

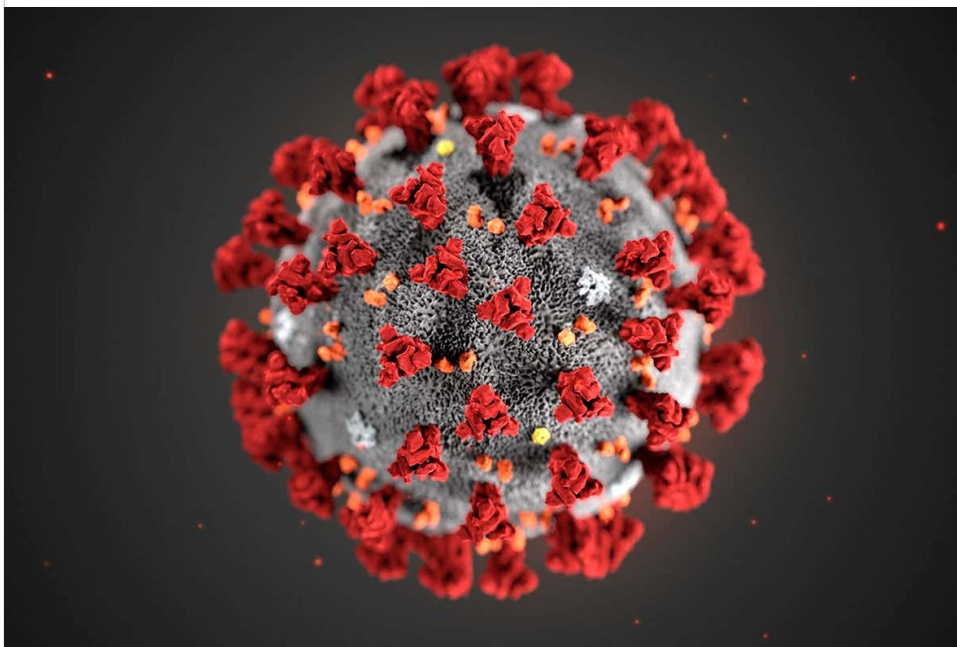


Newsletter

**March 2020**

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## **Is My Allotment Safe In A Pandemic?**



As this issue of the Newsletter hits your inbox the advice concerning **Covid-19** is evolving rapidly. It may be that life will soon be disrupted in a way we've not seen before. Will it be OK to spend time on the allotment? Working on the plot is usually about as solitary as you can get and there is plenty of fresh air, so you'd think there should be no change. Our pastime is known to promote good mental and physical health and fresh food from the plot can only strengthen our chances of dealing with any coronavirus infection. So, that's all good, then.

However, it is important to follow Government advice to:  
Always carry tissues with you and use them to catch your cough or sneeze;

Bin the tissue; and

Kill germs, by washing your hands thoroughly, preferably with soap and water, or by using a sanitiser gel. Edinburgh Council allotments will have their water turned on earlier than is usual which may help facilitate this. (Unfortunately, it will still run cold.)

A major concern would be touching the gate handle and padlock as we arrive and leave. Common sense will tell you to wear gloves or carry a hand sanitiser to prevent contamination. Perhaps Site Associations could arrange for regular disinfecting of gate handles. As well as being careful not to pick up the virus, it is always possible you are carrying it without yet showing symptoms. You wouldn't want to pass it on. The best piece of armoury in the kit is regular [handwashing](#) and this should be done whenever possible.

As plotholders are forced into self isolation (or "staying at home" in layman's terms), succumb to the illness or find their time taken up with caring for friends, neighbours or relatives it is possible that their plots may not be kept up to their usual standard. Those who inspect plots, including independent site associations are encouraged to bear this in mind when considering taking action.

Site associations will also need to watch the situation and take appropriate advice when planning social events and committee meetings. It may not be possible to contain this virus, but it is vitally important that the spread through communities is slowed as much as is possible to give the health services a better chance of responding.

For further information click [here](#).

*(Thanks to SAGS in the preparation of this piece.)*



## SUNDAY SERVICE

MARCH 8th and 15th  
2 to 3.30pm  
Inverleith Allotments

enter off East Fettes Avenue

to sell seed potatoes, onion sets and shallots

further details at [fedaga.org.uk/news](http://fedaga.org.uk/news)

The FEDAGA Shop will once again be open for business on Sunday 15th March. Business was brisk last Sunday and quite a few varieties of seed potato have gone, as well as Golden Gourmet shallots and Sturon onion sets.

What's left - Potatoes: **Casablanca, Duke of York, Pentland Javelin, Lady Christl, Red Duke of York, Vivaldi** 2kg, **Nadine, Jazzy** 2kg, **Cara, King Edward, Pink Gypsy, Picasso, Rooster** 2kg, **Setanta** and **Maris Piper**. Onions: **Red Karmen, Stuttgart**. Shallots: **Red Sun**. Potatoes £3 for 2.5kg, Onions and Shallots £2 for 500g. Please try to bring the correct sum for your purchase. This is your last chance - don't miss it!

