

Court Oak Road & Tennial Lane Allotments Association

THIRD NEWS LETTER FEBRUARY 2013

<http://www.buddlejagarden.co.uk/allotment/home.html>

Court Oak Road and Tennial Lane Allotments Association

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 23rd April 2013

7:30pm

Quinborne Community Centre

All plot-holders are welcome but only members of the Association will be able to vote and stand for election. Please can you advise the Chair or Secretary before the meeting if you wish to make nominations for Officers or the Committee, or submit a resolution to amend the Constitution.

TENNAL LANE ROAD

We have received a small grant from the Community Chest to repair a section of the roadway at Tennial Lane. This will only install about 30 meters of kerbing but will address the worst affected area, which is becoming dangerous. We will endeavor to apply for Lottery Funding to repair more of the road but at least this is a start.

BONFIRES

The City Council and the Association have had many complaints about bonfires on both sites last year. We believe that the Council is likely to ban all bonfires on our sites if they receive complaints again this year. Just to make sure everybody understands the rules: bonfires are only allowed in November and March and must only be used to destroy **diseased** plant material. It has become custom and practice to burn rubbish but that isn't allowed under the rules. And please, please never bring anything from home to burn especially papers. If you do have to burn keep your fire small and avoid excessive smoke; try to choose a still day to burn so the smoke doesn't blow into adjacent houses.

HORSETAIL (MARES-TAIL)

Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*) is an herbaceous perennial weed that is becoming a problem on our sites. Frequent digging and well-cultivated moist soil provide perfect conditions for it to thrive and spread. The roots penetrate very deep into the subsoil, 2 meters or more, so it is impossible to dig these out. Attempting to dig it out can make the problem worse. Weed-killer will work and is best applied in the growing season (summer). There is a misconception that horsetail is immune to Round-up because its thick cuticle prevents absorption but this barrier is easily overcome by bruising the foliage, for example with the back of a rake, before applying the weed-killer. It may take several applications to kill all the deep roots but should ultimately be effective. Where you have a few shoots of horsetail it is best to tug it out, wearing gloves as the leaves can be sharp. There is further advice from the RHS here:

<http://apps.rhs.org.uk/advicesearch/profile.aspx?PID=257>

BAD WEATHER AND TASKS TO DO NOW

Due to the awful weather we have had with rain, snow and more rain. A reminder, that attempting to dig and work the soil that is waterlogged will only compact it more. Some other tasks that could be done though include:

- Ordering of plants and seeds. A number of companies have started to put these in sales.
- Chit seed potatoes
- Harvest winter vegetables.
- Spread well rotted manure or compost.
- Winter prune apple and pear trees.
- Sow indoors to raise seedlings.
- Force rhubarb.

Contact: Secretary - Andrew Large

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