

BUTE ROAD

Gardeners & friends



The newsletter of the Bute Road Allotment Society

Welcome to the Winter edition of the newsletter of the Bute Road gardeners. This is very much your newsletter, so if you have any ideas or contributions for our next newsletter (March), or simply have comments/feedback to offer, then please email the editor on - ownthenorth@yahoo.com

First, I hope you all had an enjoyable and relaxing Christmas and New Year and that your decorations are down and your taste for turkey is sated until next December.

Second, an apology! I had intended to get this out before Christmas, but working in Retail at peak, followed by a bout of flu, followed by a few days visiting The Somme, left too little time to work on even this modest publication

WINTER 2025



“ The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul. - Alfred Austin ”

FANTASTIC BEASTS

...AND HOW TO HELP THEM!

In this the second part of our series we focus on hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*).

Sleepy, cute, truly iconic. Hedgehogs are one of the UK's best-loved mammals and spend much of their lives asleep.

These prickly critters rely on hedgerows and woodland edges for food and shelter. Sadly, the UK's favourite spiky little mammal is in serious decline. While it is difficult to accurately monitor hedgehog numbers, it is believed they could be down by over half in rural areas and a third in urban areas since 2000.

It's thought a lack of food may be a factor in the hedgehog's decline as agricultural intensification and pesticide use have reduced invertebrate numbers.

In urban areas, the use of impermeable fencing, loss of greenery in gardens and increasing development is thought to be negatively impacting hedgehog populations too. Another threat is roads, with many thousands of hedgehogs killed by cars each year.

Hedgehogs are a gardener's friend, as they eat beetles, caterpillars, worms and other invertebrates. Contrary to popular belief, hedgehogs only eat slugs when they are starving, and doing so can give them lungworm.

Here's what you can do to help them:

Feed them. Put out food for hedgehogs all year round. In spring, it will be a



boost for those emerging from hibernation, while in late summer and autumn it will help the build up those all-important fat reserves to survive the colder months.

Tips for leaving out food and water:

- Leave out foods like tinned meaty (not fish) dog or cat food and crushed cat or dog biscuits.
- Supply good quality, meaty hedgehog food from wildlife food suppliers but do your research before buying. Most "hedgehog food" available for purchase is expensive, unregulated, and full of ingredients such as cereal and mealworms, which can cause agonising and terminal metabolic bone disease.

Don't forget to put out a shallow dish of water which can be a lifeline for hedge-

hogs, especially during a hot dry summer.

What not to feed hedgehogs

Avoid bread, which has little nutritional value

Never feed hedgehogs milk or mealworms – hedgehogs are lactose intolerant, and milk can cause diarrhoea and even death. Mealworms can cause metabolic bone disease.

Make a hedgehog feeding station

Help protect food and water from weather, debris and cats by making a simple feeding station. Use whatever is to hand to make a shelter with a small entrance and a tunnel or sharp angle that prevents cats stealing food. It could just be a few bricks with a large slab on top that lifts off so food can be placed in the corner.

Create hedgehog highways

Hedgehogs can travel around a mile every night, so they may need help to get into and out of your garden. Try cutting holes in fences, removing bricks from walls, or digging tunnels under the garden boundary. Hedgehogs can

travel through gaps as small as 13x13cm, so these gaps don't need to be large.

Encourage minibeasts

Make your garden even more appealing to hedgehogs by attracting their natural prey. Allowing areas to become overgrown or adding a pond, log pile or compost heap will provide habitat for creepy crawlies and attract birds and other wildlife that feed on them too.

Provide shelter

Hedgehogs need sheltered spaces to sleep during the day and hibernate through winter. A small area left to grow wild, compost heaps and log piles can all be used by resting hogs and are great ways to make a hedgehog-friendly garden. Another option is to buy or build a hedgehog house. Put it in a quiet, shaded corner of your garden for the best chance of a hog moving in.

