

Welcome

to the summer edition of the
King Henry's Walk Garden
Newsletter



What a busy Spring we have had. The woodland has come on leaps and bounds thanks to Herculean effort on the part of Andy and his growing band of volunteers. Phase One is just about finished, with the bees on their way. Look out for the bee people's demo soon. And you may have noticed that large body of water in the centre of the garden....Yes, it's the pond, risen from the ashes (only the pond at KHWG can do this...) and now fully planted up. It may look a little sparse right now but the plants will soon spread to fill the space. Come on all ye frogs and munch our pesky bugs.

Hope you made it to the Spring Event and the Woodland Launch. Don't miss out on forthcoming events! (See page 2)

STOP PRESS....newts, frogs, snails and lots more wildlife species have already been spotted taking up residence in the pond....



The newly-planted pond will hopefully soon become a des-res for bug-munchers!

Emma Nissé



News from the committee

Our appeal against the valuation for building rates (mentioned in the last newsletter) is due to be heard by the Valuation Tribunal on 8 July so we're keeping our fingers crossed. Islington Council have been supportive of our claim to be zero-rated, and are also helping us to look into the options that might be open to us should the appeal fail.

We've received a draft 50-year lease from the Council and are currently

ironing out a few points. The charity registration process grinds slowly on ...

It's good to see the Garden being used more frequently by the wider community. Regular sessions for schools are being run by The Garden Classroom, who are also hosting a mothers and toddlers group, Little Green Fingers, on Friday mornings. Attendance at the monthly teas for the Mildmay Pensioners Forum is increasing, despite the best attempts of the weather forecasters to put people off!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Spaces at most events are limited. To book a place contact Marnie Rose at The Garden Classroom (TGC) marnie@thegardenclassroom.org.uk or 07974 353148 unless otherwise stated.

Suggested contribution £3.00

Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th September

A practical weekend learning about food illustration with **Emma Dibben**. All abilities welcome. Lunch provided. Please bring a jam jar. Cost £35 (a deposit of £5 is needed to secure your place) (TGC)

Wednesday 16th September

Charles Dowding (www.charlesdowding.co.uk) will talk about new ways of growing salad leaves and vegetables including his no-dig gardening practice, 7.00pm (TGC)

Saturday 26th September

Autumn horticultural show for

gardeners at KHWG. Vegetable and cake categories, plant stall, children's activities, refreshments. Free entry for all.

October (date to be confirmed)

Geoff Sinclair returns by popular demand with another full day willow workshop. This time, make your own chair out of wood! (TGC)

November

(date to be confirmed) Wednesday evening talk with **Joe Swift** talking about a year on his Edmonton allotment. (TGC)

Saturday 5th December

Our winter event: more details to follow

COMING UP NEXT YEAR

In February... a full day workshop - An introduction to gardening skills...

In March... continuing our evening talks, this time on the history of Mildmay's Green Spaces by Alex Allardyce, author of "Newington Green, the village that changed the world"

Also in March...

a willow workshop - help make a hide in the woods from which you can observe birds and wildlife

For more information about any of our events or to download a booking form visit our website, www.khwgarden.org.uk or visit the garden Saturday and Sunday 12.00 - 4.00pm, May to September; Saturday 12.00 - 4.00pm October to April.



Learning new skills at the botanical drawing workshop this spring

Becky Tabram

Meet your plotmates

By Paul Tabram

Michelle Rip and Liz Ward have been plotholders since February 08. From starting out not knowing a weed from a root crop they've developed a real taste for fecundity – beetroot, carrots ('white and red in a battenburg formation'), parsnips, lettuce, runner beans, broad beans, French beans, asparagus ('following the square foot principle and intercropping'), cucumbers...the list goes on – all thriving in their well tended plot. Over a couple of jars in the Garden's favourite watering hole, The



'The garden makes you feel part of a community, which is so refreshing in London'

Alma, they talked excitedly about growing, gardening and grafting on volunteer days.

'We never had the patience to grow stuff before,' says Michelle 'couldn't get a pot plant to survive. Just pottering around makes you feel better – it's a real stress relief, and there's such a sense of satisfaction and achievement to growing your own food. Plus we've had lots of help and advice from people in the garden.'

Liz agrees that the social side of the Garden is very important to them. 'It's a great place for people of all generations to get together, there are so many like-minded people around. It's a great way to meet people. We bump into people in the neighbourhood now. It makes you feel part of a community, which is so refreshing in London.'

One way they've found to get involved and get to know people is through their regular Work Day volunteering. 'We like it. Once the plot's done there's only so much tinkering you can do. Work Days keep you involved and busy and it's a great way to meet people. Even doing an hour is good – if you're digging a hole with someone, you just get chatting.'

There are other advantages too, according to Michelle, 'We used to do a lot more shopping before we got the plot – now we grow all our own veg.'

