Please forward or share with as many plotholders as possible.

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MONTHLY ROUNDUP

BIRMINGHAM & DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS COOPERATIVE

Birmingham & District Allotment Cooperative : 2025 Issue 2

On the Plot

With the majority of plotholders still avoiding visiting their plots as they remain unworkable due to the rain and the cold temperatures, it is a time for preparation and planning. Looking forward to longer days and warmer nights here are a few things to think. about:
The following is an extract from John Harrison's Newsletter:
"Conventional advice is often to sow parsnips now but I believe their reputation for poor germination rates is due to being placed in cold wet soil and I have had much better germination rates by sowing in March or even April.

Jerusalem artichokes and shallots can be planted now, although shallots will benefit from covering with a cloche.

Under Cover in Greenhouse, Coldframe and Polytunnel
If you have a greenhouse, you can get an early crop of lettuce, rocket and radish away in there. You can utilise cloches outdoors but success will be more dependent on the weather.

Time to sow your summer cabbages such as Greyhound and Primo, as well as turnips and spinach.

Onions from seed should be started now. They need about 15 degrees C to get them going so you may be best using the windowsill in a cool room to start them off.

With a heated propagator or using windowsills you can start off aubergine and peppers, chillies and tomatoes I have often found better results by waiting until March, which I put down to day length but many people feel this is the right time.

As I said for January, the big problem at this time of year is available light. Covering cardboard with aluminium foil and standing it to the north side of the seed tray will reflect extra light and help prevent leggy, drawn seedlings without the expense of special horticultural lights.

Fruit
Planting & Pruning
There is still time to finish planting fruit trees and bushes, especially raspberries and other cane fruits.

Early this month you can prune apple and pear trees while they are still dormant. It's also time to prune gooseberries and currants. With currants shorten the sideshoots to just one bud and remove old stems from the centre of the bushes.

Protection & Forcing
If you are in a sheltered area and grow early flowering fruit trees like nectarines, peaches and apricots, protect the flowers with horticultural fleece against frost. You can also use old net curtains for this job.

Forcing Rhubarb
Rhubarb Forcing Pot and Manure
Rhubarb Forcing Pot and Manure to Insulate

Rhubarb can be forced for an early crop of the sweetest stalks. Just cover a crown or two with large buckets or even an upturned black bin and insulate the outside with straw or manure for added heat. The stalks will grow in the dark ..."

John's Newsletter is full of useful advice for the traditional allotmenteer and his website is full of information for those that "Grow their Own". https://www.allotment-garden.org/

THIS MONTH'S YOUTUBE TIP

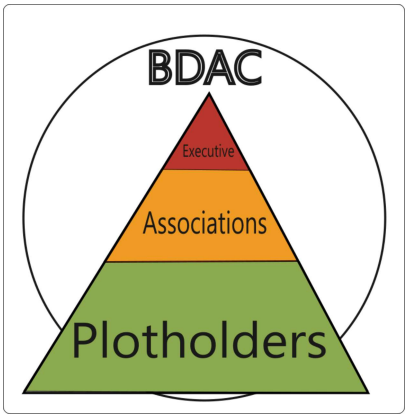
It is all to easy when watching Gardeners' World to think that everything is done in a nice calm ordered way when growing vegetables. When the reality is that what you plan rarely happens. You go to the site focussed on getting seeds sown but when you come away they are still in the packet but the greenhouse is nice and tidy. "Jessie at Plot 37" deals with the realities of growing veg and looking after chickens, and shares positivity and ideas.
https://www.youtube.com/c/JessieatPlot37

Flo Pickering Fund

Wondering about why work has still to start on essential repairs then the answer is the commissioner has still to sign off on the expenditure.

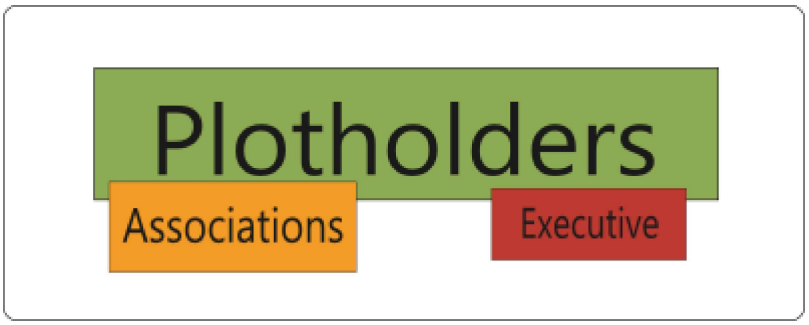
Moving Forward

Since the Confederation decided it should become a Cooperative in order to consider changes in the management of sites there has been much discussion regarding the best structure for the organisation. Whether to stick with the more traditional model, as proposed for discussion, allowing



council decisions to trickle down via the officers, exec and then local associations or to seek a solution in which the involvement of tenants could directly develop the cooperative. Initially this was thought to be too unwieldly but discussions and some testing has suggested it a real possibility and perhaps the fairest option available. Rather than being an association of associations BDAC would become an organisation with approximately 5,000

shareholders each tenant having the same rights and influence.



To find out some of the reasons why the Executive decided this was the best way forward you can check out the list of Pro's and Con's on our website. Click here

The final decision rests with the members. To take part in the conversation email the secretary with your views.

If you have a view on this or any other allotment issue let the secretary know or join in the chat on Facebook. The next meeting of the Exec' is on February 15, 2025 at Meadow Road. A full list of meetings and the AGM and Half Yearly Meeting is now available on our website in the section About Us. All BCC tenants may attend Exec Meetings as an observer but the secretary should be given 14 days notice.

Flood Damage

Many Birmingham allotments occupy land on a flood plain and have streams nearby or running through the site. Flooding which was a once in 10 years event has now become a regular event and plots have been under water for months last year. In some cases, plots have been taken out of cultivation by local associations as they cannot be let. Advice to put in raised beds or build French drains is not always an option for people growing on a budget. If your plot or site has suffered please let us know by completing our short online survey. Click here

If you think you could help the team drop us a line @ secretary@bdacallotments.co.uk

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