

Cripley Meadow Allotments September 2019 Newsletter

Next Working Party is Sun 8th September 10.30-12.30. Meet at the green shed wearing clothing and footwear for strenuous work; learn more about the site and meet other members.



Orchard Work



Jamie Rodney, Wendy, Manda and Barrie (plot 5) summer pruned the Castle

Mill orchard last week. Anna Benn does our espalier pruning (looking really good). We hope to shred the prunings at the Working Party.

Jamie, Rodney and Wendy made a start on Cripley Island Orchard on Thursday, Friday and Saturday last week. We have rationalised the number of trees. It is much improved. This orchard has little fruit, having suffered from extensive floods of 2013 and 2014, a lack of regular maintenance and too much willow shading (willows are pollarded in sequence so that Castle Mill is less visible – ours can be done now the Port Meadow ones have grown back).



The large weeping willow on

Cripley Island has dropped more limbs! Please stay away from this area. It may crack further.

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It looks as though it will be the end of September before fruit is ready on Castle Mill, The Green and Cripley Island. **There will be a fruit picking day on**

Sunday 22nd September 10.30-12.30 weather permitting (does not count as a WP). If you want a share come and help. Members should not pick fruit outside of picking days... unless a windfall or the odd one as you pass.

We could have done with the use of the communal wheelbarrows for the orchard work, but out of 10 that should be available there were only 2 and both of these had punctures. Please **return CMAA wheelbarrows to the shed**



at the end of the day, each time. If one gets a puncture during your watch you could delight the Cripley Fairies by mending it? Otherwise leave at the front of the shed with an indicator – such as a tied on plastic bag.

We had a turnout of 70+ for ODFAA's 100th and Cripley Meadows 125th Birthday, hosted



on Wendy's plot with lots of reports of how much it was enjoyed. The sun shone and members from many other sites enjoyed their first view of Cripley Meadow - and were amazed at how big we are (the biggest fully worked site in the city).

Cllr. Susanna Pressel supported us as always and wondered what she might do to commemorate the occasion. Do let us know if you have any ideas. There are more photos and information about the centenary, competition and events at <https://www.odfaa.com/news>

ODFAA Allotment Competition

The second judging day for plots and the site has been changed to Monday 9th September.

The Trading Shop is open again after the August break. Our regular hours are Sunday 11am-12 noon. Or email sarahjehome@aol.com to see if Sarah is available for one off sales. We aim to keep the shop running when Sarah is on holiday – if we have to close, we'll put a sign on the noticeboard.

Dumping

The skip has had two large-scale dumps of weeds last month and yet another petrol mower! **The mower is now out of the skip at the side for the member to take to Redbridge.**

It is members' responsibility to remove their waste from the site. We aim to be helpful in organising skips, but dealing with this dumping is unnecessarily wasting your committee members' time. We moved the CCTV camera to the gate after someone glued the locks, but we will soon have a new one back on the skip! (Thanks to the two members who gave us a very prompt alert about the gate problem, to Manda for getting the message out quickly and to Keith and Jeremy for mending in record time.)

The former recycle area behind the green shed is no more but some members are using it to dump



material like batteries, gas cylinders, paint etc. that cannot go in the skip – you must dispose of this kind of waste yourself. Please be more thoughtful. If the camera does catch dumpers their membership will be at risk.

Audit and Seeding weeds

Many members are beginning to clear crops and ground - please keep on top of any seeding weeds. Seeding thistle is particularly irritating. If weeds are allowed to seed on your plot your neighbours WILL INHERIT THEM. Many thanks to Manda, and Emma and the audit group, who have contributed many hours of audit work.

Committee member Tia Sedley is taking over as our new Field Secretary/Audit Lead. The next audit is Sunday 6th October. Tia will be coming onto plots more regularly in her Field Sec role and there will be changes to the present audit system in due course. More soon.

A special note about bramble, willow, trees and boundaries

When we started clearing Cripsey Meadow in 2004 a major problem was bramble and overgrown boundaries. Bramble and self-seeded willows grew on any spare plot and then spread

rapidly, firstly along boundaries. It has taken us many years to reduce the rootstock. We have again some patches of poorly-managed bramble, self-seeded trees, trees that are beyond our 10ft rule and trees out of place (particularly on adjacent boundaries between plots). **Please remove any trees that do not comply with our agreed rules: growth on adjacent boundaries must be no higher than the width of the path, there must be no willow or bramble on adjacent boundaries, and full-size (i.e. max 10ft) fruit trees must be at least 5ft from any boundary.**

Headlands and fruit

Please remember that blackberries and other fruit on plots and headlands belongs to the member, whether fenced or not. **It is never OK to take other people's crops without permission and that includes blackberries on plot headlands.** None of us like to see food wasted, so you can put excess crops under the members' noticeboard and, if you will be away during a harvest period, you can invite members to pick your produce by putting a notice on the noticeboard.

Rain harvesting if you ran out of water in the summer do increase your rainwater harvesting.

Castle Mill and bonfires – please be considerate with bonfires – despite the building work people are living in Castle Mill.

Free Woodchip and compost

We had a couple of deliveries of woodchip by the Green in August. We aim to return plots 66 and 67 back to small plots over the winter. The green waste plots on 84 and 109 will be ready to open shortly.

Ground cover

My summer green manure crop of buckwheat on an empty bed was again successful. It was pretty, easy to dig in and can be used as a catch crop as it's only 6 weeks from sowing to digging in. I have already sown a little Caliente mustard green manure in empty beds.

Sowings in August and early September benefit from the day longer day length, so if you have some autumn sowing, like oriental veg, spring onion or carrot.... get them in.

Good gardening, Wendy