



**St Anns Allotments**

Nottingham's unique heritage gardens

# Gardeners' Newsletter

**Summer August 2014**

## Welcome to our summer edition of the Gardeners' Newsletter!

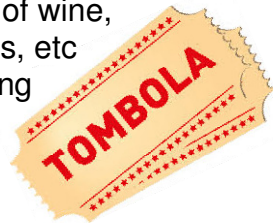
It's been a very busy summer and we have lots more planned over the next couple of months.

Take a look at what's on and let us know if you would like to get involved!

## Tombola donations needed!

We'll be holding a tombola at the Harvest Celebration event. If you have any unwanted bottles of wine, books, toiletries, seeds, etc please bring them along to the STAA office.

Thank you!



## Show off your plot

We find that visitors are always interested in meeting allotment holders and seeing examples of real plots. If you enjoy talking about what you are growing and would like to show off your plot, why not open it to visitors at the Harvest Celebration?

Please contact the office for more information.

## STAA Gardeners' Club Meeting

11am – 1pm

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2014**  
at the Visitor Centre

Here's what we have planned for the next meeting...

- Cathy Symes talks about working with different soil conditions
- We'll tell you what's on at the Harvest Celebration on 6th September
- Discuss bulk orders
- Visit Dave McVea's Allotment



Not to be missed for both new allotment holders and those who'd like to share their experiences.

**Free to STAA members!**

£2 for non-members (but join at the meeting for £3 and get free admission).

## Dig for History

STAA are bidding for funds to carry out an archaeology project at the allotments. We hope to...

- Put all our finds on a GPS system.
- Have two weekends of shovel tests, where tenants can dig in their garden and bring finds to the visitor centre for identification.
- Plan an excavation of a Victorian well on the West Bank.
- Engage children in archaeology with the development of a storyteller.



If anyone is interested please contact Mo at the office. If we get the funding, we are planning for an autumn start.

## Heritage walks

Our monthly heritage walks have been very popular with both plot holders and visitors. If you are interested in the history of the allotments, why not come along? The dates for the next tours are

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> August, 1:30pm**

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1:30pm**

We also have a bonus walk and an illustrated talk to celebrate the **Heritage Open Day** on **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September**

**Tour 1:30pm**

**Illustrated Talk 6:30pm**



Booking essential for all events.

£2 suggested donation (children free)

## Gardening equipment

You may be aware from recent press coverage that the project has benefited from a delivery of gardening equipment.

The Cannabis Dismantling Team of Nottinghamshire Police chose STAA as the beneficiaries of the equipment it has seized from illegal cannabis growing. The donation includes lots of various sized plant pots, water butts, seed trays and bags of compost. If you are interested in receiving any of the items please contact the STAA office. We aim to share this around as much as possible with gardeners. Distribution will be 'first come, first served' and anyone not benefiting this time round will be kept on the list for future donations. We often get asked about tool hire. This is not a service we currently provide but we have negotiated a discount with ATOM Tool Hire for STAA members. The membership scheme costs £3 a year and you can sign up at any time. Once you are signed up you will get a 5% discount on any hire charge over £20 and they will deliver equipment to the allotment site and collect it free of charge.

## The Orchard building is on its way!

The Community Orchard has managed for 13 years without a shelter bigger than a brick shed. However, consultation with visitors has highlighted the need for a warm, dry space big enough for a class of kids. After a two-year fund-raising push, we have finally begun work on an 8 x 5m straw-bale building with a living roof. The work will be supervised by Tim from Ecoworks and mainly built by our amazing team of local volunteers. We've also had great support from Willmott Dixon (who have a site on the Wells Road), who provided a digger and a team of construction trainees to do the foundations in super-quick time. There will also be opportunities for people to get involved in straw-bale construction and lime-rendering, so watch this space! Many thanks to the Limbourne Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Bernard Sunley Foundation, JN Derbyshire Foundation, Rank Foundation, Edward Cadbury Foundation, the Freemason's Fund and the ever-faithful Monument Trust for their support in making this happen.



## St Anns Community Orchard

### Community Orchard Activity Day

**Every third Sunday 11 – 4pm**

**17th August**

with a free fruit tree bud grafting workshop for adults  
**11:30am – 1:30pm or 2 – 4pm**

Phone STAA to book a place

**21<sup>st</sup> September**

**19<sup>th</sup> October – Apple Day**

### Free adventure play sessions

**Every Thursday in the school holidays**

**12 - 3pm for 5 - 12 year olds.**

Activities include den building, exploring, bug hunting, cooking on the fire, arts and crafts workshop, messy kitchen, pick your own summer fruits. Wear suitable clothing.

