

Penny Grimley - Editor & Leicester's
Growing Spaces Co-ordinator.

Editor's Column

FOR our second edition, the focus is on National Allotment Week, which takes place from the 12th August to the 18th August and the Best Kept Allotment Awards 2024

If you are interested in starting to grow your own food or just looking for something to do as a family, there are allotment open days and a horticultural show to visit.

We have some budding inventors in our midst, providing us with ideas of how to keep our crops watered over the summer. See inside!

Also, Leicester's Eco school children have been putting together their own mealbarrows, take a look at the winning entries.

Good news, we are also live on the Parks Facebook page, see the link below. You can keep a lookout for more gardening stories and information on our posts.

Also we would love to hear your gardening questions, stories and successes. Please do get in touch.

For support, advice and to send Gazette articles;

Penny.grimley@leicester.gov.uk or call

0116 454 4473 to reach me.

<https://www.facebook.com/LeicesterParks>



Penny Grimley

National Allotment Week!

12th - 18th August

To mark the occasion of National Allotment Week this year, several of our allotment sites will be opening their gates during August, so we can take a peek inside somewhere which is normally only reserved for plot holders.

Red Hill allotments, (A6, near Birstall) will be offering refreshments, fresh produce, homemade cakes and plants for sale on 17th August from 12 - 4pm.

On the same day, the Groby Road allotments are offering Bric a Brac, raffles, crafts, vegetables for sale and refreshments from 10am - 12 noon. Washbrook (Welford Road) is also open from 1pm - 5pm.

A week later, Rowley Fields Allotments (Merridith Road) are welcoming visitors on the Saturday 25th from 10am to 2pm.

The Stokes Wood Allotment Society

(Stokes Wood Drive) are holding an Open Day on Saturday 17th August 12-4pm and their annual horticultural show on Sunday 18th August 12-4pm as part of National Allotment Week.

At the open day there is the opportunity to take part in the scarecrow trail, browse the books, jigsaws and bric a brac for sale, buy cakes and buy fresh produce and enjoy some singing and line dancing while you have a cup of tea.

On the Sunday, exhibits in the pavilion will include vegetables, fruit, flowers, baking, preserves and crafts. The show is open to competitors from the area and all visitors are welcome to come and view the results of others' labours and skill, enjoy a cup of tea and cake and buy fresh produce from the allotments.

If you require an entry form to show your exhibits, please email stokeswood2b@gmail.com

Ripening tomatoes

Top tips

Penny Grimley

During my allotment visits, I have noticed that a lot of allotment holders cut the lower leaves off their tomato plants to help to ripen the fruit. Give it a try.



Woolly bugs

Top tips

Penny Grimley

Woolly Aphids can be found on apple trees, looking like balls of cotton wool attached to mature and new growth. Spray sparingly with one part vinegar and three parts water to manage the aphids.

Paul Howgill

Best Kept Allotment Plot awards 2024

The Leicester Allotment Gardeners Council (LAGC) is a local branch of the National Allotment Society, set up to support the allotment societies in Leicester.

Leicester Allotments and Gardens Council held their annual Best Kept Plot Competition in July this year, with the winner receiving the Albert Thornhill Memorial Trophy.

Twenty-three allotment societies had the opportunity to enter their best three plots to be judged. The guest judge this year was Mr. Bob Mullins of Leicester City Council.

The judge had the most difficult task this year, with the hot weather early in the summer and then the rain later, but the standard of the plots entered have been improving every year - not just for quality but also the number of plots that

were of this high standard.

The second-place plot on 159 points to the tenth place on 146 points were covered by 13 points scored, of the 200 available.

In third place was and Hubert Adamczuk of Belgrave Allotment Society on the Uxbridge Road site, each achieving 158 points out of 200 points.

Second place best kept plot, with 159 points, was awarded to Tony Gunn of Rowley Fields Allotment Society, Meredith Road site.

First place with 179 points went to Kris & Margaret Gula of the Belgrave Allotment Society on the Red Hill site winning for the for a second year in succession.

