



## June Newsletter

“Ne’er cast a clout till May is out”

Some of the older sayings have their roots in bygone times but in some cases still hold true today. We are now well past the date of any late frosts but over the last few days the weather has taken a turn for the worse. According to the Met Office UK temperatures have been 1.4°C below average, with maximum temperatures 1.8°C below the norm. Sunshine has also been below average with just 52% of average spring sunshine being recorded and rainfall is around 23% above what is expected at this time of the year. These “topsy turvy” conditions have had a considerable affect on growth and have not allowed our gardens/allotments to wake up in the same way as in previous years resulting in plants being behind what is expected for this time of the year. With the forecast for the next fortnight looking good, lets’ hope a change is on the cards.

### Society News:

The Store opens every Saturday morning between 9am and 1130am and is located on the Clarence A Allotments, LN1 3JP. Download the price list by this link: <https://www.northlincolnhorticulturalsociety.co.uk/the-store>. Sales of compost have been particularly impressive for a couple of reasons; first, the compost is first class and better than any we have seen for some time and second, the cost, it is significantly cheaper than composts bought from garden centres or superstores as are other gardening requisites.

There are two forthcoming events for the summer and the Annual Produce and Flower Show in Sept:

**Summer Solstice:** A superb evening to enjoy and socialise with Society members on 23<sup>rd</sup> June starting at 7pm in the Society’s garden behind the Store. There will be a buffet provided so do not eat too much at teatime.

**Evening Talk - ‘The Show must go On’** I have listened to this talk by Nick Smith the Harrogate Show Director and it is one of the best I have heard for a long time. It charts the history of the Northern Horticultural Society and the beginnings and organisation of the Harrogate Flower shows. The talk is on 26<sup>th</sup> July starting at 8pm,

location Castle Ward Working Men's Club, Kingsley Street, Lincoln, LN1 3JN. Buffet provided. A talk not to be missed.

**Annual Flower and Produce Show.** The Show will take place at the Grandstand Community Centre, Lincoln on 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. Schedules available at the Store and on-line, link: <https://www.northlincolnhorticulturalsociety.co.uk/annual-show>. Entry forms and be returned to the Store or submitted on-line at [nlhs.showorg@gmail.com](mailto:nlhs.showorg@gmail.com)

## **Seasonal Jobs to be getting on with:**

The weather forecast for the next fortnight is good and with the Summer Solstice a few weeks away the longer daylight provides time to get on with jobs in the garden/allotment.

With the soil beginning to warm up now is the time to start the direct sowing of seeds outdoors as June is the last month for sowing many crops. Earlier successional sowing in modules and pots can now be planted out if not already done so. If direct sowing draw your drill and water well: **top tip**, leave the drill for around a week which will allow any weeds to germinate and then use a flame gun to burn them off, then sow your seeds and water well with a fine rose head to settle the seeds in. This should result in weed free seedlings.

Successional sowing each fortnight of beetroot, French beans, early carrots, kohlrabi, early peas, lettuce, rocket, turnips, endive, radish, spring onions will give you a constant supply of salads and vegetables at their peak for your plate.

When planting out consider some of the advantages of "Companion Planting". I am sure that many practise some form of companion planting. I have for years planted French marigolds/tagetes with my tomatoes to ward off aphids but recently in preparation for a talk on companion planting I have come to realise how beneficial it is in basically warding off aphids and increasing pollination and therefore yield. This is just scratching the surface. My talk is on 28<sup>th</sup> July at Birchwood Garden Club, St Luke's Church Hall, Jasmin Road, Lincoln, LN6 0YR starting at 7:30pm.

With the present weather set to continue I am reminded of the advantages of mulching, a very important technique to improve time spent watering and weeding. Remember to use biodegradable mulches such as grass cuttings, garden compost, green wood-chippings and/or leaf mould, all of which are good options.

