

August 2024 Newsletter

Best Kept Allotment 2024

Two independent judges scored the 20 shortlisted plots for Best Plot Overall and the 6 shortlisted plots for Best Newcomer 2024. The judges had a difficult task this year as it was a closely fought contest.

Adam H. (CR47B) scored the most points at Clothall Road and is the Best Plot at Clothall Road. Dave K. (NR49B/50B) scored the most points at North Road and is the Best Plot at North Road. Congratulations to Adam H., who scored the most points overall and will be awarded the Basil Bryant Cup. Winners will receive a £25 voucher to use at the Members' Shop. Presentations will be made at the 2025 AGM.



Here are the results for the newcomers: Kemjira S. (CR14A) scored the most points at Clothall Road and is the Best Newcomer at Clothall Road. Colin M. (NR60A) scored the most points at North Road and is the Best Newcomer at North Road. Kemjira will be awarded the Frank Conway Cup and Colin will be awarded the John Gray Cup at the 2025 AGM. In addition, the Best Newcomers will receive a £10 gift.



Congratulations to all the winners and finalists! Pictures of the winning plots can be found in this article, with larger versions available on the website. Hopefully, this will give you some inspiration for next year!

BALGA Open Day

This year, National Allotments Week ran from Monday, August 12th to Sunday, August 18th, with a special focus on biodiversity.

As part of the festivities, BALGA hosted an Open Day on Saturday, August 17th, at Tapps Garden Centre, opposite the Clothall Road allotment site, from 2 pm to 4 pm. Members gathered to collect their Kings Seeds catalogues and meet the committee and other members. Phil (General Secretary) offered great advice about seed saving and demonstrated it with his tomatoes, allowing members to take seeds home and try growing them themselves. It was a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together, share ideas, discuss BALGA becoming a co-operative, and explore displays about biodiversity, the history of BALGA and allotments, and the NAS.



The event was well-received, and members are already looking forward to next year's National Allotments Week celebrations. Thank you to everyone who came to our Open Day.

If you were not able to make it on the day, you can collect your Kings Seeds catalogue from the shop any Sunday (10 am - 12 pm). Remember prices are considerably cheaper than other retailers.

Committee Changes

I wanted to share that I've recently been promoted at work, which means I won't have as much time to dedicate to BALGA as I used to. In light of this, Judith will be stepping in as the North Road Site Rep alongside Mick (Chairman), and I'm confident that the role is in very capable hands with her. Additionally, Sarah will be working with me over the next few months to take on the publicity role. I'll still be looking after the website, so I'll remain involved in that capacity. I've truly enjoyed my time in these roles and love doing many of the tasks, but I need to be honest about the time I'll have available moving forward. Thank you all for your continued support!

Food Bank

We understand that not all ploholders are aware there are boxes at both allotment sites for surplus produce, which is donated to local food banks. When you next speak to your allotment neighbours, please ensure they are aware of this. The produce is collected from the big black box near the large central gate at the Clothall Road site before 9 am every Friday during the main growing season, and from the big black box near the main gate at the North Road allotment site on a Wednesday evening.

Thank you to everyone who has been donating surplus produce to our local food banks—your generosity is truly making a difference! Please spread the word to your allotment neighbours so more people are aware of this opportunity to help others. Your contributions are greatly appreciated, and a big thanks to our volunteers who are collecting the produce and delivering it to the food banks.



Shop Update

As usual, the BALGA shop will be selling a selection of garlic, onion sets, shallots, and spring bulbs. We will publicise when these are available, but we can confirm the prices will be as follows:

- Garlic: £0.70 per bulb
- Onion Sets: £0.70 per 200g
- Shallots: £0.90 per 250g
- Daffodils: £1.30 per 500g
- Tulips: £0.70 per 10 bulbs

Did you know that the shop now sells 1.5m tree stakes? A post driver is also available and can be borrowed for a small contribution.

If there are any items that the shop currently doesn't stock, or if you are interested in purchasing larger quantities (such as whole 25 kg bags of fertiliser), please contact Ross by email at tradesec@balga-online.co.uk.

Allotment Waste

We have been informed by North Herts Council that they have had to clear a number of fly-tips from the area by the bin at the Ivel Springs/North Road allotments car park. The materials were described as 'allotment-type waste.' The bin is provided for dog walkers' waste or litter only. Please dispose of your own waste by:

- Composting green waste
- Burning any perennial weeds or wood, while adhering to our bonfire advice
- Taking anything else to your household bin or a local recycling centre

Do not leave anything by the allotment gates or anywhere else around the site.

New members and Plot Vacancies

Clothall Road

3 x half plots

North Road

2 x half plots

We are continuing to let plots in strict order of the waiting list, which currently stands at over 40 people. Our total membership is now 360 members!

National Allotment Society

We used to access the NAS Members' Area using the same login details as an Association. The National Allotment Society has now updated their website, and each of you now has your own login details to access the Members' Area. Attached to the original email is a 'HOW TO' guide on accessing and using the new features, such as reading the NAS allotment magazine, news and articles, membership discounts, and other benefits.

BHS Autumn Show

Baldock Horticultural Society is once again holding its members' Autumn Show on Wednesday, September 18th, at Brandles School in Weston Way. As last year, BALGA members are invited to exhibit their entries. Schedules listing various classes for vegetables, fruit, and flowers are available in our Members' Shop, on the Baldock Horticultural Society website, and on the BALGA website. It's all a bit of fun and an opportunity to take pride in what you have grown. Let's see some BALGA members entering and perhaps winning again!



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Thank you for reading, Miles

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Members' Group



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