An allotment open day at the Belgrave Allotment Society's Red Hill site Loughborough Road, with a chance to view the winning plot was arranged for Saturday 17th August with the presentation of the trophy at 12.30pm.

Paul Howgill, Secretary,
Leicester Allotment Garden Council



Best Kept Plot Competition 2024 winner - Kris & Margaret Gula of the Belgrave Allotment Society, Red Hill Allotments. Congratulations!

Free seeds!

A Piece of Heaven / Community Hub

If you are looking for seeds for your crops for next year or would like to have a go at growing your own sunflowers, we have some seeds to give away!

Some of the packets are slightly past their sell by date but many of the seeds will still germinate and we would like to share them with you.

Please contact the LGS editor to register your interest, thank you.



Sara Coy

Let's Get Together Strolls

Supporting National Allotment Week.

Also supporting National Allotment Week are Public Health and Choose How You Move.

Their free guided walk 'Let's Get Together Stroll' on Sunday 18th August starts from Jubilee Square around lunchtime, follows the canals, meanders through local parks, and finishes at the Stokes Wood allotments horticultural show.

It is a great opportunity for people to enjoy this event in a friendly group, share enthusiasm and perhaps find inspiration to get growing. For full walk details and to book your place visit [Events < Choose How You Move](#)



Dave Mee

Budding Inventor

Greenhouse irrigation

Recently I moved out of the city into the sticks. Despite being the best thing I've ever done, it did leave me with a slight dilemma. Up until the move, I used to look after my Mum-in-laws tomatoes as she is unable to do it herself. Moving away meant that I would no longer be able to water them on a regular basis.

So, with spanner in hand, I decided to knock up a self-watering system for her greenhouse. As a budding inventor, I already had many items that I could reuse - a pond pump,

various lengths of tubing, a timer and my son's old car battery.

The greenhouse already had a water butt which was fed from the gutter, so my supply was already sorted! It also has self-opening vents to prevent the tomatoes from cooking on the vine!

From the water butt I ran a short length of hose pipe under the corner of the greenhouse and connected it to a simple cistern that I'd rigged up (similar to a toilet). This is basically a container that holds a reservoir of water. The level remains constant via a ballcock valve (I did have to buy this bit which broke my heart! - about £8). Inside the cistern I submerged my pond pump which

was connected to a system of tubes and drippers to each of the dozen tomato plants. The pump is operated by a programable timer

powered by the car battery (I hope my son doesn't want it back!). It's set to come on twice a day for 10 minutes each time. The other added benefit is that, from time to time, I will be able to add tomato feed direct to the cistern.

I'm sure I'll need to play about with the timer to get the correct amount of watering and maybe top up the water butt if we have little rain fall but so far so good! What's next on the agenda - who knows, maybe a tomato canning machine as I'm bound to have a glut of fresh, home grown toms!



Dave's irrigation system and the Community Payback team on Red Hill allotments installing paving, a pergola and raised beds.

Tony Mason

Community Payback

Leicester and Rutland Probation Service

When the Courts sentence someone who has committed an Offence, they have several sentencing options and if they decide the offence does not warrant a custodial sentence, they can issue a fine, curfew, rehabilitation days or Unpaid Work.

The number of hours of Unpaid Work given would depend on the nature of the Offence and could be anything from 50-300 hours.

For many years now the Unpaid Work unit at Leicester Probation have been supervising People on Probation that have been given Unpaid Work hours by the Courts on various projects that benefit the Community Including painting and gardening in several Schools, Community Centres and Religious organizations, Assisting to keep local parks and green space areas tidy and safe for the public visit as well as assisting in the preparation of unused allotment plots on numerous sites in and around Leicester.

This has encouraged members of the Public who wish to have an allotment plot but may be unable to tackle a plot that is very overgrown due to not having been used for several years.

The Unpaid work groups attend different sites usually on a weekly basis for Seven hours per day and work in groups of up to 8 people Supervised for the day by one of our experienced Supervisors. The work can be demanding, varied and does not always consist of clearing overgrown plots. We have assisted with laying paved footpaths for easy access and raised beds for people with disabilities, construction of sheds and other shelters as well as general maintenance of the sites in general.

