



WAGS News

July 2015



Wallingford Allotments and Gardens Society
Affiliated Member of the Royal Horticultural Society No. 10572234

www.wags-wallingford.com

Trading Store at Centre 70 open to members only Every Saturday 10:00–12:00 (except August)
Annual subscription £4.00 (per household)

WAGS Store Summer Holiday – closed 18 & 25 July; 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 Aug. Re-opens 5 Sep.

Madam Chairman's Piece

The WAGS AGM this year had to raise a very serious issue, that of support by members for WAGS. We asked for a little help and a couple of people did come forward, for which we are very grateful, but we need more support if WAGS is to continue. I would particularly like to thank Giles Whitehead for joining the committee and taking on the role of membership secretary, Nadine Mitschunas for writing an article for the newsletter and Marion Cherry, Karin Matthews and Mel Belgrove-Jones for helping baby sit the bedding plants ready for the plant sale.

On the web site you will find an article under 'News' that outlines WAGS's needs, so please can I ask you to have another read of it and get in touch if you can help in any small way. These things won't get done if no one will do them, and you can't argue with that logic!

If you have any suggestions on any aspect covered by the Society, please tell me, or one of the Committee—we welcome any new ideas.

Wishing you a great Summer, and hope you enjoy eating the fruits of your labour!

Sandra Halstead

01491 836527, s.halstead2@btinternet.com

WAGS Spring Plant Sale

This year's plant sale came at the end of a cold Spring, but we still had a good selection of annuals and vegetables for members. The annuals, perennials and shrubs sold well, but surprisingly there was not so much call for the veg as there was last year.

Thank you to those of you who came and purchased something, and a special thank you to those who grew plants to donate.

Please do remember to return the bedding trays, so we will have something to grow next year's plants in—you don't have to wash them!

The money made goes towards helping run WAGS, and in particular to cover some of the considerable costs of staging the Autumn Show. We have raised about £450 this year, down on previous years.

Tables for Hire

WAGS owns 10 trestle tables which are available for hire at £5 per table, or £30 for all 10. Each table is 6ft by 2ft 6" (LxWxH 180x75x74cm) and folds in half to 3' 2ft 6". So remember if you are having a party this Summer, or a garage sale, and need some tables for the day, please contact George: georgesmall68@yahoo.co.uk

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THE AUTUMN SHOW

The show schedule comes out with this newsletter; please do take a look at it and consider entering. We have a new class 94 for anyone who has never entered the show before, so take a look, this class is free to enter!

The show is the one way the society can bring members together to see what others have done this season, to talk about successes and failures, get and give great advice and to have a laugh. As always, I would love it if you could all enter something, but if not, please do still come along to see the exhibits, between 2-4pm on Saturday 12th September.

There are a few minor changes to the schedule, mainly in the top/novice Gardener section and in Specialities.

If you won a trophy last year, please return it to the store and in clean condition, **by the latest Saturday 12th July** (earlier is fine to!). *Remember the Store is **closed** during the **second half of July and all of August**, so please don't miss the deadline.*

See you show day if not before. If you can bring us a cake to sell with the teas, that would be much appreciated as well.

Sandra Halstead & Toni Littledale
Show Secretary & Deputy

p.s. Help the weary: The hall has to be cleared away at the end of the day, so please offer to stay and help for 10 minutes, it would be much appreciated by a very tired show team.

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My wildlife-friendly allotment and some suggestions to attract pollinators and other beneficial wildlife: Part 1

(Part 2 will be in October's Newsletter or can be found on the WAGS website)

My name is Nadine and I manage 1 1/2 allotment plots on the Fir Tree allotment site. I decided to write about my plots, which I manage as wildlife-friendly as possible, and to give some tips on how to attract beneficial wildlife, and in particular pollinators, to your allotment or vegetable garden.



If you want to attract beneficial wildlife it is important that you do not use pesticides. Pesticides not only kill pests but also their predators. Ladybirds and their larvae, lacewings and hoverfly larvae will eat aphids for example, but this can only happen if there are some aphids for them to eat. Birds need lots of caterpillars to raise their chicks, but if caterpillars are killed with pesticides the chicks will starve.

On my plot, I plant flowers, vegetables and fruit together and I try to avoid planting large areas with the same

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vegetable. This way the vegetables are more difficult to find for pest insects, and the plot looks more interesting. If you plant the right flowers you can also attract pollinators. Single-flowered annuals such as cornflowers (*Centaurea cyanus*), nasturtiums (*Tropaeolus major*), pot marigolds (*Calendula officinalis*), poached-egg plant (*Limnanthes douglasii*), borage (*Borago officinalis*) and sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) are usually a good choice.

Sunflowers are also great for birds, which will eat the seeds in autumn and winter.



Another well-suited late-summer and autumn flowering annual is cosmos (*Cosmos* spp.). It is very attractive to bees and keeps flowering until the first frosts set in. Many annuals will self-seed if you let them do so, which means they may re-appear in the following year without the need for re-sowing. There are also many herbs that are well-liked by pollinators. For example, with wild majoram (*Oreganum vulgare*), mint (*Mentha* sp.), lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) and fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) you are almost guaranteed to see a wide range of butterflies, bees and hoverflies visiting your allotment plot. In particular, hoverflies are really keen on fennel!

Fruit bushes such as gooseberries, currants and blueberries; cane fruit such as raspberries, loganberries and blackberries, and small fruit trees such as apple and plum provide much needed pollen and nectar for pollinators in spring and early summer. In particular, gooseberries and blackcurrants are useful for emerging bumblebee queens, as they flower early in the year.

Green manure, especially if left to flower, can also provide a valuable resource for wildlife. My personal favourite green manure is phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*). You can sow it in any gap on the plot and it will quickly cover the soil. It has pretty purple flowers which are very attractive to honeybees, bumblebees and moths. Other types of green manure supporting pollinators and other wildlife



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include buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum*) and clovers such as crimson clover (*Trifolium incarnatum*), red clover (*T. pratense*) and white clover (*T. repens*). Green manure can also provide much-needed cover for ground beetles and other predators which are after slugs and other pests.

A small area planted with single-flowered biennials and perennials will look nice and is nearly maintenance-free. Especially early-flowering plants such as lungwort (*Pulmonaria* spp.), and spring bulbs such as specimen crocus (for example *C. tommasinianus*), are of high value and provide food for emerging bumblebee queens and honeybees in early spring.

If you plant late-flowering plants such as cosmos, single dahlias (*Dahlia x hybrida*) and michaelmas daisies (*Aster* spp.) you can provide a much-needed food source for young bumblebee queens preparing for hibernation and other late-flying pollinators.

Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) is an impressive biennial plant. The flowers will attract bumblebees in summer and birds (especially goldfinches) like to eat the seeds in autumn and winter.

