



# Allotment News

## WAHGA celebrates Summer in style

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Joint winner of the best half-plot category in our annual plot-judging competition, Nita Flowers (plot 6), receives her prize from WAHGA vice-chair, Pippa Graeme at our picnic on August 21st (see pages 1&5).

IF THE temperatures were high enough to risk breaking the thermometer at times, WAHGA members battled on and signed off the summer with a great celebration.

We decided to turn our annual barbeque into a picnic due to the fire-risk and 45 members turned up to socialise and to celebrate the winners of our plot-judging competition and sunflower growing contest.

WAHGA plot-holders were invited to enter their plots for judging - and 24 plucky members came forward. We invited Julie Jacob to be our new plot judge. Julie is an Instructor at Kew Gardens and Merrist Wood and an allotment gardener to boot. The judging criteria were revamped this year - so that we could focus more on biodiversity, sustainability and recycling - without losing sight of the primary focus on growing delicious fruit and veg, as well as flowers. The criteria were published well in advance of judging. We set aside a couple of hours for Julie to 'do her stuff' ..... five hours later we completed our (very educational) walk around the 24 plots!

Julie was extremely impressed by the allotment site, and was delighted with the standard of the nominated plots. She was most impressed by plots with a large variety of vegetables and fruit, flowers and herbs (*cont on Page 5*)



Summer sunset over the allotments—by plot-holder Mandal Kalbassi

## WAHGA membership — don't forget to renew!

THE WAHGA membership year runs from Michaelmas to Michaelmas, so September is the month during which plot-holders and other interested gardeners are invited to renew their membership.

The Association's finances are in good order so we don't need to charge a membership fee for the second year running. However, you do need actively to renew your membership. Look out for an e-mail from our online membermojo service with a link to the page at which you can renew.

Membership renewal is due by 29th September. A big thank you to the many members who have already renewed for 2022-23.

WAHGA will continue its focus as a community group, providing members with support across the growing seasons, as we have every year since our creation in 1961. Over the last twelve months, we have focussed our energies on activities that add value to members' gardening and community experiences. We have also responded to the request from many members to organise more social events. Many of you will have enjoyed our recent Summer picnic at Churchfields and there will be a WAHGA Quiz in the Autumn. **(Save the date: Sat, November 12th)**

## Working alongside WiB again



WAHGA was able to resume its annual pre-Covid partnership with *Weybridge in Bloom* at this Summer's Oatlands Fayre, by helping them with their sunflower competition for children. WAHGA worked on WiB's stall, with both voluntary groups looking to promote horticultural activities and cultivation.

WAHGA provided sunflower seeds and pots filled with compost so that youngsters could enter the WiB Sunflower competition (*separate to our own Churchfields' sunflower competition—see pages 1&5*).

WAHGA also offered packets of seeds from our own shop, free of charge, to children and anyone else interested in learning about cultivation or developing their gardens and plots.

Pictured left is local MP, Dr Ben Spencer, who was one of our satisfied customers. Sophie Murphy (*centre*) and Pippa Graeme, resident in their WAHGA pinnies, were our volunteers on the day.

### CHURCHFIELDS PHOTO GALLERY

#### Churchfields Allotments — the site that keeps on giving...



THE scene, captured left was a magnificent sunset between 6pm and 7pm about a week before August's sweltering temperatures landed and drove us all indoors. But the picture is another reminder of those magical moments that inspire us, as we go about our cultivation.

(Photo by Phil Murphy)

THANKS to plot-holders Nancy and Phil Wragg for this photograph, which shows two hedgehogs feeding at a location onsite, oblivious to the attentions of a fox. These are stills from camera footage which Phil has taken at a secret feeding station for hedgehogs.

We are approaching the time of year when hedgehogs can be hidden beneath piles of leaves — so be super-careful when raking up leaves to ensure there is not a small animal concealed there.



## What the allotments mean to me...

**In the latest in our series, former oil and gas geologist, Ed Jones, tells Sophie Murphy how, after a career of intense, often stressful toil, he has found peace at Churchfields**

The year 2021 was significant for Ed Jones, the proud tenant of Plot 80B. He got married, moved from Surbiton to Weybridge — AND took on an allotment at Churchfields for the first time!