Hedgehog-friendly gardening tips

- Provide an exit route from ponds and pools. Use bricks or stones at the

They lay on their heathery beds and listened to all the sounds of the night. They heard the little grunt of a hedgehog going by. They saw the flicker of bats overhead. They smelt the drifting scent of honeysuckle, and the delicious smell of wild thyme crushed under their bodies. A reed-warbler sang a beautiful little song in the reeds below, and then another answered. **ENID BLYTON—The Secret Island**

FANTASTIC BEASTS

CONTINUED

side of the pond. Create a sloped edge on part of the pond to help hedgehogs to climb out if they fall in.

- Check for hedgehogs before using strimmers or mowers - particularly under hedges, where they might be resting during the day. If you're forking over a compost heap, check them for any nesting hogs first.

- Always thoroughly disturb bonfires immediately before you light them, as there could be hedgehogs nesting or hiding inside. Moving the whole bonfire by hand before setting it alight is the best way of ensuring that hedgehogs and other wildlife aren't sleeping in there.

- Litter is a real hazard to hedgehogs - they can get their heads stuck in tins, plastic bags, binders from drinks cans or discarded yoghurt pots. Make sure you dispose of your rubbish safely and check there's no litter in your garden. Any plastic rings should be cut up, however small they are.

- Raise any netting: if you have any netting or wire in your garden, make sure it's at least a foot

above ground level, as hedgehogs can easily become tangled up in it.

- Don't close your shed doors if you usually keep them open, as there might be hedgehogs nesting inside. If you need to dismantle your shed, check carefully underneath the floor first for nesting or hibernating hedgehogs.

Avoid slug pellets and pesticides - these can poison hedgehogs and should only be used as a last resort. If you have to use pellets, place them under a slate that's inaccessible to hedgehogs. The outdoor use of [slug pellets containing metaldehyde](#) was banned in Great Britain from March 2022. Contrary to popular belief, slugs are not a hedgehogs preferred food as slugs can give them lungworm.

Sick or injured hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are nocturnal, so if you see one out in the day, he or she is probably



ill or injured, and it's vital that you take the animal to a reputable local rescue. Your nearest wildlife hospital is in Leatherhead. For more information and contact details go to:

[Wildlife Aid Foundation | What to do if you've found an injured wild...](#)

Occasionally, female hedgehogs may be out foraging for their young in daylight, but this only happens during the very short nights of June and July, and they will be moving purposefully. If the hog is a healthy-looking adult and is busy carrying grass and leaves to a dry space, then leave it alone. If it is asleep in the sun, staggering or walking in circles, it needs to get to a rescue centre, as soon as possible.

Using a thick towel and/or gardening gloves, pick it up and put it in a card-

board box or pet carrier, lined with newspaper or an old towel. Add a hot water or plastic bottle filled with hot water and covered in a towel but not if you've observed flies surrounding the hog as the hot water will help the maggots to hatch and will start to eat the hog alive. If you haven't got anything to put it in, wrap the animal up in an old towel and put it into a shed or garage to save it wandering off while you make arrangements for its transportation to the nearest wildlife hospital. Hedgehogs can carry fleas. However, pet owners and humans don't need to worry as these fleas can only survive on hedgehogs and not on other species.

Never try to treat a hedgehog yourself as these are complex creatures who require expert medical treatment.

Do you have some time to help us? We are always looking for volunteers to:

Work in the Trading Hut

Help with the Wildlife Area

Help to organise or run events

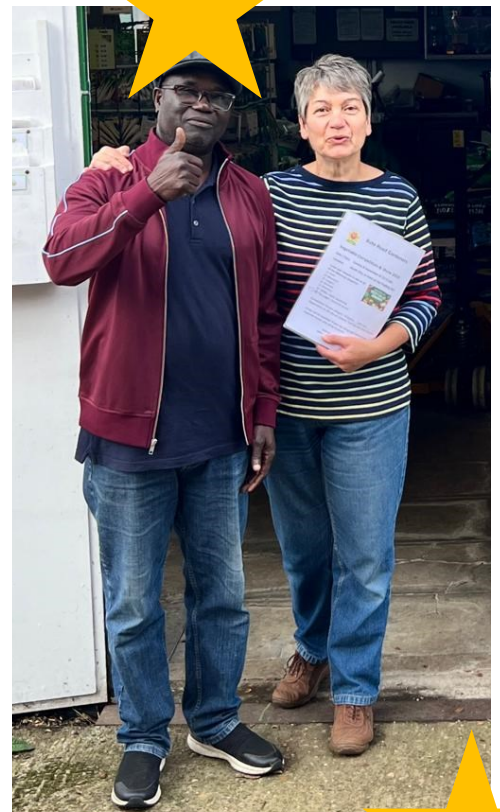
Serve on the Committee

Regular volunteers get a 10% discount on most items in the Trading Hut. If you would like to help ...



Vegetable Competition & Show 2024





SQUASH POTS

A warming vegetarian supper for two



Ingredients:

2 small squashes
150g green lentils or Puy lentils
1 onion (chopped)
1/2 leek (chopped)
100g mushrooms (chopped small)

1 carrot (chopped small)
Bouillon powder
Olive oil
English mustard
Sage and thyme
Salt and pepper

Method:

Pre heat oven to 180C/ gas mark 4

Cover lentils with cold water and bring to the boil. Cook until they are fairly soft (around 20 mins). You might need to add water as lentils absorb quickly

Cut a lid from each of the squashes and scoop out the seeds

Scrumple a piece of tin foil or parchment and put inside squashes to prevent sides collapsing

Place squashes on greased

baking tray in oven for 20 mins

Heat a glug of oil in a pan, add onions, leeks, mushrooms, carrots and herbs and sweat until onions are transparent, stirring all the time.

Add cooked lentils, 1 tsp bouillon powder, 1 tsp mustard, seasoning to taste. Add water if necessary (you want a moist mixture but not soup like)

Remove foil/parchment from squashes and use the lentil mixture to fill them up. Place back in oven adding the lids to the tray, cook for 25 mins.

Serve with celeriac and potato mash or swede and carrot mash and buttered cabbage.

YES CHEER!



Open bonfires are not allowed on the council's allotment sites. Waste material that cannot be disposed of by composting or other means may be burned in an incinerator or clean oil drum during the period 1st October to 15th March. Fires should not be lit more than 2 hours before and are not permitted on Bank Holidays during this period. Material that is damp or green must not be burnt until it dries



POLITE NOTICE

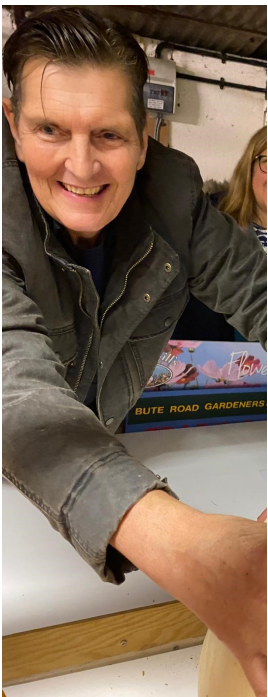
out fully.

Allotment rules allow tenants to only bring on site materials that are related to crop production. Excessive materials invariably become material which pollutes allotments and can become hazardous.

Tenants bringing on site any polluting materials such as scrap metal, painted timber, tyres, carpet or glass bottles will be put on notice and the same applies for tenants burning materials that can cause pollution.

There was a good turn-out for our Guy Fawkes event and Pumpkin Competition held on Sunday 27th October at the Trading Hut. The weather was kind to us, the cakes and snacks were delicious and a pleasant evening was had by all. A big thank you to our Events Secretary Jeannette Crosier for organising it.







The trading hut closed on 1st December and will re-open on Sunday 26th January 2025. We would like to thank our 120 members for their support throughout the year.

