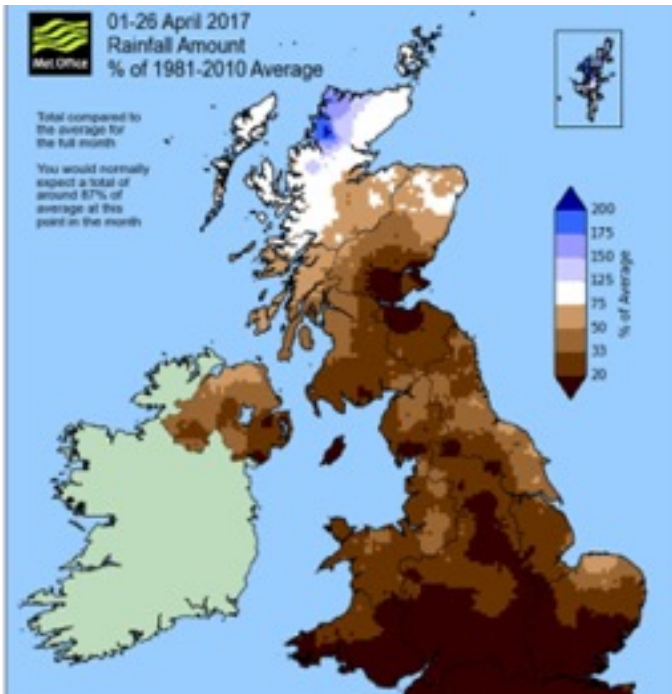


May 2017: The Rain Dance Has Been Successful



April was exceptionally dry. Just look at the chart on the left. The only precipitation we had was hailstones. Climate change means that the weather can be more wet or dry for prolonged periods. It is important to employ as much rain harvesting as you can. Let those waterbutts fill up.

THE EDINBURGH ALLOTMENT SHOW



Saturday 2nd
September 2017
Central Methodist Hall
Nicolson Square

Submit Entries 9 to 12
Open to Public 2pm
Prizes 3.30pm



THE FEDERATION OF
EDINBURGH AND DISTRICT
ALLOTMENTS AND
GARDENS ASSOCIATIONS

FREE ENTRY - flowers - fruit -
vegetables - children's section
homecrafts - expert panel - cafe

fedaga.org.uk/annual-show

Last year saw the return of the Edinburgh Allotment Show. After a break of a few years entries were down but those who attended thoroughly

enjoyed the celebration of allotment culture and produce. Organisers were persuaded to do it all again this year. We are hoping that more plotholders will support the Show this year and are strongly encouraging as many as possible to prepare fruit, flowers, vegetables and homecrafts for display.



There are four main aims for the Show:

- * For our members' enjoyment.
- * To promote allotments to the general public.
- * To demonstrate how well we can grow produce.
- * To enable plotholders from different sites to meet up, socialise and swap gardening experiences.

The venue is excellent. It is central and has just enough parking spaces for dropping off entries. There is also a cafe.

The show classes have been revamped to take into account changing enthusiasms. There will be a special "monster veg" section and

categories for children, including a radish competition. Also, a homecrafts section, "From Plot To Plate", where you can offer up bakes and preserves that include some allotment-sourced ingredients. So - put the date in your diary. **Saturday 2nd September.**

Allotment Diary And How I Discovered Grow Lamps

Have you discovered the Allotment Diary on YouTube yet? I found it looking for advice on growing early onions, which I'll talk about later, but do have a look by clicking [here](#).



The diarist throws down the gauntlet.

The diarist lives in the Yorkshire Dales. He records videos from his allotment to show what he's been up to. He grows for the table but has made a few Giant Exhibition Show attempts. Don't miss how he grows potatoes in pots, especially how he grew 13½ pounds of Sarpo Miro spuds from one tuber.

I was hoping to grow some big onions from a packet of seed I'd been given. It all ended in failure as they were stretched trying to find enough light during the dark days of winter. So how does the Allotment Diarist cope?