**Everyone welcome. All for free!**

## Tenancy Matters

### Site Inspections

The STAA team is working its way around the site keeping an eye on levels of cultivation. If you receive a non-cultivation letter this is because we genuinely believe that your plot falls short of the levels of expected activity. There may be perfectly justifiable reasons for this so please contact us, as we may be able to provide some partial support. Occasionally we will get it wrong and are happy to visit a plot and be shown the error of our ways.

If we hear nothing and a plot remains unused then the result will be a Notice to Quit, which brings the tenancy to a formal end. The threat of eviction often triggers a last-minute response but a tenancy will only be re-instated in exceptional circumstances. Please contact STAA if you would like to end your tenancy as there is a list of people waiting to take on a plot.

### Dogs

Despite previous requests there is still a problem with dog mess around the site. Please collect and dispose of it properly. We've also received complaints about dogs running loose and causing near misses with traffic. Dogs are welcome on site if they are under control and kept on a lead in public areas. Within your allotment they can be allowed more freedom provided they are secure within the boundaries. Dogs must not be left on a plot unattended.

### Vehicles and parking

We still have issues with people parking in the lanes and preventing traffic flow around the site. Please drive carefully and park considerately. Emergency vehicles cannot negotiate our narrow lanes if they are blocked with parked vehicles, so please use one of the designated parking areas.

### Livestock

I have written to three gardeners about cockerels. Please again note that they are not allowed and STAA will require anyone found keeping a cockerel to remove it.

We receive regular requests to keep bees. If you would like to keep bees, you must have completed some formal training or be able to provide a letter from a registered beekeeper who will attest to your competency. You must also be a registered member of the Beekeepers' Association. With these points covered you must still write for formal permission to keep bees. We need to know where the bees are kept and who to contact in case of emergency.

### Smoke and noise nuisance

There have been occasional issues with smoke and noise nuisance over the summer. Whilst a small bonfire to dispose of genuine garden waste is acceptable, please do not burn plastic or light them in the middle of the day.

If you are playing music, please keep the volume down so that it does not disturb others' peace. There is a clause in the tenancy agreement about being a good neighbour – please be guided by this and be respectful of other site users.

### Security and Break-ins

Despite our best efforts we do, from time to time, receive unwanted visitors on site and some plots are targeted for theft and vandalism. STAA is working with the local police team, which regularly patrols the site and gives a reassuring visible presence. The same advice still stands:

- Close gates and use locks where you have them.
- Do not store power tools and other valuables overnight on your allotment.
- If you have a plot gate, keep it secured with a robust lock and chain.
- Secure any buildings on your plot.



The local police have provided a number of shed alarms, gate signs, solar lights and tool marking equipment. This is all available for free via the visitor centre. PC James North is our beat officer and, together with colleagues, offers regular drop-in sessions. Look at the notice boards for further details. If your plot has been broken into or vandalised you must report this to the police on the 101 number. If you witness a crime taking place you must report this using the emergency 999 number. Thank you for your consideration of the above.

*Michael, STAA Project Co-ordinator  
on behalf of the STAA Management Committee*

## Around the site

The site team has remained busy over the summer. Long sunny days are great for relaxing but it's tough work strimming in full protective overalls when the weather's hot and humid! At least Chris and Dave have stayed mostly dry.

Many people comment on the natural and peaceful environment of the allotments. We always try to strike a balance between keeping it safe for users whilst at the same time supporting the wildlife that shares our space. Although we do not undertake major hedge cutting until much later in the year, we do work our way around the lanes keeping lines of sight clear. We'll tip back new growth and trim the bases of hedges to keep lanes and paths tidy during the summer months. Hedge cutting starts properly in September but it does take time to work our way round the site so you may not see your lane cut until much later in the year.

Rubbish removal is a round-the-year task and we've already filled a number of general rubbish skips. We remove bulky items only once this has been agreed with the STAA office. Many gardeners are willing to give a small contribution to the cost of rubbish collection and disposal. This helps us to provide more skips to support more people. Being remote from the main site, gardeners of Gorse Close benefitted from two skips in May to help dispose of bulky materials. Given how full they were the gardeners obviously took full advantage!

