

January 2020

Dear Tenants,

Although it's mid-winter many of us will be looking to the new growing year wondering what it will bring. For me, and I suspect many of us, what the weather has in store is the big imponderable. Will it be an early spring or will we have a slow start with late frosts, perhaps another 'beast from the east'? And how will summer turn out? Will it be a scorcher with little rain or will we have a monsoon setting off fungus diseases like potato blight? The weather is always uncertain but recent years have brought more extremes. The evidence of a changing climate is there for all to see, not just in the science and tumbling records but in our own experiences of growing, especially if you've been doing it for many years. Allotments are on the frontline when it comes to weather extremes.

Because of this, and even though it might not be at the forefront of our agenda right now, this is something YACIO, like any responsible organisation, has to consider. There's a lot to think about, not just obvious issues like water use and drainage, but also how we help members develop more sustainable growing practices, for example how do we wean ourselves off plastics, the use of which is so widespread, in professional and amateur horticulture. This is an issue we'll be returning to in the future but for now it would be good to hear from members on how they think allotments and YACIO could help respond to the climate emergency.

-Tony Chalcraft – Chair of Trustees

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Save the date!

YACIO's AGM will take place on
the 28th March at 10am at
Clements Hall.

Refreshments will be provided.
Do come and join us!

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Site Inspections

Regular site inspections are carried out all year round on all YACIO allotments and we will write to anyone whose plot is showing signs of neglect, especially where this has been observed over the preceding months.

Winter is the perfect time to tidy up your plot and prepare the soil for the year ahead. If you leave everything until the spring then you may find that you never catch up and your plot will suffer come the growing season. A few cold hours put in now will definitely reap the benefits come the summer!



Rhubarb Talk

Lots of us have a clump or two of rhubarb on our plots. Quite often it's been 'inherited', planted by a previous tenant, probably years ago. I wouldn't be surprised if some clumps stretch back decades, even in a few cases to the initial laying out of the allotment site. Although rhubarb is a hardy perennial it's wrong to assume it doesn't need occasional attention. Clumps that aren't nourished tend to produce smaller, spindlier stalks. A good late winter mulch of manure or compost will help maintain productivity. Clumps also tend to become less vigorous over time. As with any perennial plant the best remedy is division every four or five years. This is best done in mid-winter. Dig up the entire clump, not always easy, and chop it into several pieces with a sharp spade. Make sure each piece has at least one good bud and replant several feet apart. To allow the plant to 'convalesce' refrain from pulling any stalks the following spring. It's also often assumed rhubarb is just rhubarb. In fact there are many different varieties. The National Collection has 130 different types. Two of the most widely planted are Timperley Early and Victoria. If the clump on your plot shoots precociously in spring it could well be the former for, as the name implies, it's ready to pull early. Victoria, on the other hand, crops later but is more of a gourmet variety. It has handsome red stems and is usually a strong grower. Both of these varieties have been around for years and can still be bought from garden centres or online.

Rhubarb & Orange Frangipane Tart

Makes 1 rectangular tart

One sheet ready rolled
sweet shortcrust pastry

~4 sticks rhubarb

85g butter, softened

85g caster sugar

1 egg

85g ground almonds

zest of one large orange,

finely grated

1 tbsp caster sugar

- Heat the oven to gas mark 7/220C and grease a loose bottomed rectangular tart tin well.
- Shape and roll the pastry to fit.
- Press the pastry into the tin carefully, leaving a small overhang around the edge.
- Slice your rhubarb into batons the width of the inside of the pastry shell.
- In a small mixing bowl combine the butter, sugar, egg, ground almonds and orange zest and beat until well combined and smooth.
- Scrape the frangipane mixture into the pastry.
- Place the rhubarb on top of the frangipane evenly.
- Sprinkle with the remaining 1 tbsp sugar.
- Bake for 30 minutes until the top of the frangipane is golden brown and the pastry an even colour.



If you're paying your invoice online you need to use your Invoice Number and your Tenant Number. (This is different from your plot number!)

You do not need a Paypal account, simply choose the option to pay by credit or debit card on the secure payment screen.

Planning an Event?

All tenants are members of YACIO and are therefore covered by YACIO's Public Liability Insurance. But if you are having an event, as an Association or otherwise, where members of the public are being invited on to the site then you need to inform us so that you are covered by our special Events Insurance. This doesn't apply to simply inviting friends and family on to the site but if you are unsure please do get in touch with us to make sure you are covered. You can find more information on our website at

www.yorkallotments.org/events-insurance

Allotment Associations Meeting

When I got the email from Adam Myers, YACIO Trustee, suggesting that all the allotments associations should be given an opportunity to meet and discuss ... I was intrigued. Myself and our Treasurer, Ali Bharmal, went along. As I find is pretty standard with allotments we met in a pub!

The meeting started with introductions and then we had an opportunity to give an overview of our association, such as: how any members we have; the cost of membership; what we do; what works well and what doesn't so much. The range was huge from small allotments who are working towards creating an allotment community through to shops, events, shared and/or community spaces, lawnmower rentals and the all-important manure & chippings deliveries!

As you can imagine, this took longer than anticipated with lots of questions & discussion so we didn't get much beyond that! My take away from the meeting was that each association has their struggles in one way or another and so it's a great forum to share experiences and best practice. As such we agreed to continue with the meetings and an agenda was drafted. I'm really excited about our future meetings, developing our association and trying new things.

Hannah Swierstra, Chairperson – Holgate Allotment Association

Hempland Lane Fundraising

Following on from their brilliant project to revitalise the easy access area we are delighted that Hempland Lane Allotments Association has been chosen to benefit from the Co-op Local Community Fund.

When a member buys selected products or services from the Co-op they earn a five per cent reward for themselves, with a further one per cent for local causes like this. Co-op members can choose a cause by going online www.coop.co.uk/membership.

The cause is Hempland Lane Allotments cause no. 33958. We really hope that people will visit the website and choose to support Hempland Lane to improve the allotments there for all in the community.

If you would like to put up a shed or keep livestock on your plot just ask your site secretary for a permission form and they will be able to advise you on what is permitted.

Keep In Touch!

If you change your contact details please don't forget to let us know! Just drop us a quick note and we can update your records so that we don't lose touch.

If you didn't receive any emails from us last year, then we do not have your email address on file, so let us know so we can keep you up to date with important notices throughout the year.