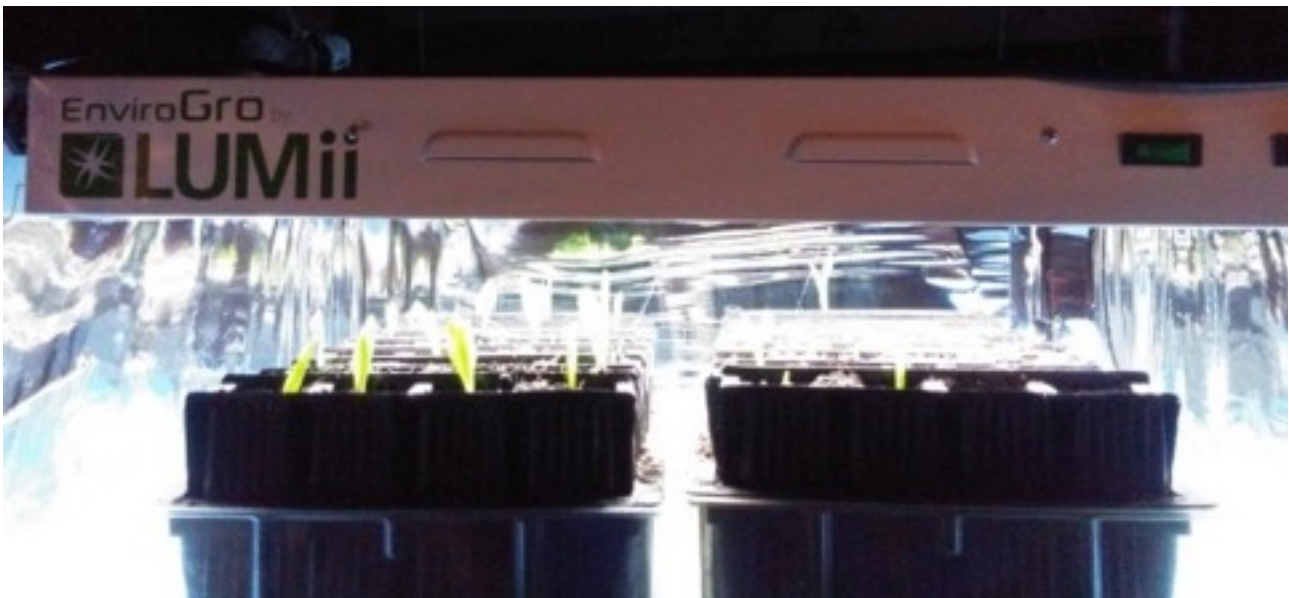
He uses Grow Lights. These are units with strip lights installed which provide around four times the light that we get on a typical winter/spring day. They come in different lengths (usually 2 or 4 foot) and configurations (2 or 4 tubes).



Stuart's bespoke wine cooler/seed incubator combo. Note the reflective walls covered in 'Mylar', available where they sell the lights. A further panel fastens at the front reflecting light back.

I used to put my tomato sowings in a cupboard in the kitchen which contained the hot water tank. Once they germinated they were moved to a windowsill but always got leggy as they sought out light.

The opportunity to try a Grow Light arrived when I upgraded the heating system to a combi boiler. The hot water tank was removed which left the cupboard empty. In went a drinks fridge (highly recommended!) which enabled my Grow Lights to fit above it. The fridge produces a gentle heat that is ideal for germination, the seedlings are then moved under the lights above. They absolutely love it and grow perfect plants, no leggy specimens now. After a couple of weeks, they were big enough to prick out into pots.



Sweetcorn basking in the 'sunshine'.

I decided to buy a two-foot model with four tubes. The tubes are known as T5, provide the right colour spectrum for plant growth and last 30,000 hours. Price was £80. They use the same energy as a 100-watt bulb when all four tubes are on. They can be switched on/off in pairs and I found I only ever used one pair – so the equivalent of a 50-watt bulb. A Pound Shop timer switched them off at night and back on in the morning.

So, where to buy your Grow Lights? I discovered a shop called 'Edinburgh Organics' UK Gardening Supplies who have a unit in West Telferton Industrial Estate. What an education it was! The lights are very popular with, shall we say, the growers of ingredients for herbal cigarettes. I had no idea what a vast array of equipment, compost and fertilizers were available. I didn't dwell - just long enough for my box of lights to be put into a 'plain wrapper', a black bin liner. Not sure I should have paid by credit card though.

If you do grow a lot of plants from seed, I'd really recommend the investment. I've never grown happier wee plants.

Stuart McKenzie

Heritage Potatoes: SASA Visit

A visit to the Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA) premises to the west of Edinburgh has been arranged for **30th June**. If you'd like to go then click [here](#) to book your place. This was extremely enjoyable and educational last year and was also extremely popular. Don't delay, do it today.

News From Around The Sites



The main news is that FEDAGA has completed a **Tree Audit** which has been fed into the Council's List Of Things To Do. Already there is action with a job hanging over Carrick Knowe (literally: a tree hanging over a fence into the site and posing a potential risk if it toppled) finally completed after a wait of some years. Thanks to representatives and ploholders at Warriston, Lady Road, Ferry Road, Craigentenny, Pilrig Park, Inverleith, Redhall, Cambridge Avenue, Saughton Mains and Carrick Knowe for responding. In addition, we already have requests for tree work at Bridgend, Leith Links and Midmar. Presumably, all other sites have no problems as regards overgrown trees.

We have three excellent **newsletters** from West Mains, Warriston and Saughton Mains. Click [here](#) to go to our "links" page to find the latest issues. If your site has a web presence (Facebook, whatever) and it's not listed let us know. If you'd like to see the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society Newsletter, click [here](#).

