



St Anns Allotments

Nottingham's unique heritage gardens

Gardeners' Newsletter

Spring April 2013

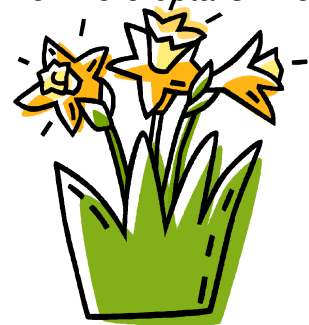
Spring is here

Welcome to our latest Gardeners' Newsletter. Spring has been a long time coming but hopefully the weather will now settle down and we can all get our seeds in. We also hope that summer will be kind to our gardens this year.

We are finally moving to our new office and Visitor Centre – see below for more details. Please be patient with us over the next few weeks as we settle in and get the telephones and computers working. Our new contact details are:

**STAA Ltd,
St Anns Allotments Visitor Centre
121 Ransom Road
Nottingham, NG3 3LH
Tel: 0115 958 9255**

Email contacts remains the same.



Allotment Centre

We look forward to receiving gardeners and visitors to the new Visitor Centre soon. In the January newsletter we asked you all to let us know your thoughts on the new building; when we should be open, what type of activities we could run, etc. There wasn't a huge response and there was no overwhelming indication of when you want us to be open.

In the first few months we will aim to be open as much as possible during the working week. We will do our best to make sure that the office is staffed between 9.30 – 4.00 each day. Please be aware that we're a small team and we're often out and about on site or meeting people. If the office is shut for any length of time we'll leave details of when we're next available. We will also try to be open on some Saturday mornings as this is when we think most people will want to speak to us outside of the standard working week.

To make the move as successful as possible we will be looking for volunteers who are willing to get involved in running the building. Training will be provided. If you are interested, please contact us for more information.

Rents and new tenancies

A big thank you to all those people who have already returned their tenancy agreements and paid their rent for the year. If you are yet to return the document(s) or pay your rent, please try to do so soon, as we'll start chasing in the near future. This costs money in terms of postage and time, all of which can be better spent on improving the site. It is important that the tenancy agreements are signed and returned. If you have misplaced the agreement we sent, or if you think you haven't received one, please get in touch. If you want to discuss the new tenancy agreement, please call the STAA office and ask to speak to Michael or Annalisa.

If you are struggling to pay your rent please contact us. You might be entitled to a discount or we can suggest payment by instalments. If we don't hear from you we will assume you do not want to pay and you risk losing your plot as a result.

Water

The water switch on took place w/c 15th April. We had planned to turn it on before the Easter weekend but the very cold and unseasonable weather meant that we decided against it. If the water freezes in the taps it can cause damage to the infrastructure, which is why the system is closed down each winter to protect it. There was some work over the winter to try and improve water flow to parts of the site that suffer when everyone is watering at the same time. We also repaired some damaged valves. This will hopefully make the supply more equitable for all gardeners. At times of high usage, such as summer weekends, there will undoubtedly be pressure on the system. Please try to be sensible with water usage so that all gardeners have access to this resource. Please also try to save water. Rainwater is better for your plants and it's easy to set up some guttering on a shed and run it into a barrel. We still have some water butts available for gardeners – just get in touch and we'll drop one off. You can conserve moisture in the soil by adding compost and organic matter and using mulches.



New Gardeners' Support Service

We have been fortunate to receive funding from the Local Food Fund to re-introduce a gardener support service. Alice Hewkin, a long-time volunteer and allotment holder on site, is offering the service in partnership with STAA. If you have jobs you cannot do, such as hedge cutting or tree pruning, or just want some advice on how to make better use of your plot, please get in touch with Alice. Alice is also able to offer specialist pruning of fruit trees and bushes. These are all chargeable services but rates are heavily subsidised thanks to the funding. There is some free support for new gardeners to help you get established.

For details of services available, or to book a slot with Alice, please contact her direct on **0792 8819 192** or **alicethegardner@gmail.com** or call the STAA office and we'll put you in touch.



St Anns Community Orchard

The Community Orchard continues to run its monthly activity days every third Sunday of the month, open to all tenants, their families and local people. The next dates are:

Sundays, 11am - 4pm

19th May

16th June

21st July

There will also be a school holiday **Play Session** on **30th May, 12-3pm**.

Just come along on the day or ring STAA for more details. The Community Orchard entrance is on Ransom Road opposite Hill View Community Centre, about 200yds up from the junction with Hungerhill Road; look out for the sign!

Beekeeping courses at Stonebridge City Farm

If you're interested in keeping bees on you plot, a beekeeping course might be just the thing you need! Stonebridge City Farm is holding courses over the spring and summer. Each course will be held 11am – 7pm on these dates:

Sunday 26th May (Changed from Saturday 1st June)

Sunday 7th July

Sunday 22nd August

Email **keith@stonebridgecityfarm.com** to book a place.