When casting a glance around one's garden/allotment, often something that we consider to be a problem may actually be a valuable resource. For example, nettles make an excellent foliar feed, rich in nitrogen and other micronutrients. Also, comfrey tea is rich in potassium and micronutrients and works very well as a feed for fruit and plants such as tomatoes courgettes and pumpkins. Both these are certainly worth a try but be careful with the comfrey as it smells disgusting. Furthermore, comfrey is most useful

when growing tomatoes outdoors or in a greenhouse border. Wilted and chopped comfrey will add 100% natural, organic high potash fertiliser. French and runner beans will also benefit from comfrey in the planting trench or applied as a mulch. Block 14 Comfrey is the best to buy as it is a sterile and non-spreading strain. Details and sales can be found through this link: <https://comfrey.co.uk/product/bocking-14-root-cuttings/>

I am reliably informed the whilst this year's strawberry crop may be later than usual the fruit is likely to be larger and sweeter than previous years. The cooler spring weather has resulted in a slow ripening period and this longer growing time has produced larger berries than last year whilst the recent sunny days and cooler nights have boosted their sugar content making them sweeter and juicier.

Having read the National Vegetables Society's Simply Vegetables magazine I was impressed by an article 'The Law of Limiting Factors.' In a few words it covers the factors that could be limiting the yield of your crop or the size of individual vegetables. These may be limited by a factor, either a nutrient and/or condition which is in short supply. There are a number of limiting factors that are well explained in the article. The full article is on the web-site Link: <https://www.northlincolnhorticulturalsociety.co.uk/articles>. It is worth a read.

Attached is the guide to seasonal jobs published in Issue 2 of the National Allotment Society's ALG magazine. Should you wish to read the full magazine please use the following link. <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ALG-Issue-2-2023.pdf>

## seasonal jobs to do...

### ...June/July/August

#### June

June is often the first month when one sees rewards of early sowings and young carrots, beetroot, lettuce etc. can be harvested. However, you may need to keep protection handy in case of late frosts. Watch out for pests encouraged by the rising temperatures.

Mulching with compost, leaf mould, grass clippings, well-rotted manure etc. helps to cut down the need to water and suppresses weeds. Apply to damp soil, a good couple of inches thick to do the job properly. Keep the hoe on the go, not just to reduce weeds, but to keep the surface of the soil loose, as any water or soluble fertiliser that is applied will absorb much better.

**VEGETABLE**

- Allow autumn planted onions to fall over naturally as they ripen and dry. Once they are fully dry, lift and store somewhere dry and airy.
- Sweetcorn can now be thoroughly hardened off and planted out.
- Outdoor tomatoes can be planted in deep rich soil in as warm and sheltered position.
- Finish harvesting asparagus mid-month, then feed and mulch the plants, water the crown during dry spells.

**FRUIT**

- Sow maincrop carrots.
- Tip out broad beans, to lessen blackfly attacks.
- Keep sowing successional salad crops in a shady spot, which will reduce bolting.
- Plant out courgettes, marrow, squashes pumpkins etc.
- If not done so already, sow chionary for winter forcing.
- Ensure peas all have sufficient stakes, canes or netting for support.
- Sow swedes and turnips for autumn/early winter use.
- First croppings of early lettuces, radishes, spring onions, bunching shallots, and early carrots can be made, with successful sowings until mid-July at fortnightly intervals.

#### July

July is generally a busy time on the allotment. Often one of the hottest months. Young crops should be kept well-watered in either morning or evening. As always, keep the hoe on the move through the plot as young weeds will soon wilt if hoed off in the sun.

Early potatoes can be lifted as required and a quick maturing crop can be planted straightaway in the vacant soil, but watch out for blight. This will show itself in the form of black blotches on the foliage, and, at the first signs, all of the top growth should be cut down. If caught in the early stages, this should not damage the crop. It is still wise to be vigilant to pests on the plot.

**VEGETABLE**

- Use a liquid feed on most crops in moist soil. This can be a proprietary feed from the garden centre or homemade from nettles, comfrey etc.
- Shallots should be lifted as they mature ensure the foliage has completely died down first.
- A last sowing of dwarf French beans can be made early in the month for a September harvest.
- Sow and plant brassicas for winter and spring harvests.

**FRUIT**

- Continue staking and tying tall growing crops, i.e., runner beans.
- Attract beneficial pollinating insects by growing plants rich in nectar and pollen nearby. This will ensure that crops which need pollination to occur to set a crop, i.e., runner beans and most fruit crops etc. will have a better chance of producing a good crop.
- Shallots should be harvested this month, harvest and lay on chicken wire to fully dry off before storing.
- Lift a few early onions for immediate use, leaving others to fully ripen before storing.