If you want to find out more about Liz and Michelle's square foot approach take a look at Andy Clevely's Allotment Book and/or Mel Bartholomew's Square Foot Gardening. For other methods mentioned, either ask them on a volunteer day, or buy a Battenburg cake.

“When the well is dry, we know the worth of water...”

Benjamin Franklin

Responsible water usage is not an innate skill – we all need to learn how to use the minimum amount of water to maximum effect in our plots. As global warming increasingly affects us, we also need urgently to teach our young ones how to treat our water reserves with respect. It’s a global issue, but this knowledge begins at home.

The water system at KHWG is evolving. Currently we are using the mains to ‘top up’ rainwater from the rooftop of the adjacent flat (11B). Of course, the demand for water is higher when there is a dry spell, meaning less rainwater harvest. We can’t leave the mains connection open all the time, as there is a leak somewhere in the system meaning that water is just running away into the ground. Strenuous efforts to locate the leak have failed, so the system needs to be reconstructed from scratch. This will be a major project that will take some time to implement.

We can no longer take water for granted, as a community garden and as a society. Thankfully there are plenty of techniques gardeners can adopt to conserve this precious commodity. Cover your ground – evaporation from the soil surface can be prevented by intensive planting, and after all, you want the maximum veg from your plot. If your planting plan has left you with a bare patch, consider mulching with compost, shading with a screen or even



Emma Nisse

just covering the ground with stones, bricks or uprooted weeds until you’re ready to plant your next crop. To see the effect of evaporation, try putting a piece of clear plastic over the earth on a sunny day!

Spot watering – sink a plant pot or yoghurt pot with holes in next to thirsty plants such as toms so that you can direct water straight to their roots

Gather water – leave a bucket on your plot to collect your own rainwater

Recycle ‘grey’ water – consider saving any ‘hardly used’ water from wash-

ing up etc. and bringing it along.

Follow the advice on the water butts in the garden

Last year we got through two to three cubic metres a day – that’s between two and three thousand litres! An average watering can is roughly eight litres. And that was a wet year.

The forecast is for a dry summer as the oak is out before the ash.

PLAN NOW TO CONSERVE WATER

If you have ideas, thoughts, comments or suggestions about the direction of the Garden, we want to hear from you. We are a community garden and a community of gardeners. Whether it’s workday volunteering, a bit of know-how or a vision of what you want to see happen, we would all appreciate your involvement.

Mollusc control

TRY THESE:

Beer – sink a pot or dish into the soil and fill with beer. Dispose of the drowned critters in the compost. (Keep the rim about 1cm above the surface so as not to accidentally trap bug-eating ground beetles)

Brassica bits – attract them to a lunch of cooked cabbage or similar under an upturned pot; collect them up and do your worst

Citrus appetiser – they collect under hollowed halves of oranges and lemons for you to murder at your leisure



Sharp stuff – they don’t like going over sand, gravel, crushed eggshells and the like

Coffee grounds are apparently effective (according to Woman’s Hour on Radio 4)

Oat bran – apparently makes them explode

The Buddhist way – hand pick and relocate them somewhere far, far away. Much further than your neighbour’s plot, possibly the railway sidings

Reality check – resign yourself to losing a certain percentage of your seedlings and crops

Grow weeds

Any tried and tested methods? Share the secret – contact news@khwgarden.org.uk

GARDEN GALLERY



Spring into summer... As the alliums fade, verbena takes over and the herb garden goes from strength to strength

If you have photos of the garden you'd like to share, email them to news@khwgarden.org.uk



Left: Garden classroom in the woodland;



THE SPRING EVENT 2009
Clockwise from top left: Meeting a tanuki; a rapt audience for the storytelling; a happy customer at the plant stall



Chard offerings

By Paul Tabram

If there's one thing in the garden that seems to be going great guns (but by no means the only thing), it's Chard. Plumes of the stuff. A bit of a head scratcher what to do with it though. Well here's the thing! I found this in a book about Vietnamese cooking, and it really is quite a wonderful side dish to anything Thai, Vietnamese or Cambodian. And best of all it couldn't be simpler. In fact if you want a quick supper just cook up some rice to go with it.

INGREDIENTS

2 tsp groundnut oil
2 garlic cloves
2 red or green chillies, seeded and finely chopped
500g Chard (or spinach)
3 tbsp nam pla fish sauce (go to Chinatown, or any decent sized supermarket)
Salt and ground black pepper

First, heat a wok or large pan and add the oil. Drop in the garlic and chillies and stir for about a minute, then add the Chard and toss around the pan.

Once the leaves start to wilt, add the fish sauce. Make sure it coats the leaves. Season to taste with salt and pepper (through quite frankly the fish sauce probably packs all the flavour punch you'll need) and serve straightaway.

Try it – you'll be amazed.

Adapted from Vietnamese Food and Cooking by Gillie Basan

Ed note: chard makes a great mulch for the bare patches on your plot if you don't want to eat it!


KING HENRY'S WALK
garden

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