**ELTHAM AND AVERY HILL GARDENS SOCIETY**

Website: www.eahgs.org.uk

**NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2022**

Here we are, early February and already the afternoons are beginning to lengthen out bringing signs of spring to come.  There are still plenty of jobs that can be done such as polishing and sharpening tools, pruning fruit trees and bushes, pruning roses, maintaining compost bins, repairing fences and if this is all too much, why not sit in your favourite chair with a cup of tea and browse the seed and plant catalogues and dream of balmy days to come when your garden will be filled with flowers, fruits and vegetables.

**Did you know?** Our Society is affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society. Amongst the benefits are:

the monthly RHS magazine, *The Garden*, is delivered to us. This is available in the shop for anyone to borrow. And we have a reduced price entry card for all five RHS gardens (Wisley, Hyde Hall, Harlow Carr, Rosemoor and Bridgewater). Two adults can get 30% reduction on the entry price. This can be borrowed from Dr Mike Hill, 020 8859 4990.

**Our special correspondent, John King, writes HERE AT GLENLEA:** We are talking TATERS. I now grow them in 30 litre black plastic pots.  With first and second earlies you can grow four seed potatoes in each pot. For main crop you would only put in two.  For the earlies I put four inches of compost into the pot and put in two seed potatoes, cover with compost and put the next two in at 90⁰ to the first two.  I then fill the pot with compost to within an inch of the top to allow watering.

COMPOST:  Potatoes grow best in a PH range of 5.5 to 6.5. An alkaline soil will promote the emergence of scab, so avoid adding lime to your plot.

FEEDING: Some growers get good results using Fish, Blood and Bone but can get problems with foxes digging them up.  I shall be using potato fertilizer bought from our shop.  In addition I am going to try different feeds suggested by top growers: (1) every two weeks foliar feed with Maxicrop; (2) every two weeks with Chempac No.4.

WATERING is critical during the formation of the tubers when the tops are about 10 inches high and this will also help scab.   GOOD GROWING!

If you haven’t already ordered your supply through our shop, you may still be able to find seed potatoes from Premier Seed Direct, Seekay Hort Suppliers, Real Seeds, Simpsons Seeds, Seed Co-Operative, Golden Harvest Seeds or Victoriana Nursery Gardens.

**TRADING REPORT (Pat & Dave Middleton)**

The shop is open again on Sunday mornings, 10am – 12 noon.

The shop has managed to keep trading over the last 2 years during the pandemic, with closures, and we would like to thank those plot holders at Pippenhall and society members who continue to support us.

Seed potatoes are expected to arrive during February.  On arrival pre-orders will be bagged up ready for collection so please keep checking the website and/or noticeboard for the date you can collect from. Early collection is appreciated please.  There will be a small quantity of some varieties for sale on a first come basis.

The shop is well stocked for re-opening for the new growing season with multipurpose, farmyard manure, grow bags, all varieties of John Innes etc.

We know this is said each time but **PLEASE SUPPORT THE SHOP**!  We need your support to continue trading and wish more plot holders would use and support the shop.  You just need to become a member of the society (see below).

**DATES FOR YOUR 2022 DIARY**

***EAHGS Annual General Meeting*** will be held at 7.30pm, **Friday, 25 March 2022** at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Southend Crescent, SE9 2SD.   All are welcome. The Agenda is attached.

***ANNUAL SHOW***: **Saturday, 10 September 2022** at St Mary’s RC Primary School, Glenure Road SE9 1UF.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS (Brian Greenwood – brian@eahgs.org.uk)**

The Committee is considering some changes that include a proposed move to a fixed annual membership with renewal more closely linked to the date of the Annual Show, along with a small increase in membership fees to £5 and £3 (for Seniors).  These proposals will be discussed at the AGM so please come along and have your say on 25 March.  In the meantime, anyone whose membership has recently expired will still be regarded as a member of the society, pending decisions taken at the AGM.

**FOR PLOT HOLDERS AT PIPPENHALL – FROM THE SITE REPRESENTATIVE (Pat Middleton)**

I have been informed by a plot holder that rubbish and green waste from another plot is/has been dumped on their plot.  This has been reported to the Council.  I would like to remind all plot holders that this is not permitted under any circumstances.  Any plot holder seen/caught/reported dumping any form of rubbish/green waste etc on another plot or anywhere on the site including paths between plots and main, side and bottom paths will have their tenancy terminated. It is your responsibility to remove all unwanted items and waste from the site.  Please be respectful of other plot holders.

* Please do not get gate keys cut and give to non plot holders.  The key you are issued with by the Council is for the plot holders use only.
* If you have visitors to your plot or have help at any time working or clearing your plot, you must be present at all times while your visitors are there or while work is being done
* Please ensure that all paths around and between plots are maintained and clear and free of rubbish
* Please number your plot so it can be clearly seen.
* The wheelbarrows (purchased by Eltham and Avery Hill Gardens Society) are for the use of Society members **ONLY** and must be returned to the storage shed immediately after use and **NOT** kept on your plot or taken off site.  Please be considerate of your fellow plot holders! If you wish to use a wheelbarrow a key to the storage shed can be purchased for £3.50 from the shop.
* Please **DO NOT** drive down to the bottom of the site.  If your car gets stuck it is your responsibility alone to get it removed.
* **The water supply to the site is currently turned off (as it is every winter) so the toilets are not in use.  The water will be turned on again when there’s no chance of a frost.**
* **Bonfires** are still prohibited by Royal Borough of Greenwich

To keep in touch with all the society’s news, shop opening times, price lists for the shop and other items of interest log on to

**www.eahgs.org.uk**