## Car parks and wild flower areas

In the previous newsletter we explained our pilot project for the borehole car park just up from the visitor centre. The intention was to avoid any strimming over the summer to assess what grew naturally. This was with a view to enhancing the planting for a longer season of colour and also to reduce the burden of intensive management regimes in future years. Up to about the end of June the wide variety of wild flowers gave a good show of colour, after which the coarser weeds took over. This has been a good learning experience. We will try to reduce competition from thuggish plants like dock, bindweed and nettle and introduce a greater range of flowering plants and bulbs. Seed from desirable plants such as red and white campion, cornflower and corncockle has been saved.

If any gardeners would like to help us develop this area please contact Lucy. If anyone has any cuttings or divisions of late season perennials, such as rudbeckia, echinacea, asters or solidago, we will gratefully receive them.

The main wildflower meadow next to the visitor centre has changed throughout the seasons too. Initially there was lots of red clover, followed by a fantastic show of ox-eye daisies, which were then replaced by a sea of wild carrot. The general white hues were interspersed with the red of poppies and the blue of cornflowers.

This area will be allowed to set seed and then cut back in late summer, when the weather allows, and all the vegetation removed. From our privileged view in the visitor centre we know that the birds, bees and butterflies have enjoyed the show!



## STAA Wildlife Weekend

In mid-July, with Urban Nature and the Community Orchard, we held our first 'Wildlife Weekend' – a series of wildlife themed activities, and a survey of wildlife species across the site.

Despite periods of intense, wildlife-frightening rain, we were able to **survey for mammals, identify over 80 species of moths, 20 birds, 5 bumble bees, 2 bat species, 16 butterflies and 220 plants!**



Photo by Wayne Jones

There is still a lot to learn about the site, so we will continue to survey – don't forget the whole of the Hungerhills site has the official status as a 'SINC' – Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

We are pleased to see that the wildlife is still thriving despite a period of limited close-up monitoring. If you have spotted anything on your allotment, or would like to get involved with Urban Nature and continued species surveying, email Lucy: [lucy.kennedy@staa-allotments.org.uk](mailto:lucy.kennedy@staa-allotments.org.uk)



## Volunteer spotlight

STAA couldn't function without volunteers – we have a small army of regular volunteers who manage the display gardens, wildlife areas and Community Orchard. There are also a number of partner organisations who bring groups here to support us – you may often see them around taking on the larger scale tasks.

We have recently received a lot of support from Probation services clearing plots for new tenants. Teams from Experian have helped with a number of tasks, as have Nottingham High School year 10s! Environmental charities TCV and the RSPB have helped with ongoing wildlife surveying and improvement works. We also received support from 17 trainees on the nearby Willmott Dixon project to help start the foundations for the straw-bale building on the Community Orchard.



We have also supported several work experience placements recently. Mohammed and Carl were both young people who spent several days with us and we currently have Joe, on a 6 month placement focussing on heritage and events.

We are particularly grateful to the commitment and enthusiasm of our regular volunteers. For example, Peter Maxfield, a gardener volunteer, gives tours of vacant gardens in the evenings and at weekends. He collects details of available plots and checks them out so he knows about any issues or problems. He then meets between six and ten people at a time and takes them on a guided tour of the plots. He signs them up and then passes the details to the STAA office to process the tenancy agreements and sort out keys. So far Peter has helped us create about 20 new tenancies since April.

Leila Sykes, an employee of Experian, has been with the project for 6 years. She visits the office each week to take all the heritage information we have gathered over the past few years and put it into a database that we hope will be accessible from the visitor centre. People will then be able to find out about historical tenancies, old fruit trees on plots and more recent wildlife sightings.

Do you have some free time to help STAA? There are lots of ways in which we can use your skills and experience. If so, contact Lucy for further details of all our volunteering opportunities.

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



# STAA Harvest Celebration

at St Anns Allotments

Saturday 6th September 2014



11am - 4pm

- Produce displays
- Craft sessions
- Guided tours
- Drumming workshop
- Stalls and community information
- Burying of our time capsule
- Refreshments by Beccy's Global Kitchen
- Morris dancing workshop and performance

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Promoting and enhancing  
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in St Ann's, Nottingham