#### August

August is the month when one can begin to really reap the rewards of all your previous hard work. It is still prudent to keep well ahead with all of the regular jobs such as hoeing, feeding and watering in dry spells.

Evenings will start to draw in and the cooler damper nights can bring rot and fungal infections to ripening fruits. Greenhouses will benefit from a little air ventilation overnight and full ventilation as soon as morning temperatures lift. Clear any spent crops as soon as the last harvest is made, composting all clean and disease-free material. Then lightly cultivate the vacant soil and either mulch with garden compost, leaf mould or well-rotted manure to prevent weed growth. Alternatively, sow a crop of green manure that will prevent weed growth, whilst giving something back to the soil. Begin to lift onions for winter storage. Keep harvesting all crops as they mature. Beetroot, kohlrabi and turnips can get woody and tasteless if allowed to get too large.

**VEGETABLE**

- Plant out remainder of spring brassicas, and draw up a little soil around the stem of sprouts and kale to prevent damage from winter winds. Alternatively, use a single stake or

**FRUIT**

- Finish all summer pruning on trained apples and pears.
- Prune blackcurrants by removing any branches that have carried fruit this year.
- Reduce side-shoots on red and white currants by two thirds.
- Remove straw from around strawberry plants that have finished fruiting; lightly prick the soil and add a general fertiliser. Prepare new strawberry beds.
- Prune summer fruiting raspberries and tie in new upright canes, then treat as for strawberries above.

#### June/July/August

**FLOWER**

- Ensure all dahlias are planted out before the middle of the month, and stake well for the taller varieties. Keep them well-watered.
- Annual out flowers should be well hardened off and planted out early in the month.
- Chrysanthemums that have been stopped earlier should be thinned to allow 2 stems for large flowered and three stems for medium flowered, removing all surplus stems, and each remaining stem tied to a cane. For the biggest blooms, start to remove side growth from the leaf axils allowing just the terminal bud to develop.

**FRUIT**

- Give strawberry beds a tidy over - ensure they are all well mulched with straw or similar.
- Top fruit such as apples and pears should start to shed a little excess fruit; this is perfectly natural and is referred to as 'June Drop'.
- Keep a watchful eye over gooseberries for gooseberry sawfly attacks.

**GREENHOUSE**

- Ensure greenhouses, polytunnels and cold frames are well ventilated on warm days, as temperatures will soon rise and can damage young plants.
- Floors, staging etc. can be dampened down with the garden hose or watering can; this lessens the chance of red spider mite attacks, which thrive in hot dry conditions.
- Ensure that all greenhouse crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers and melons are kept well-watered, and new growth is tied in regularly.

#### June/July/August

**FRUIT**

- Apples and pears that are trained as espaliers, step-overs, and cordons will need to be pruned this month. Reduce all this season's growth by one third, pruning just above a leaf joint.
- Protect ripening cherries from birds.
- Finish harvesting rhubarb by the end of the month. Give crowns a heavy mulch of manure.
- Prune side shoots of mature gooseberries and red/white currants, cutting them back to 4 or 5 leaves to encourage fruiting buds to form for the following year's crop.

**GREENHOUSE**

- Keep greenhouses, polytunnels etc. well ventilated, and in the hottest weather keep damping down greenhouses whenever possible.
- Continue to tie in new growth on tomatoes, cucumbers and melons.
- Tomatoes should be well-watered to avoid blossom end rot and fed regularly with a high potash (potassium) fertiliser. Continue to remove side-shoots, and on

**FLOWER**

- Keep all out flowers well-watered.
- Keep tying in sweet peas and cut off faded blooms.
- Keep dahlias well fed, they are greedy plants.
- Out any annual out flowers when they are ready.

**GREENHOUSE**

- Continue as last month with watering, feeding and tying in, and harvest all tomatoes, cucumbers etc. as necessary.
- Ripening melons should be supported with nets so they cannot break away from the vine as they swell.

**FLOWER**

- Continue as last month.
- Ensure that any winter bedding seeds are sown no later than the beginning of the month. Winter pansies, violas, wallflowers and primulas can really brighten up plots in the duller months of the year.