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## **SASA Potato Club Continues in 2020**

Our partnership with Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA) continues for a sixth year. We are delighted to announce that SASA will again supply sample varieties from their seed potato store to any FEDAGA members willing to grow them. Three tubers of a named, yet commercially unavailable, variety will be supplied in time for planting. This is usually around the beginning of April. All you have to do is grow them and report back via a short online questionnaire on how you got on and what they tasted like. We'll also try to put on a small display at the Allotment Show in September. It's fun to try a piece of potato history and, who knows, you may discover the tastiest potato you've ever tried. A few people have!

If you'd like to take part this year then email - [sasatrials@fedaga.org.uk](mailto:sasatrials@fedaga.org.uk). We're a little late this year so please do it now, or at least before **22nd March** with your name and site.



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## What Should SAGS Do Now?

SAGS are conducting an online survey to engage with members and find out what you would like them to concentrate on.

To complete the survey (which should take about 10 minutes) please click [here](#).

If your site is affiliated to FEDAGA it is in turn affiliated to SAGS.



# Scottish Allotments - Tools for Disadvantaged Sites

A reminder of the project, being administered by the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society. Allotment sites in disadvantaged areas located in the top 20% of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas are invited to apply for tool packages with a value of £500. Deadline: 31 Mar 2020. There are sites based in Edinburgh that ARE eligible, read all about it [here](#).

To apply, your allotment association must be located in the top 20% of disadvantaged areas according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Click [here](#) to check. Your association must also have a constitution and elected committee and supply a named person who will manage the process within their site.

How to apply: By e-mail to [tools@sags.org.uk](mailto:tools@sags.org.uk) with the following details:

Responsible person's name, home address, e-mail and telephone number/s, name and address of site and GPS coordinates if possible, and confirmation your site satisfies the qualifying criteria.



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# Rules And Regulations Reminder

There have been nearly 200 responses to the Council's Allotment Rules and Regulations consultation. This is a really good response so far. However, if you've not managed to participate yet then please take a look at the draft and let the Council know what you think. To get started, click [here](#). FEDAGA is not making a formal response as we were involved at the planning stage, although the actual draft was written by Council officials. We have our own suggestions for improvement and clarification and we will be participating in the evaluation of the results. Each member has the opportunity to respond, as do Site Associations. The deadline is 27th March.



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# Pollinator Progress Report

The [Pollinator Strategy for Scotland 2017-2027](#) sets out how Scotland can continue to be a place where pollinators thrive, along with actions that are needed to help achieve that objective. The [second annual progress report](#) on the delivery of the Strategy has recently been published. It reports on progress across the objectives of the strategy. Feedback on the 'case studies' section of the 2018 report was very positive and with that in mind they have expanded this section to better showcase more individual projects. Individually these projects are very impressive, but taken in combination they are even more so.

For all the many projects underway, and being developed, the five main objectives identified in the Pollinator Strategy for Scotland remain consistent. These are:

1. To make Scotland more pollinator-friendly, halting and reversing the decline in native pollinator populations.
2. To improve our understanding of pollinators and their pollination service.
3. To manage the commercial use of pollinators to benefit native pollinators.
4. To raise awareness and encourage action across sectors.
5. To monitor and evaluate whether pollinators are thriving.

Opportunities that emphasise habitat connectivity and habitat corridors are continually evolving and the recent award of Biodiversity Challenge Funds to Buglife Scotland and a cluster of local authorities is testimony to this approach gaining momentum.

*(thanks to Greenspace Scotland for this information)*





# Scottish Allotments (SAGS) at Gardening Scotland

As things stand this year's Gardening Scotland event will be cancelled. No announcement has been made yet, but it doesn't look likely. There will, we hope, be future events so this notice is carried with the expectation that any plans made for this year can be realised eventually.

Our national body, SAGS, will again be represented at the annual [Gardening Scotland](#) event which will take place at the Ingleston Showground. This year the event runs from **Friday 29th to Sunday 31st May**. As with past years, SAGS need volunteers to help on their stand. This simply involves talking to the public and simply being enthusiastic about All Things Allotment. In the past we've found that most visitors to the stand have allotments themselves and enjoy a chat about what's happening on their own site.

Volunteers are needed for a morning or afternoon on each of the three days of the event. All will be provided with a free day pass so they can enjoy the rest of the show when off duty. If you're interested please email Stuart McKenzie who is administering on behalf of SAGS - [stuart@stulu.co.uk](mailto:stuart@stulu.co.uk).

Scottish Allotments will also create a slide show of allotment themed photographs for the event. It needs your help to show just how impressive our allotments are by sending in your own pictures which may be used. This list will hopefully help you recall good pictures which, again, should be emailed to Stuart at [stuart@stulu.co.uk](mailto:stuart@stulu.co.uk). Please send them in the highest quality possible. No prizes, just a lovely warm feeling as your photo pops up.