Remember to read your allotment handbook for all of the rules and regulations for keeping bees on your plot.



Heritage events at the allotments

We will be running a series of heritage events at the new Visitor Centre. Tenants are welcome to come to any of these activities. During this time visitors are able to tour the site – please direct them if they get lost.

Sat 11th May 11 - 3pm, tour noon

Wed 15th May Noon - 3pm, tour 1.30pm

Sat 8th June Victorian Tea Party 11 - 3pm, tour noon

Wed 12th June Noon - 8pm, 2 tours (1.30pm, 6pm)

Wed 10th July Noon – 8pm, 2 tours (1.30pm, 6pm)

Sat 13th July 11- 3pm, tour noon

Signage

Over the next few months you will see signs going up at main entrances and around the site. Hopefully this means that visitors will be able to find us, and new tenants will be able to find their allotments more easily.



Volunteering at the allotments

Have you ever wanted to get more involved with the allotments, or meet new people? There are lots of opportunities to get involved including: - helping at the Heritage Garden, Visitor Centre, Wildlife Areas, and Community Orchard. We need help with clearing plots, gardening, welcoming visitors, helping with teas, leading tours or showing visitors around your own garden. Why not pop into the office to have a chat?

Want to be a film star??

We're creating a welcome video for the Visitor Centre - we'll be filming at the Heritage Garden, Visitor Centre with possibly some scenes in private gardens. If anyone wants to be in the film – either as themselves, or as an historical figure (it's a silent movie so you don't need to learn lines) – just let Mo know - filming will take place w/c 27th May.



Our time capsule has arrived!

We'll be collecting items for the capsule. It will be filled with memories and buried by the new Visitor Centre.



If anyone wants to be involved in selecting items, please contact Mo.

Nothing new...

We've been experiencing a number of break-ins across the site. It's a problem that allotments have always suffered – take a look at these headlines from the past.

THEFT OF FLOWERS BLOOMS STOLEN FROM THE HUNGERHILL GARDENS

Between 40 and 50 white chrysanthemum blooms of the flat variety have been stolen from the Hungerhill gardens.

The police appeal to any person to whom blooms are offered for sale under suspicious circumstances to communicate with them.

**NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST
9 DECEMBER 1929**

GARDEN ROBBERING

William Widdowson, a lad of about 13 years old, a shoe-black, was charged by P.C. Siddalls with stealing fruit from a tree in the garden of Mr. Tutin, Hunger-hills.

**Nottinghamshire Guardian – 29
August 1879**

Print too small? Contact the office for a large-print version

Urban Nature at St Anns Allotments

Despite the continuous cold weather the small number of conservation volunteers have been very active within the wildlife areas. In the Stonepit Copse adjoining Coppice Park a variety of 8 willow species has been planted to provide wildlife, educational and practical value. Alongside the developing hazel and oak coppice the willows will demonstrate how traditional local crafts, such as basket making, can still function alongside the modern use of willow biomass for the creation of energy. From the wildlife aspect a willow tree is second only to oak for attracting insect species, 266 compared with 284 for oak.

A special thank you has to go to our partners, Groundwork Greater Nottingham and the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust who supplied willow, hazel and malus (crab apple) trees and assisted with the planting. Groundwork also provided 300 primrose and cowslip plants for use in the conservation areas, within the wildflower meadow adjacent to the Community Orchard and at Oliver's Heritage Gardens.



Volunteers helping lay hedge row by Urban Nature

Although the bird nesting season is upon us we still have many exciting tasks for our volunteers when we meet at **10 am every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month** at the Visitor Centre on Ransom Road. If you would like to join us please give Robert Zviko a call at the STAA office.

RSPB Visit - Details from a survey of the allotments

We're lucky to have lots of wildlife on the allotments and we love hearing from our tenants when they spot something exciting. So if you ever get a chance to take a photo, please feel free to send it to us or share on our Facebook page.

We had a visit from The RSPB on Tuesday 19th March to do a survey of the allotments. The results are as follows:

Kestrel	1 female	1
Sparrowhawk	1	1
Robin	8 plus 7 singing	15
Wren	3 plus 2 singing	5
Dunnock	18 plus 10 singing	28
Blackbird	20 males, 4 females	24
Song Thrush	1 plus 2 singing	3
Mistle Thrush	1	1
Gt. Spotted Woodpecker	2	2
Green Woodpecker	1 heard	1
Blue Tit	5	5
Great Tit	11 plus 4 singing	15
Long tailed Tit	13	13
Chaffinch	4 males 2 females 2 singing	8
Greenfinch	2 plus 8 singing	10
Goldfinch	10	10
Bullfinch	4 male 2 female	6
House Sparrow	5	5



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STAA Ltd.
Promoting and enhancing
the historic allotment gardens
in St Ann's, Nottingham

