

September 2015



What's this? See the Craigentiny story below.

Telferton is legal (but still under threat)

Rachel Purnell of Telferton Allotments writes:

Good news! Telferton Allotments have been granted a Certificate of Lawfulness by the City of Edinburgh Council.

Although there is no formal agreement with the landowner we now have a legitimate right under planning law to use the site as allotments, meaning the site is authorised.

We were able to demonstrate an established use, that the site has been used as allotments continuously and uninterrupted since 1923. The site of 85 plots is well used and has an interesting history; some allotment holders have worked their plot for over 40 years, and a couple were married on their plot in 2000.

Although this is great news, unfortunately it doesn't stop the land owner submitting a planning proposal for the site. At their public exhibition this June, they indicated an application would be made this Autumn. It's still important that objections are submitted to any proposal to build housing on the site, but the Certificate counters the land owner's argument that the allotments are unauthorised.

Thank you for your support and keep your fingers crossed for us should any planning application be made!

Apple Press News



The brand new FEDAGA Apple Press will be on tour to 4 sites this autumn. Details below. If you are interested in converting your excess apples into juice or cider, please get in touch with the volunteer organising at each site for further details...

19th September - Midmar ([Andrew Watt](#))

26th September - Prospect Bank ([Gillian Nugent](#))

3rd October - Saughton Mains ([Des Peffers](#))

10th October - Inverleith ([Stuart McKenzie](#))

Also - You could visit the Botanics for the Apple Festival on the 3rd and 4th of October. Further details [here](#).

Himalayan Balsam



FEDAGA recently received the following e-mail:

"Do you have any rules about preventing the spread of invasive non-native plants such as Himalayan Balsam? I recently acquired a plot at Warriston and while my plot is free of it, there are clumps of it in some neighbouring plots. I have not had the chance to speak to the individual ploholders and other neighbours don't seem to realise it is a potential problem."

We replied:

"It needs clearing as no one wants it to invade an allotment site. There's a lot of this growing on the banks of the footpaths around Warriston.

"The official advice is to clear it and you can read it [here](#).

"Have a word with your neighbours about how bad it can spread and try to join forces to get rid of it asap. Now is a critical time as the seeds are popping."

Annual General Meeting

The FEDAGA AGM takes place on the 20th of October. It is important that each site is represented. Please come along. More details including the draft agenda [here](#).

Froglife



James Stead, the Scottish Dragon Finder Project Officer writes: I work for Froglife, a national wildlife charity committed to the conservation of native amphibians and reptiles. Part of our current project (Scottish Dragon Finder) is an activity we call 'Dragons in your Garden' – this is a free allotment workshop for members of the allotment/community group. We run sessions usually over an hour and a half incorporating a short talk on wildlife gardening, a model garden activity and then a practical element to the session to build an insect hotel, small pond or other wildlife related feature. You can see examples of our previous sessions [here](#).

I am looking for an allotment/community garden group who may be interested in having us over for a morning/afternoon sometime this year for one of our free workshops in the Edinburgh area and wonder if anyone would be interested in hosting this. The sessions we have run

across Scotland so far have been very successful and we have received really good feedback since the workshops started in January 2014. Interested? E-mail james.stead@froglife.org

Elephants at Craigentinny



This was found at Craigentinny allotments recently and perplexed plotheolders. Not surprisingly. FEDAGA was asked to identify it. It would appear to be a larvae of the Elephant Hawk Moth (illustrated at the top of the page).

Although it has a widespread range across the British Isles and beyond it is not common and is quite a fearsome sight. To discourage predation from birds the larvae can retract the back end (which resembles an elephant's trunk) and adopt a snake appearance. More info [here](#).

Consultation from Government and Council



There are two consultation exercises currently underway regarding allotments.

The City of Edinburgh Council wants to hear from you and has already e-mailed many ploholders. This is the latest in a series of consultations to gauge how ploholders feel about the allotment service. This time it is especially important as changes are being considered. Please respond by the 2nd of October.

The Scottish Government also wants to hear from you as it moves to establish the Community Empowerment Act. The closing date for this is the 16th of October.

Further details including the links you will need to follow can be found [here](#).

Grand Theft Astro



FEDAGA recently was offered a lorry-load of used astroturf and site reps were alerted. The good folk of Craigentiny took up the offer. John McKinlay takes up the story...

Great excitement with the delivery but alas nothing is ever simple. The rolls of turf weigh in at half a ton so are almost impossible to move. Moreover, we got double the amount we asked for. Much soul searching: how will we deal with the weight and what will we do with the surplus?

We need not have worried. Within 24 hours an unmarked lorry arrived and made off with most of it hotly pursued by our own Dave Roberts - on his bike. Sadly despite his best efforts Dave was outpaced and our AstroTurf has gone.

Perhaps a case of turf luck :-)

Heritage Potato Reminder

The ploholders who took heritage potato varieties from SASA are reminded to get in touch with that organisation to provide their feedback. So far we've heard Pride of Bute is yeuch (but then perhaps it fares better if not boiled) but Arran Luxury and Lord Scone are both delicious, the former being particularly tasty. The yields are not great though. Perhaps that's why they are not in commercial production. Write to info@sasa.gsi.gov.uk and mark your e-mail as "Heritage Potato Trials - FEDAGA".

Seven Top Tips

From the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens...

We hope this finds you harvesting goodies in earnest. Short on time we've managed 7 top tips this month. Please do help us and the wider network by sending in useful resources for any of the monthly areas covered. This month 'Produce'.

1. Before you get too carried away harvesting take time to make note of veg varieties that have worked well for next year's planning.
2. With some plants the more you pick the more they produce so keep going with courgettes, runner beans and sweet peas.
3. Try saving some seed by allowing pods to swell, ripen and dry on the plant. [Real Seeds](#) have a comprehensive guide to basic seed saving.
4. Want to try outdoor cooking on your site but unsure where to start and what equipment to use? We can help you with equipment ideas, simple recipes and robust health and safety measures. Contact lou@farmgarden.org.uk
5. Check out the RBGE Edible Garden Project Gardeners kitchen [blog](#) for regular 'what to grow' inspiration and what to cook with produce tips.
6. Stuck for jam and pickling ideas- try [A guide to preserving the harvest](#).
7. And if after that you have jam and chutney to boast and share bring it to our preserves tasting at our [10th anniversary party](#) at Holyrood in October.

One last thing..

If you produce surplus produce and have a method for distributing it within your community that you'd like to share please email lou@farmgarden.org.uk