His plot is situated on the Triangle Area, which was looking especially gorgeous on the day I visited his plot. I was struck by what can only be described as a ‘forest’ of tomato plants along one of his beds.

### No need for a whole packet!

Ed says he now realises that you don’t have to use a whole packet of seeds in one go. You can hold some back! I know that he had even more huge and healthy plants that were re-homed to the Clubhouse Project, so his success-rate with tomato germination is very high!

He says he also got a bit carried away with potatoes this year. As a winner of the WAHGA Photo Competition earlier this year, he decided to ‘plough’ his winnings back into the Trading Hut by purchasing



different first, seconds and main crop potatoes. He is now awash with spuds.

Ed worked abroad for many years so he never had a garden of his own before. It wasn’t until he moved to his home in Weybridge that he got a small outside space. On the back of this and, having decided to take redundancy from work, he realised he wanted to take on a plot.

He has hand-built his own raised beds and erected a small shed. The shed was damaged in the storms earlier in the year but he managed to locate all the parts that had blown away and put it all back together again.

He says he has no real previous experience in growing crops. But it is clear that he has fond memories as a child of helping his dad, who used to help maintain the walled garden of the vicarage where they lived. At the age of eight or nine, he had a mini-greenhouse in the family garden which he used to grow bedding plants. To make pocket-money, he would set up a small stall outside the house and sell them on.

Ed worked as a geologist for many years, often in highly stressful environments. What does his allotment mean to him now, a year on?

“A chance to reconnect. A sense of well-being. Relaxation.”

## WAHGA ACTIVITIES SINCE SEPTEMBER 2021

WHAT	HOW	MORE INFO
WAHGA MEMBERSHIP	Renewals in September. New members join via Membermojo. Membership reduced to £0 until September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Today WAHGA has 350 members.</li> <li>• 41 of whom are new members / plot-holders who have joined WAHGA since last September</li> </ul>
PRACTICAL HELP AND ADVICE FOR PLOT-HOLDERS	Provided 1-1 mentoring and adhoc advice to many plot-holders. Volunteers have been helping plot-holders who need some additional help	Helping to dig over and tidy plots for those who need temporary help. Putting up guttering to collect rain water for water butts.
SOCIAL EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 members (maximum capacity) attended</li> <li>• 67 members/friends attended. £200 donated to DEC Ukraine</li> <li>• Picnic and Prize-giving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 members (maximum capacity) attended</li> <li>• 67 members/friends attended. £200 donated to DEC Ukraine</li> <li>• Picnic and Prize-giving</li> </ul>
COMPETITIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winter Photography Competition January</li> <li>• Sunflower competition entries = 64. Pumpkin competition = 47</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunflower measuring took place 7 August. 2 Junior and 2 adult winners announced.</li> <li>• Pumpkins will be measured on 22/23 October</li> </ul>
PLOT JUDGING	Julie Jacob - an RHS Merrist Wood Instructor (and allotment gardener) was engaged for plot judging. Revamped criteria were published to all members, and all entrants received their scores and detailed written feedback.	New Scoring criteria was developed to encourage biodiversity / sustainability. Judging took place on 28 July. 24 plots entered and results were announced 21 August
MEMBER DISCOUNTS	Rocket Gardens 15%. GardenSkill 10%. Danieli Chocolates 15%. Gok's Kitchen 15%. McLaren Fine Foods 10%. Fish'd 10%	Available to all 350 members and well used
BULK PURCHASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using purchasing power and sharing a large order with members at cost price. Also avoids members having to collect by car</li> <li>• The composted manure is £3 an 80 litre bag - which is amazing value</li> <li>• 855 bags delivered to members since April 2022 !</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 620 bags of stable manure / compost delivered April and May</li> <li>• 300 eight foot canes delivered to members in May</li> <li>• 235 bags of manure / compost delivered 8 August</li> </ul>
SOCIAL MEDIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WAHGA website revamped to include more horticultural tips and techniques, articles, wildlife and sustainability information and other helpful advice. 'Jobs for the Month' published</li> <li>• Facebook group. <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/231852138510666">https://www.facebook.com/groups/231852138510666</a></li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.weybridgeallotments.org.uk/copy-of-home">https://www.weybridgeallotments.org.uk/copy-of-home</a>  153 members in the Weybridge Allotments Facebook group. 420 posts made since September 2021 !
WAHGA NEWSLETTER	Published 4 October, 20 December. September 2022	
FREE LOAN OF BATTERY OPERATED STRIMMERS AND HAND MOWERS	2 cordless trimmers and 2 hand mowers are available for members to borrow at pre-arranged times at no cost	
SHARING, RE-USE AND RECYCLING	The Sharing Table encourages recycling and re-use. Our aim is that members don't need to buy new plastic but re-use what is already available for sharing	The Sharing table has been really successful. Miles of cardboard have been and gone. Lots of seedlings, plant pots and other useful items have been donated and taken for re-use. Summer produce is appearing regularly.
WILDLIFE, SUSTAINABILITY & BIODIVERSITY	Actively promoted more sustainable horticultural techniques. We continue to record, preserve and help enhance the unique biodiversity on the site.	WAHGA volunteers continue to cultivate and tend the biodiversity and sustainability projects on plots/site. Watch this space for slow worm mats.
MANAGING FOODBANK DONATIONS	Via the Blue Bin in the car park. Monthly donations taken to St James Church.	A big thank you for all the donations made to date
AGM AND SUBMISSION OF CIO ANNUAL RETURN TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION	WAHGA AGM held on 17 March 2020	41 WAHGA members attended WAHGA CIO Annual Report and Accounts submitted to the Charity Commission 13 April

