and go to flower in hot weather such as Lettuce, Mustard, Mizuna, Rocket, Spring Onion and Lambs Lettuce. Be prepared however if the weather turns cool to cover your crops with a polythene grow tunnel or cloche to keep them productive.

Spinach is also a great crop to sow at this time of year with a number of varieties of winter spinach that will provide you with leafy greens throughout the colder months. These can be sown direct in the soil or started off in modules in a cold frame and planted out later.

By mid August french and runner beans will be in full swing. You should harvest regularly picking the beans whilst they are small and tender before they grow too large. If your plants grow too tall nip out the growing point once they reach the top of the canes and all the energy will be put into production of the beans.

The same applies to Courgettes, pick regularly and they will keep on coming. If you leave the fruits too long larger crops inhibit the production of more fruit. You may wish to put some straw under your fruits particularly if it has been raining to prevent them rotting. They can also rot at their base if pollination wasn't completed (usually associated with poor weather at flowering time which puts off the bees) or the plant has set too many fruits and is aborting some.

August also means bulb time at the Garden Centre. Get there early to ensure that you have the pick of the best varieties and biggest bulbs. Give the bulbs a quick squeeze. If they feel soft and mushy then discard as they won't flower and will rot in the soil. If you would like specific gardening advice then you are welcome to contact Terry direct via e-mail on terry.stott@btinternet.com

Feedback/Suggestions/Volunteers

If you have any feedback or suggestions for the newsletter or are interested in volunteering at Slopefield to help maintain our site in the beautiful condition that it is then please e-mail or speak to one of the committee members or row reps on site. Details can be found on the noticeboard in the bottom car park or our website here: <https://www.slopefieldallotments.org/info> You can also keep up to date with the Committee minutes which appear on the noticeboard shortly after every meeting.

Best wishes
Slopefield Allotment Association