A Noise Annoys... Reports from Claremont Park tell of raucous goings-on. It seems a neighbour in one of the big houses fronting on to Leith Links is in the habit of arranging parties in his or her grounds.

Loudspeakers have been set up in the garden, two of them attached to the other side of the allotment wall. It is speculated that the miscreant might be in the wedding party business. Ploholders are advised to **dial 101** and report it to the authorities if things are getting out of hand.



The recent **plant sale at Warriston** has been a great success. Over £200 was raised for site funds simply by ploholders bringing on seedlings and selling them to their colleagues. This would nearly pay for a mega-skip, such as the one that **Inverleith** hired to take **accumulated debris** from around the site. Quite a lot of one person's rubbish became another person's recycling as lead was metaphorically turned into gold and avoided taking up space in the skip. A lot of old wood was burned and quite a bit of better quality wood was turned into a new communal compost bin.

Elsewhere, there have been hic-cups in the (ir-)regular Trade Waste uplift service. FEDAGA is talking to the Allotment Officer (again) in an attempt to get it sorted. Some sites have had their bins ignored by the scaffies for quite a while (Lady Road's first uplift of 2017 was two weeks ago) and Carrick Knowe and Inverleith have had their emptied bins nicked. Frustrated ploholders on an un-named site have been spotted taking their rubbish to nearby communal bins which is technically **fly-tipping** and potentially an imprisonable offence. Don't run the risk: report unemptied bins to your site committee or representative, or organise a **Site Clean-Up Action Day**.

There have been **break-ins** at West Mains. Site reps have liaised with the Allotment Officer and potential entry points have been tightened up. Ploholders are once again reminded that they must report any incidence of theft or vandalism to the police and get an Incident Number. Ensure that each plot has a separate number. This adds to the statistics the police and local authorities use when allocating resources. That is how offences are responded to and is the only way to ensure that it is taken seriously.



Finally, video evidence of how contortionist rabbits can squeeze Houdini-style through wire mesh fences. Click [here](#) to view the slowed down footage of these pesky varmints. You have been warned.

A yellow poster for a community health gathering. The poster features several botanical illustrations: a dandelion on the left, a pink flower on the right, and a branch with red berries at the bottom left. The text is centered and includes the event title, dates, location, and contact information.

Seeds of Justice

A Community Health Gathering in Edinburgh

13th/ 14th May

North Edinburgh Arts,
15a Pennywell Road,
Edinburgh, EH4 4TZ

Sat 10.30am-9pm
Sun 10.30am-4pm

We'd love you to join us for any or all of the weekend.
Entry will be by donation and we don't need you to register with us.

The Edinburgh crew of the Scottish Radical Herbal Network invite you to a weekend of workshops and discussions exploring health and community. We want to create a space where different projects in the Edinburgh area and beyond can come together and share skills and knowledge about fighting the injustice that cause ill health, building community resilience and collectively taking care of each other.

radicalherbalscotland.co.uk
hello@radicalherbalscotland.co.uk



Scottish Allotments
and Gardens Society

ANNUAL SCOTTISH ALLOTMENTS CONFERENCE 2017

Saturday 17th June 2017 Victoria Halls, Dunblane FK15 9EX

- 09.30 **Registration, Coffee, Networking and Stalls**
- 10.00 **WELCOME: Ian Welsh, President, Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society**
- 10.10 **Tales from 40 years of Allotmenting**
George Anderson, Beechgrove Garden presenter
- 10.50 **From Allotment Plot to Food Forest**
Andrew Lear (Appletreeman) and Margaret Lear (Plants with a Purpose)
- 11.30 **Question and Answer Session**
Panellists: George Anderson, Andrew and Margaret Lear, Ian Welsh
- 12.00 – 13.00 **Lunch break, stalls and networking**
- 13.00 **Address by Phil Gomersall, President of the National Allotment Society**
- 13.20 **Galvanising the Grass Roots – the Bigger Picture: Steven Tolson**
- 13.40 **News from Plots**
- **Rachel Purnell, President, Craigentenny and Telferton Allotments, Portobello**
 - **Robert Pearce, President, Arbroath Allotments Association Forming a SCIO**
- 14.45 **Workshop Sessions**
- **The Seed Co-operative – Hans Steenbergen**
 - **Galvanising the Grass Roots: Ian Welsh, SAGS President**
 - **Devolved site management: Spreading the Load, Mark Thirgood, Chair, Killandean Allotments Livingston**
- 15.45 **Conclusion of Conference**

All plotholders are encouraged to stay for the SAGS AGM at 16.00

Stalls to include: The Seed Co-operative, Plants with a Purpose, Dalefoot Composts, Garden Solutions, and Emily Chappell – book signing by author of “A Hut of One’s Own”