If you know of a project, not necessarily an allotment in need some assistance please follow the link below.

[Nominate a Community Payback project - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Daxa Ralhan - Public Health

Funding Opportunities

Get Growing Grants

Growing your own fruit and vegetables is a fun and healthy way to fill your plate and stay fit.

Alongside the Let's Get Growing program, see below, Public Health offers financial support: Get Growing Grants (GGG) for any community groups who also wish to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

The scheme is part of Leicester's Food Plan which aims to make Leicester a healthy and sustainable food city.

Any community group can apply; an existing group, or a new group looking to start up a new gardening activity or project in their local area.

The application process is simple; community groups are asked to plan their scheme, complete an application form us telling us how their activity or project will encourage more people to grow their own food.

The application will be reviewed and if approved,

we'll let you know as soon as possible so you can start spending your money.

For more information on Get Growing Grants and the application process please see: [Get Growing Grant \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk)



Leicester Tree Warden members during mapping sessions and project board meetings.

Penny Grimley

Leicester's Orchards

Leicester Tree Wardens

Also included in Leicester's Growing Spaces is a project that the Leicester Tree Wardens have been leading on since 2022.

From the beginning, members were concerned that community orchards were not being visited, as fruit was left rotting on the ground.

Tree warden members started to visit orchard sites to map each tree location. They also noted the tree type, the quantity of crops, condition of each tree and the overall site.

We researched the sites, created a new website [Community orchards \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://leicester.gov.uk) and online map, showing where free, fresh food could be picked.

This year we have started to look at pests and diseases and see how we can help the trees without using chemicals

We are very proud of the tree warden members for all they have achieved.

More community orchard sites are being added this year.

Daxa Ralhan (LCC Public Health) & Kay Thompson, Gurpreet Kaur (TCV)

Get Growing / Free Workshops

Supporting Growing Spaces across the City

Leicester's Let's Get Growing (LGG) programme is delivered by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) a charity conservation organisation. The programme offers a set number of free food growing courses and events across the city to help residents grow their own food. Please see for more information on what's happening across Leicester:

[Let's Get Growing - Leicester | Facebook](#)





Sir Jonathan North and Stokes Wood Schools Mealbarrows and menus.

Eco Schools & the Mealbarrow Competition.

Laura Barke



Leicester City Council has a dedicated Sustainable Schools team, based in Sustainability, who provide support to schools to help them become more sustainable in all that they do.

Seventeen schools across Leicester took part in the 2024 Mealbarrow competition!

The children were tasked to design a menu and grow the produce for the meal in a wheelbarrow.

Visitors to the Abbey Pumping Station casted over 300 votes, commenting they were very impressed with the range of crops and the inventiveness of the submissions. They often pointed out how difficult it was to just pick one school!

The overall competition winners are calculated by 25% menu score, 25% school grounds score and 50% public vote.

Stokes Wood Primary School took first place, followed by Nurturing Roots in second place, see the image below.

Third place was awarded to Sir Johnathan North.

Congratulations go to the winners and thank you to everyone who took part.



Gardening Questions

Do you have a burning question to ask about growing vegetables and fruit?

Please send your questions and any images to the editor's email penny.grimley@leicester.gov.uk and we will answer them in future editions. Thank you.

Your Gardening Guide

Penny Grimley

August / September tasks

Potatoes

Second early potatoes are ready for harvesting, followed by main crop varieties during late August till early September.

Seeds to sow

Arctic King or Winter Gem lettuce seeds can be sown in pots for planting out later this year. Winter hardy spring onions can also be sown. Spinach will give a late crop in October.

Vegetables to plant out

Brussell sprouts (for a spring harvest), turnips (late varieties), winter cabbage, carrots (late varieties), cauliflowers, dwarf beans and parsley.

Strawberries

August and September is the best time to plant strawberries, as it gives the plants time for their roots to establish before winter starts. The plants will then fruit in the following year during June and July, depending on their variety.

Time to harvest

Blueberries and Blackcurrents, as well as early varieties of apples will be ready to pick. Plums will soon be ripe too.