When the hut reopens in the New Year, don't forget to renew your membership, at £3 for the year. This is a bargain when you think of the benefits of being a member. Members are able to purchase gardening requisites at competitive prices and receive a quarterly newsletter. In addition to these benefits garden members also have access to free bark which is located in front of the trading hut and allotment members have the protection of public liability insurance.

Please spread the word and encourage family members and friends to pop down to the hut to sign up as the more the merrier.

Seed potatoes/onion and shallot sets

Orders can be placed in January when the hut re-opens.

Goods from the K G Loach Catalogue

Want another watering can, fancy a new

fork or hankering after a new hoe?

The wholesaler K G Loach who supplies us, also sells tools and other gardening equipment such as:

- Garden tools by Wilkinson Sword, Bulldog and Spear & Jackson
- A range of gardening gloves at very good prices
- Water butts, compost bins and a range of wheelbarrows

K G Loach does not have a website so to see what's available and to place an order you need to ask a volunteer in the hut to see their catalogue. Whilst the prices are very good, please note that those in the catalogue are excluding VAT so this needs to be added.

As this is a custom purchase, please note that payment will be required when the goods are ordered.

Items can only be returned if they are faulty, not if you change your mind.



A CARROTY TALE

The word 'carrot' is first recorded in English around 1530 and was borrowed from the Middle French *carotte*, itself from the Late Latin *carōta*, from the ancient Greek *karōtón*, originally from the Proto-Indo-European root **ker-* ('horn'), due to its horn-like shape. In Old English, carrots (typically white at the time) were not clearly distinguished from parsnips. The word's use as a colour name in English was first recorded around 1670, originally referring to yellowish-red hair.

When first cultivated, carrots were grown for their aromatic leaves and seeds rather than their roots. Carrot seeds have been found in Switzerland and Southern Germany dating back to 2000–3000 BC. Some close relatives of the carrot are still grown for their leaves and seeds, such as parsley, coriander (cilantro), fennel, anise, dill and cumin. The first mention of the root in classical sources is from the 1st century AD; the Romans ate a root vegetable called *pastinaca*, which may have been either the carrot or the closely related parsnip.

The plant is depicted and described in the Eastern Roman Juliana Anicia Codex, a 6th-century AD Constantinopolitan copy of the Greek physician Dioscorides' 1st-century pharmacopoeia of herbs and medicines, *De Materia Medica*. The text states that "the root can be cooked and eaten". Another copy of this work, Codex Neapolitanus from late 6th or early 7th century, has basically the same illustrations but with roots in purple.

The plant was introduced into Spain by the Moors in the 8th century. In the 10th century, roots from West Asia, India and Europe were purple. The modern carrot originated in Afghanistan at about this time and is thought to have been spread by traders along the Silk Road. The 11th-century Jewish scholar Simeon

Seth describes both red and yellow carrots, as does the 12th-century Arab-Andalusian agriculturist, Ibn al-'Awwam. Cultivated carrots appeared in China in the 12th century, and in Japan in the 16th or 17th century.

The orange carrot was created by Dutch growers. There is pictorial evidence that the orange carrot existed at least in 1512, but it is probable that it was not a stable variety until the Dutch bred the cultivar termed the "Long Orange" at the start of the 18th century. Some claim that the Dutch created the orange carrots to honour the Dutch flag at the time and William of Orange, but other authorities argue these claims lack convincing evidence and it is possible that the orange carrot was favoured by the Europeans because it does not brown the soups and stews as the purple carrot does and, as such, was more visually attractive.

Modern carrots were described at about this time by the English antiquary John Aubrey (1626–1697): "Carrots were first sown at Beckington in Somersetshire. Some very old Man there [in 1668] did remember their first bringing hither." European settlers introduced the carrot to colonial America in the 17th century.



SEASONAL TASKS

Top Tasks for December

Make leafmold. Gather the leaves and stack in chicken wire cages or put in refuse sacks, stabbed with a fork for ventilation and leave for at least a year.

Harvest leeks, root vegetables, autumn and winter brassicas.

