



NEWSLETTER

THE LATEST NEWS FROM YORK ALLOTMENTS



Best Overall Established Plot

BEST PLOT COMPETITION

The sun shone brightly on YACIO's first city-wide allotment awards ceremony held at Holgate Allotments Community Orchard on 13th August. Competition judges, themselves experienced allotmenters, had visited sites across York in July and were happy to see so many high quality, creative, loved plots across the city.

Judge, Sarah Hill, said: 'I spent a wonderful afternoon judging several allotment sites in the North area and it was a joy to see so much care, creativity and productivity across the plots. Competition for the prizes was certainly fierce.'

The prizes were awarded by Tony Chalcraft, Chair of YACIO And Rachael Maskell, MP for York Central who congratulated everyone who had entered and thanked plot holders for their efforts to maintain beautiful, productive and sustainable green spaces across the city.

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Paula Smith, winner of Best Overall Established Plot.



Emma and Helen's plot at Bootham Stray



Helen and Emma Chan accepting their Best Overall Newcomer Plot trophy.

Paula's plot at New Lane



AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Best Overall Established Plot, **Paula Smith, New Lane**

Best Overall Newcomer Plot, **Helen and Emma Chan, Bootham Stray**

North Area Best Established Plot, **Elizabeth Parry, Hempland**

North Area Best Newcomer Plot, **Helen and Emma Chan, Bootham Stray**

South Area Best Established Plot, **Jonathan Brown, Hob Moor**

South Area Best Newcomer Plot, **Agnes Szechy, Scarcroft**

East Area Best Established Plot, **Nick Ford, Low Moor**

East Area Best Newcomer Plot, **Matthew Barber, Glen**

West Area Best Established Plot, **Paula Smith, New Lane**

West Area Best Newcomer Plot, **Carolyn Herbert, Green Lane**



The award ceremony at Holgate Allotments Community Orchard

AUTUMN OPPORTUNITIES

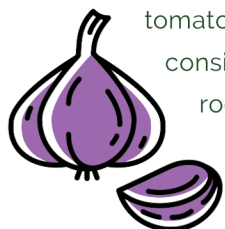
It's an often overlooked fact that September, in most years at least, is the fourth warmest month of the year. What's more October is generally the sixth mildest month, usually having average temperatures above April's. This means there's still the potential to sow and plant quick growing crops or get those that'll over winter off to a flying start.

Fast growing salads such as rocket, mizuna, corn salad, and various mustards will all germinate quickly if sown at this time of year. All should give pickings of leaves well into the autumn and possibly beyond if the weather is kind. Others worth a try are spinach and chard plus herbs such as coriander and chervil. An added bonus is that all of these crops are much less prone to bolting (producing seed heads) than if sown in the summer.

Overwintered crops that can be started soon include onions and garlic. The former can be started from sets, best planted from around the end of September as this'll reduce the chance of bolting in spring. Garlic should go in a little later, late October and early November is probably the optimum time.

If you have a greenhouse, polytunnel, or even just a small protected growing area, all the aforementioned leafy crops can be sown and planted through the autumn. Most should survive the winter under cover producing harvests into the spring. Where growbags will soon be emptied of

tomatoes and other summer crops consider reusing them for salads such as rocket. There should be enough nutrients remaining to nourish undemanding leafy crops for at least a couple of months.



FOCUS ON...

SCARCROFT ALLOTMENTS



Scarcroft Association's base is at the Scarcroft Allotments site. It's a large wooden shed which serves also as a shop, selling a wide range of garden supplies at competitive prices, in line with the Association's not-for-profit philosophy. The Association has plans to replace the current building, which is over fifty years old. Membership of the Association is open to all gardeners – home gardeners or allotment tenants from any site. The annual membership fee is £2.50, which is easy to recoup with a 10% discount on garden products from Dean's Garden Centre and Pextons Hardware.

For more information, contact the Association at scarcroftallotments@live.co.uk

Visit our website at

scarcroftanddistrictallotments.blogspot.com

or call in at the shop, which is open on Saturday afternoons from 1.30 to 3.30 p.m. and Sunday mornings from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon.

Do you have an event or piece of allotment news you'd like to share? Let us know by 1st December and we'll publicise it here.



Scarcroft Allotments Association shop



HEDGE MAINTENANCE

If you have a hedge on or bordering your plot autumn and winter is the time to get it into order. Unless otherwise agreed by YACIO, your Tenancy Agreement requires the cut winter height of hedges not to exceed 1.5 metres. This is to minimise shading, increase site security through better visibility and to make hedges easier to maintain.

Although we're entering the hedge cutting season, don't be in too much hurry to start work if there are a lot of berries. These can provide food for birds and other wildlife. A good time to cut is in January or early February. Don't leave it too late though; hedge work should not be started later than the end of February.

When cutting take care and be sure to clear any debris from pathways or neighbouring plots. Ideally cut material should be removed from the site. If this is not possible thin trimmings can be cut up and placed on compost heaps. Larger branches can be piled in an out of the way corner of the plot where they can provide a beneficial habitat, but take care not to provide a hiding place for less desirable creatures such as rats and slugs. Please, only burn hedge cuttings as a last resort. And if you do have a bonfire, make sure the material is dry and the prevailing wind will not carry smoke to nearby houses or plots on which other tenants are working.

Finally, if you have a large or very overgrown hedge YACIO may be able to assist with reducing its height. Or we may be able to help dispose of large piles of hedge cuttings. In both cases we may ask for a financial contribution to defray costs. For information email contact@yorkallotments.org

Are your contact details correct?

Have you moved house, changed your email or phone number? Please let us know.



LIVE AND LET LIVE



There's a rat in my compost what am I gonna do?' as UB40 nearly sang (maybe you're too young for that reference....). We live surrounded by rats, here, there and everywhere. So that naturally includes allotments. And like all creatures, they're hungry; they have to feed dozens of baby rats a year, so if you're putting out bird seed, any that fall to the ground will be a happy rat picnic spread. If you're using your compost bin to get rid of food waste, you may see more than a fair share of peckish rodents. But be reassured, they're not going to peck you; they're much more scared of you than you are of them. Really.

If they're in your compost then it's likely far too dry and you should give the heap or the bin a good drenching. They won't like that cosy home as much then. Nor do they like change, so turn your compost regularly (which should be happening anyway to speed up the effectiveness of the processing), and give the bin a kick or a whack with your spade to scare them off a bit. The only health hazard comes from the extremely low risk of Weil's Disease from their urine, but once the compost is spread on the ground, the soil bacteria will see off any risk. Only resort to poison, safely in a tube or pipe, if you have rats at home.

On allotments, we're never going to get rid of them. Learn to live with them, maybe even learn to find them as interesting as your hamster or gerbil in a cage at home.

CONTACTING US

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