

Spring 2023



# NEWSLETTER

THE LATEST NEWS FROM YORK ALLOTMENTS



## MEMBERS' DAY AND AGM

With this newsletter you'll find details of our Annual General Meeting and Members' Day to be held at Clements Hall on Saturday 25th March between 10 o'clock and midday. Everyone with a YACIO allotment is welcome to attend. The AGM part of the meeting is usually no more than 30-45 minutes. The rest of the morning will include an open forum where there'll be discussion and questions on any matters relating to the allotments, from ideas on

how sites can be made better, to suggestions for improving how YACIO operates. This year we'll also be discussing some possible changes to the way rents are structured. Come along, have your say and meet other allotment holders. Refreshments are available!

## Best plot competition



Best plot • Most improved plot • Prizes!  
Self nominated • Judging to take place in July

**Details coming soon!**

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## MAINTENANCE UPDATE

This coming year, YACIO will be making every effort to bring all sites up to a satisfactory level of maintenance with a focus on hedge work and assistance with vacant plot clearance so that we are in a position to make the best use of all of our growing space. Our new contractor 'Aspects Horticultural Services' has made a good start working on the backlog of boundary hedges during January and February with a plan to cover all sites before nesting season. Feedback, so far, has been very positive.

YACIO's freshly prepared Risk Assessment of all sites has highlighted a number of maintenance jobs that need to be dealt with in order to ensure we are all working in a safe environment. A good deal of this work will be carried out by Dave between now and the end of April. The remainder of the tasks will be prioritised and completed during the summer period.

There is still a good deal of tree work to carry out and the trustees will be revisiting this issue during Spring and Summer months, ready for any urgent work to be carried out in the Autumn and Winter period.

In addition to the above, the trustees are still keen to assist plot holders with the clearance of any inherited waste and with 'out of control' hedge trimming. So, if you need any assistance with these issues, or if you have anything else relating to maintenance that you wish to draw to the trustees attention please contact them on [contact@yorkallotments.org](mailto:contact@yorkallotments.org)

**Colin Smith, trustee with responsibility for site maintenance**

**Do you have an event or piece of allotment news you'd like to share? Let us know by 15th May and we'll publicise it here.**



## INTRODUCING OUR NEW CONTRACTORS



You will see Peter (left) and Graham on your site

Hello, I'm Richard, the managing director of Aspects Horticultural Services Ltd. I started my horticultural journey back when I was 15 with work experience at York University grounds. I then progressed to working at a commercial garden nursery, then for a turf grower before finally becoming a greenkeeper. Being a greenkeeper gave me opportunity to work in the USA for a few years. In between all this I studied at Askham Bryan College and achieved a National diploma in amenity Horticulture. Later in life, I studied and obtained a degree in sports turf science. After returning from the USA I decided to set up on my own and established Aspects Horticultural Services Ltd, which has been going for nearly 20 years.

We operate a small team of staff who are fully trained and competent in the use of a variety of machinery and equipment. This enables us to offer the following services: mowing, hedge cutting, clearance, planting, wildflower establishment and maintenance and soft landscaping.

We also recycle 99% of our own green waste which is processed and made into a soil conditioner. Other materials we can supply are horse manure and wood chip.

If you think that we can be of any assistance then please do not hesitate to contact us at [aspects.horticultural@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:aspects.horticultural@hotmail.co.uk)



## WILDLIFE GARDEN AT HOWE HILL



I took on a plot on Howe Hill Allotments that was deemed un-lettable in 2021. The plot was very neglected and overgrown with thick bramble, nettles, mare's tail and bind weed. My vision was to create a Wildlife garden, with a seating area where people could take a break from working their plots in the height of summer in the cool shade of a Walnut and large Conifer tree.

It's taken a lot of hard work to get to where I am now, and it's still not finished. But at least the seating area is, with the new bench from YACIO and all the wood chip down. I've started building the dead-hedge, and I'm pleased with how this is going apart from the length of time it takes! There's a small pond on the plot that already attracts frogs, and there's several plants to attract bees. I made a bug house from old fallen branches, and hope to put up several bird feeders. It's still an ongoing project, but at least the tenants can hopefully enjoy the area.