## WAHGA members just keep on giving!



### Keep feeding the bin called Wanda!

WAHGA's Committee would like to say a big 'thank you' to all of those members who continue to support the Weybridge and Runnymede Food Bank project. Every month, Committee member Sophie Murphy is invariably delighted to find that it is well stocked with donations, when she takes it from Churchfields' car-park to St James' Church..

Sophie updates the items that the Food Bank's organisers know will be most useful on a monthly basis and attaches the laminated list to the top of the bin.

September's required contributions are: meat soup; long-life juice, laundry powder; shaving foam; anti-bacterial spray; sponge pudding; washing-up liquid; shampoo; baby wipes; toilet roll; men's and women's deodorants; and feminine hygiene towels.

### Thanks for helping The Clubhouse Project

The Clubhouse Project is now back onsite and fully operational — just as it was until the disruption of COVID. TCP's Day Service provides individual, person-centred support to adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities.

Like many of us though, they had setbacks with a late frost this year and lost some young plants. Following a Facebook appeal, plot-holders were quick to donate a couple of wheelbarrow loads of seedlings. We're pleased to say the subsequent results have been spectacular.



(Cont from Page 1)

which attract pollinators and, of course, well laid-out plots with weeds under control. She also checked plots for well utilised compost bins, as well as water butts where sheds allow for guttering and the capture of rain water.

All participants received a copy of Julie's scoring and comments sheet specific to their plot, with suggestions for the next growing season, as well as lots of positive and constructive feedback. Participants have told us they've found the feedback really useful. The seven category winners (who each received a Squires gift voucher) are shown on the right. Thanks to all of the 24 members who entered their lovely plots for scrutiny!

Back in April, 67 adult and junior members collected sunflower growing kits from the WAHGA sharing table, and we set Sunday 7 August as the target date for measuring. Sunflowers over 1.2 metres high were eligible for the finals, as well as those with large flower heads. Four adults and nine junior members qualified for the finals and the winners (and whopping measurements) are shown on the poster (right). All of the junior members whose flowers made the final received a certificate and an age-appropriate nature book as a thank you for entering. Winners received Weybridge Bookshop or Squires vouchers.

It's been a delight to see so many sunflowers blooming on the allotments. Have a look for them when you are next on site, or go to the WAHGA website gallery to see a selection. <https://www.weybridgeallotments.org.uk/gallery>. A huge thank you to everyone who took part.

