



# Newsletter

## August 2016 - 1 Month to the Show



THE FEDERATION OF  
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT  
ALLOTMENTS AND  
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

## THE 2016 EDINBURGH ALLOTMENT SHOW

Saturday 3rd September  
Free Admission

Register your entries - 9am to Noon  
Open to public - 2 to 4pm  
City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, Nicolson Square  
For full details including Entry Form go to -  
[www.fedaga.org.uk/annual-show](http://www.fedaga.org.uk/annual-show)

## New Zealand Flatworm Survey



A UK-wide study of New Zealand flatworms would really appreciate your help.

The quite alien lifeforms arrived in the UK during the sixties and have been feeding on our precious earthworms ever since. There is good evidence that they have already invaded every allotment site in the city and our populations of earthworms have declined dramatically. So too have the animals that rely on earthworms such as moles, hedgehogs, blackbirds and thrushes.

The survey would like to find out more about populations, where they hide and whether beetles are predated them.

For the uninitiated New Zealand Flatworms are:

- \* Flat, ribbon-like and worm size
- \* Dark purple-brown on top, pale underneath and along the sides.
- \* Pointed at each end and covered in a sticky mucus

Their egg capsules are shiny, like small blackcurrants and they like dark damp places, under stones or plastic



*New Zealand Flatworm eggs*

### 'Yuck Alert

Flatworms 'eat' earthworms by dissolving them in their mucus and reabsorbing mucus plus worm. Amazingly, they have no internal organs. The term 'Alien Lifeforms' is well used.

### End Yuk Alert

Please spend ten minutes looking under pots, plastics, wood, stones etc and see what you can find. Then complete the survey. A photo, with an idea of scale (ruler or similar included) would be appreciated.

If you do find any or their worm capsules some say a pirouette whilst standing on them tends to sort them out. However, others say that due to their slimy nature their eggs may escape and the only certain method of destruction is to burn them or drop them in some toxic solution such as methylated spirits.

Happy hunting.

*(with thanks to the Inverleith Allotments Newsletter)*

For more information and details on how to participate in the survey click [here](#). Further information from the James Hutton Institute can be read [here](#). This link includes an e-mail address to leading NZ Flatworm researcher Dr. Brian Boag, should you wish to contact him. FEDAGA hopes to have Dr. Boag as a Guest Speaker at the AGM on 25th October.

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# Open Days Are Here Again



Three Allotment Open Days that we know about on 7th August:  
West Mains, from 1pm. Click [here](#) for details.  
Craigentinny Telferton, from 2pm. Click [here](#) for details.  
Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society Demonstration Allotment at  
Bridgend, from 2.20pm. Click [here](#) for details.  
And another one on the 20th:  
Midmar, from 11am. Click [here](#) for details.



**The Caley**  
Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society

**Demonstration Allotment Open Day**  
on Sunday 7 August 2.30pm–4pm  
at Bridgend Allotments, Edinburgh

*Teas — Produce*  
**All very welcome**



**Workshop on Summer pruning of fruit taken  
by George Anderson, 'Beechgrove' presenter**

*Bridgend Allotments are on the Old Dalkeith Road  
a short distance south of the Cameron Toll roundabout*

Numbers are limited – booking advised  
email: [rchsallotment@gmail.com](mailto:rchsallotment@gmail.com)

[www.rchs.co.uk](http://www.rchs.co.uk) 5C006522



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## Rockdust Offer: Unbeatable Price



If you're serious about growing you'll know you have to feed your soil. One of the best ways of doing this is to use Rockdust. More information about this product [here](#).

There's a sale currently on whereby sites can organise to bulk buy and make a great saving for members. Details [here](#).

FEDAGA have arranged for Remin to have a stall at the Edinburgh Allotment Show (see above) where you will be able to purchase 10kg bags.

See Remin's website [here](#).

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## Trading Scheme News

Thank you to everyone that ordered potatoes and onions from our bulk ordering scheme. The commission cheques have just been paid which should make a useful contribution to your site funds. Unfortunately many people had their chosen potato varieties substituted for others, this obviously caused complaints which we don't want to be repeated.

To address this we have decided to change suppliers and will be using Kings Seeds who supply our discounted seed scheme. We understand that if we get our order to them by the end of November then, based on their experience of past years, we can expect to get 99% of the varieties we order. Look out for further information regarding varieties, prices and ordering dates later in the year.

Concerns were also raised about the quality of onion sets we received. Again, we will order onions, along with shallots, from Kings so we expect a return to excellent quality at very reasonable prices.

In the meantime, Kings offer a wide range of garlic for delivery in September. Unfortunately there is no discount due to the higher cost of carriage but a good selection is available at [www.kingsseeds.com](http://www.kingsseeds.com).

## Weedkiller Woe



FEDAGA recently received an e-mail from a member who was worried about the use of weedkiller on their neighbour's plot. They were especially worried about wind-drift, the unintended effects on insects and possible carcinogenic effects on allotment holders.

Here is the reply that was sent out. We publish it here as it may be of general interest.

Dear member,

Thanks for your enquiry. The general rules and regulations for Edinburgh Council allotments don't include a ban on herbicides, apart from a few specific sites such as Bridgend and Dumbryden which are organic. So your neighbour is within their rights to use herbicide.

It may be that your site could volunteer to become organic. To do this you might approach your committee. However, this may be divisive

without a good education programme. Even on organic sites enforcement of this rule is problematic. It may be that the best you can do is lead by example.

If, however, there is clear evidence of the weedkiller being blown onto your plot you would be within your rights to speak to your neighbour. Maybe you could draw their attention to what has happened and diplomatically ask them to desist.

Here are a few links that may be of interest, some suggested by members.

[Entomology Today](#)

[National Center for Biotechnology Information](#)

[Guardian](#)

[Scientific American](#)

[Independent Scientists Manifesto](#)

[Euractiv](#)

Please be aware that FEDAGA does not take a position on the use of and debate around weedkiller use.

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## SAGS Newsletter

To read the latest SAGS Newsletter, click [here](#).

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## Allotment Official Opening

The small allotment site in Victoria Park, off Ferry Road, will be officially opened in a ceremony to take place at 2pm on Wednesday 31st August.