**Dean Fawcett, Site Secretary, Howe Hill**

## WELCOME TO A NEW TRUSTEE

My name is Heather Whittaker and I will be looking after Health and Safety and Animal Welfare. I have had a plot at Bootham Stray Allotments since June 2019



and chickens since March 2021, starting with a rough bit of waste land and creating an area where I have fruit bushes, flowers, herbs and areas to grow vegetables. It has been a labour of love and a benefit for my mental health. I am an avid animal lover, having dogs, cats, and reptiles. I took a full year to research and talk to other chicken keepers, before getting them myself. Although this means having to go to the allotment every day, whatever the weather, I have had a reason to get out of the house, and have incorporated my dogs' exercise with my trips to see to my girls.

I enjoy trying at least one new produce each year, this year it will be Cucamelon and Sweet Potatoes, although I have been told Cucamelon is like Marmite in that you either love them or hate them, so we shall see. I applied to be a Trustee as I wanted to give something back to the organisation which has done so much for my mental health, by allowing me to have an allotment. I was trained by the North Yorkshire Police to conduct Health and Safety Risk Assessments, and am very proud to be able to help YACIO by conducting these on their behalf.

## INSURANCE

YACIO has a duty under our lease to take out Public Liability Insurance. We do this every year. This covers general members of the public who may bring a claim against YACIO. However please note that you as a Tenant are not covered. This means neither you nor anything on your plot is covered for any harm or damage or any costs incurred by charges brought

against you relating to error or negligence. If you are concerned about this, it is possible for you to obtain insurance yourself. The National Allotment Society provides cover to its members. You can have individual membership or you may be a member through an Allotment Association. Check with your Association if you have one.



## HOW TO BE A GOOD TENANT

Every person's reason for renting an allotment is different. For some people it might be a way to save money by growing their own crops. For others it might be a way to meet new people or to relax and unwind after a busy or stressful day. Whatever the reason, visiting your allotment should be enjoyable. With that in mind, our top 3 tips for being great tenant are:

- 1 Be mindful of your allotment neighbours and other tenants. Keep shared and communal paths free, stop any weeds from creeping onto your neighbours plot, be aware of any shade that your plants might cast onto your neighbours - the previous sun in Yorkshire can be hard to come by! and be mindful that not everyone loves listening to your music at your volume!
- 2 Apply for permission from your site secretary for sheds, greenhouses, livestock etc before you embark on your big project.
- 3 Follow the rules - these are in place for all tenants safety and wellbeing, as well as the longevity of the allotments. For example if yours is a locked site, lock the gates, keep hedges to 1.5 metres and any trees you plant to 2.5 m.

## TOP CROPS FOR DIRECT SOWING

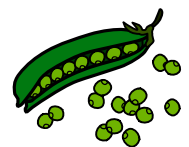
With seedlings in pots or cell trays now widely available in garden centres or online, it sometimes seems that 'direct sowing', that's sowing seeds directly into the soil rather than setting out young plants, is out of fashion. Yet there are some crops that are either difficult or costly to grow from transplants.

Although you do see parsnips and carrots for sale as baby plants, these are crops that really resent root disturbance. In pots or trays the long tap roots parsnips and carrots produce even when young can't develop. What's more at planting out any root that has grown may well be damaged however carefully they're handled. Transplanting is a recipe for gnarled and forked parsnips. It's much the same with carrots unless, perhaps, you try the small round blunt ended types.



Beetroot is another crop that doesn't always do well from brought in seedlings. It does tolerate transplanting better than parsnips or carrots, but the shock of moving, especially if the seedlings are not kept moist is likely to induce bolting. Germinating beetroot in the soil is relatively easy, at least compared to parsnips and carrots, so this is a crop that should be a top candidate for direct sowing.

Another vegetable best started from direct sowing is peas. It's not so much that peas won't transplant. They will, especially if grown in deep root trainers, but with peas, as with some other crops, it's the numbers needed that makes transplanting of dubious benefit. You need a lot of pea plants to get plentiful pods. Only if you want a few choice mangetout or sugar snaps is transplanting likely to be cost effective. And this brings us to a further reason why buying transplants is often not worthwhile: cost. At the prices sometimes asked, the cost of purchasing transplants often far exceeds the value of the crop if bought in a shop.



## CONTACTING US

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