

Somersham and District Allotment and Smallholding Association March/April 2018 Newsletter



Hurrah! Spring is finally here, the clocks have changed and Easter is done for another year. Hopefully, now, we can all look forward to lighter evenings and warmer days – Vicky Moseley

What to do in April

Continue with planting out the seed potatoes; aim to complete the job by the end of April. Be prepared to cover the emerging shoots of the earlies with soil if a frost is forecast.

Check over top and soft fruit for the first broods of aphids and take appropriate action; spray the plant with soapy water (diluted washing up liquid) or squash the flies with your thumb and finger.

In the Apiary – Paul Edmondson

The cold temperatures have set the bees plans back a couple of weeks, as it has with the flowers. More of the winter bees are dying off, and their replacement program has been slowed. One of the hives is still in trouble, their numbers have dwindled enough that they cannot spare any bees from brood warming to clean out the hive. The result of this is that dead bees are amassing on the floor of the hive and blocking the entrance. So, every few days I must clear the entrance of dead bees, otherwise when the temperature is right (above 10°C) the foragers will not be able to find the entrance to get out. If we get another prolonged cold spell this hive could be in serious trouble. Some beekeepers are reporting up to half of their hives have died courtesy of 'The beast from the east'.



At this time of year, it is very important that the bees can collect water as some of their honey stores will have crystallised and needs to be diluted back into nectar. Pollen is also very important, without this precious form of protein the bees cannot feed their young and the queen will reduce, or even stop, the laying of eggs, which will have a detrimental effect on the hives numbers.

Important sources of pollen and nectar this month – Crocus, hazel, willow, blackthorn, wild plum and dandelion.

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Somersham Carnival

As I am sure you are all aware, Carnival is on Saturday 16th June and this year's theme is "The Farm".

Please can I ask you to bear this in mind, and maybe have a think about any plants or produce you could donate to the stall? Also, if any of you would like to help plan, dress and man the stall on the day you are all very welcome. Many hands make light work and all that!

Don't forget:

- **Gardeners' World Live** – 14-17 June – Save 20% on tickets using code NAS1 at www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com
- **Do we have your e-mail address?** – if you have received this newsletter via post but have an e-mail address please contact me.
- **All contributions** to the newsletter are very welcome. If you have anything you would like to include in a future newsletter please let me know.
- We have a new stock of 70L bags of Mother Earth **compost** available for you to purchase at £4.50 a bag.

SGM

Please do try to attend the SGM on Wednesday 9th May at 7pm, upstairs in the Victory Hall, Somersham. All the details are in the SGM notice letter which you should receive along with this newsletter.