**ELTHAM AND AVERY HILL GARDENS SOCIETY**

Website: www.eahgs.org.uk

**NEWSLETTER- WINTER 2021**

Here we are again in January with hope and optimism for a better year ahead. The days are lengthening and the spring bulbs and a few vegetables are beginning to show through the soil. Winter is the time for planting bare-root plants like rose bushes and fruit trees and, maybe, catching up with the odd jobs we put off like tidying the shed or cleaning and sharpening tools. It is also the main time to prune many types of fruit, including blackcurrants, autumn fruiting raspberries, redcurrants and gooseberries.And then it’s time to sit down in your favourite armchair, browse the seed catalogues and dream of the flowers and vegetable harvests to come.

**Did you know?**

For the gardener, cardboard is often a welcome sight. It is a biodegradable and earth-friendly material that enriches as it breaks down. It is a valuable source of carbon and as it decomposes, it supplies vital energy to the microbes that improve soil quality and structure. But be a bit selective. Plain brown unwaxed, corrugated cardboard is best and remove any tape and stickers. With the rise of online shopping, it seems there’s a lot more cardboard around. As an alternative to recycling, put it to good use in the garden or allotment. Once you have decided on the area, trim down any grass and weeds and give the plot a thorough watering. Lay down single sheets of cardboard and spread a 4- or 5- inch layer of compost on the top. Water the site thoroughly once again. In addition to its use as a mulch, cardboard also makes an excellent all-purpose weed barrier by simply smothering them and preventing them from receiving sunlight.

**From our Trading Representative**

The shop is now closed for the winter. The Royal Borough of Greenwich has informed that if we are still in lockdown at the beginning of February, the shop will have to remain closed until restrictions are lifted. Please keep a check on the website and noticeboard at Pippenhall for updates.

Hopefully, the seed potatoes will arrive at the beginning of February. All orders will be bagged up as usual ready for collection from the shop on Sunday mornings during opening times. However, if the shop remains closed we will be at Pippenhall on two Sunday mornings for the collection of seed potatoes *only*. Please check the website and noticeboard for information regarding this.

**Here at Glenlea**

*Our special correspondent writes*: “Let there be light”, he said. Or in my case let there be Grow Lights.

Like most people I started growing plants on a sunny window sill. But then I discovered T5 Grow Lights. These are small diameter fluorescent tubes with a low wattage so are cheap to run. They don’t produce much heat which can be a plus or a minus depending on your set up. You should aim to have lights about 2 inches above your plants so you need to have adjustable supports. They come in a variety of sizes and configurations so you can get something to suit your space.

Another light I have is the Maxibright. In the greenhouse I have one Maxi 315w and one Maxi 600w. These, as you can imagine, produce quite a bit of heat. They are timed to come on at 6 a.m. and go off at 8 p.m. In addition, I have an electric fan heater which has to work harder during the night to maintain the required temperature of 10⁰C.

As with all growing nothing is simple. I have discovered to my cost that onions and leeks do not like the Maxibrights; tomatoes and chillies love them.

Those of you with good memories may recall how I was growing tomatoes for a mid-July show but got my timing wrong because the Maxis brought them on so quickly that they were finished by June - but it was nice eating homegrown tomatoes in April. Going to have another try this year for that mid-July show!

**For the diary**

As you will remember, our Annual General Meeting had to be cancelled last year. Traditionally the AGM has been held in March but as no firm plans can be made so far this year, please check the website in case a date can be set.

Similarly, unfortunately, we missed our Annual Show last year. A date for this year’s show has been set provisionally for **Saturday 4th September 2021.**

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**PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE:**

[**www.eahgs.org.uk**](http://www.eahgs.org.uk)

**FOR ALL EAHGS NEWS AND UPDATES**

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**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

I should like to join/re-join the Eltham and Avery Hill Gardens Society. (It is not necessary to be a plot holder to join the Society). Subscription to be sent to Roger Brown, 74 Crown Woods Way, Eltham, SE9 2NN, or come and join on a Sunday morning at the shop during opening hours.

Herewith my membership fee for the next 12 months:

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other…………………………………………………………………………………………

Address……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Post code…………………………………..

e-mail address…………………………………………………………………………………………………

I enclose a remittance of £4 (£2 for senior citizens), with cheques payable to Eltham and Avery Hill Gardens Society, together with an s.a.e for reply. I also wish to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the Newsletters and Show Schedule, and so enclose £………with my subscription. Please send me a membership card and arrange for delivery of Newsletters.

By completing this application form, I agree to receive digital communications from the Society, such as Newsletters.

*Please note that your personal details will be held on the Society Register, but in conformity with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018, we undertake never to pass these on to any third party, nor to use them for any purpose other than for legitimate Eltham and Avery Hill Gardens Society business.)*