Plant garlic, rhubarb and new bare-root fruit trees and bushes provided the ground is not frozen or waterlogged. But remember if you want to plant fruit trees on your allotment then they must be grafted on dwarfing root stocks to reduce tree size. Fruit trees should be planted within the 25% area given over to non-cultivated land unless you are growing crops around the base of trees. Where possible, you should plant small fruit-trees in the middle of your plot, not on the edges where they may cast shade over neighbouring plots.

Prune apple and pear trees to control

their shape and size. You can also prune black/red/white currants and gooseberries.

Top Tasks for January

Harvest hardy winter varieties of cabbages, cauliflowers and other brassicas, plus leeks, celeriac and root vegetables such as parsnips, swedes and winter radishes

Dig over your plot, **spread** well-rotted manure or compost over empty beds and **cover** to protect the soil

Put a top dressing of well-rotted manure or good garden compost around your fruit trees and bushes

Buy and start to chit seed potatoes

Make a runner bean trench

Dig your trench any shape you want, but it should be more than 6 inches deep. Line with newspaper then fill with garden waste – anything you would put into your compost heap.

If you're filling it gradually, do a layer at a time and cover with cardboard or layers of soil to keep out vermin. Heap it up higher than the trench, as it settles, as it rots, then cover with topsoil to plant straight into next spring. You can follow the same method if you plan to plant sweet peas.

Broad beans - as long as the ground is not frozen sow broad beans, otherwise sow in pots and keep under cover until spring.

Onions and Leeks - to give them the longest possible growing season sow seeds in modules and keep indoors at a temperature of at least 10C. Transplant outdoors in March or April

Peas - for a very early crop, sow seeds in pots, modules or guttering under glass and harden off to plant outdoors in March or April

Top Tasks for February

Harvest cabbages, cauliflowers,

brussels sprouts and kale along with leeks, celeriac, parsnips and swede for warming winter stews

Sow seeds indoors to raise seedlings for planting out in spring

Plant shallots and garlic

Chit seed potatoes

Force rhubarb

Broad beans - sow directly outside if the soil is warm enough (5°C or more) but be prepared to resow as crops can be devastated if it snows.

Spinach - for an early crop in April or May sow a fast-growing variety indoors and plant out in March

Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Peppers and Aubergines - sow seeds indoors now. To ensure germination use a heated propagator then maintain the temperature at a minimum of 21C.

Finish winter pruning gooseberries, blackcurrants, blueberries and autumn raspberries.







WINTER BUTE ROAD



BUTE ROAD GARDENERS

Bute Road Gardeners is open to anyone interested in gardening. Many of our members have allotments, mainly on the Bute Road site in Wallington, but some elsewhere. Others have gardens. Whatever your interest in gardening, whether you are a complete beginner or a seasoned grower you will be made very welcome!

There is a small annual fee for membership, currently £3. Members are able to buy items from the Trading Hut, receive our newsletter and can take part in our events.

Bute Road Gardeners was formed in 1941, in the name of the Beddington & Wallington Gardeners and Allotment Holders' Association, as an aid to the Dig for Victory campaign in WW2. The trading hut was built in 1977, hence it is known as the Jubilee Hut. The resolution to change the name to Bute Road Gardeners was passed at the AGM of 2013.

The objects of Bute Road Gardeners are:

- ♦ To promote the interest of garden-

ers and allotment holders and to take joint action for the benefit of members

- ♦ To co-operate with any committee set up by the government, local authorities, or other bodies to further the interest of allotment holders
- ♦ Endeavour to protect allotment plot-holder members from vandalism, trespass, and theft, via the local authority
- ♦ To manage the Trading Hut, to provide members with composts, fertilisers and sundry gardening items at best available prices
- ♦ To arrange competitions and exhibitions

The overall management responsibility for our allotments and all LBS allotments is now contracted out to IdVerde as part of the South London Waste Partnership. The London Borough Of Sutton still own our site.



muddybutes@mail.com



<https://www.buteroadgardeners.org/>



Bute Road Allotments Sutton