**WAHGA Competition Results**

**SUNFLOWERS** – 66 adult and junior members entered.  
There were 13 finalists (4 adults and 9 junior members)

**Junior winners:**  
Rupert Cholmondeley (plot 82) - 295cm high  
Noah Mepham (plot 13) - 44cm wide

**Adult winners:**  
Louise Martin (plot 76D) - 290cm high  
Georgia Cooper (plot 123B) - 36cm wide

**PLOT JUDGING** – 24 plots were entered and judged by Julie Jacob, RHS instructor at Merrist Wood

**Judge's favourite:** Eileen & David Lightburn (77A)  
**Quarter plot & Best Newcomer:** Joe Ladds (20B)  
**Half plot:** Laura Di Bonaventura (18A) & Nita Flowers (6)  
**Full plot:** Mislav & Lucy Matejka (88A) & Lesley Tilling (58/59)  
**Biodiversity:** Nancy Lee Wragg (47)

## Ask Diane!

*This is the first in a series of columns in which our resident expert, Diane Ewart, answers WAHGA members' questions about the trials and tribulations of cultivation*

**Q: What's wrong with my sweetcorn, it's stunted and nowhere near as tall as my neighbour's plants?**

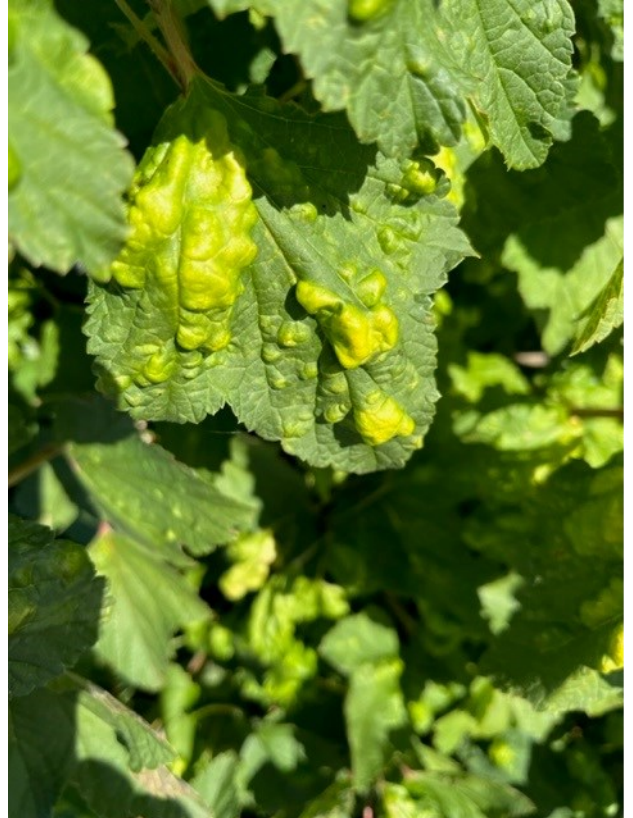
**A:** After visiting the plot, and having a chat with the plot-holder, who was new this season, it's likely that there was some residual herbicide on this section of the plot. It seems likely that the previous plot-holder had used some weed-killer. My advice is to sow some green manure to overwinter, dig it into the ground in Spring, and plant quick growing, tough edibles, such as rocket, to eliminate gradually the impact of the herbicide.

**Q: Help! My purple sprouting broccoli isn't sprouting!**

**A:** On looking at the plants, they showed plenty of leafy growth but no broccoli. Broccoli and cauliflower both need a nitrogen-rich environment to produce strong, leafy plants. But as they also produce flowers, they need potassium. So add some potassium-rich feed such as a tomato fertiliser, or a sprinkle of potash.

**Q: My red currant bushes are unhealthy, the leaves have got mildew and the plant is not productive, what can I do?**

**A:** The red currant bushes need pruning into a goblet shape to ensure that there is good airflow through the plant. This will reduce the risk of mildew. Cut out old wood, damaged branches and prune back weak and spindly branches. The area around the red currant bush needs mulching, perhaps with



*Red currant bushes can be blighted by unsightly blemishes and fail to bear fruit.*

composted manure, to improve the water retentive qualities of the soil. Finally the plant will also benefit from a slow release fertiliser.

### CONTACT US

If you have something you would like to share in the next newsletter or want to give us feedback, please e-mail:

[weybridgeallotments@gmail.com](mailto:weybridgeallotments@gmail.com)

**WAHGA Website: CTRL & [click here](#)**