

Woburn Sands Allotments Newsletter

January/February 2009

Committee News

Many thanks to Tony and Carol Gale for making and painting the new noticeboard which has been 'planted' at the bottom end of the field. Please do take the time to look as notices will be placed there between newsletters. Thanks also to Dave Cockerill who transported the noticeboard and to Geoff Cooke who helped install it.

Much of the work planned by the Committee is on hold due to the very cold weather we have been having since the start of the year. Quotes are in for some of the work and we are looking for sources of funding. (Any suggestions gratefully received.)

Tree Felling – logs and chippings

The ash tree on the corner where the allotment field meets Tidbury Close is due to be removed on 11th February. Logs and chippings will be left by the workmen. Please help yourself to either or both of these. The chippings evidently make a good mulch.

Skip

A skip will be on the field on Saturday 28th February & Sunday 1st March. This is only for Allotment rubbish THAT CANNOT BE COMPOSTED. Please see the noticeboard for details nearer to the time.

Membership News

We are very sad to report the sudden deaths of Ivor Griffiths and Peter Prokopchuk. Ivor had recently returned to the Allotments and Peter had been a plot holder for many years. The Committee has sent condolences to both families on behalf of all Society members.

Miles Demner, who is a long time plot holder on the field, has decided to give up half of his plot and will cultivate a 5 pole plot in the future.

We are expecting five new tenants to join us over the next few weeks which will mean the waiting list will be reduced to just 10 people.

Flitwick Allotments – the Seed Box

As usual the potatoes and onions have been bought from the Flitwick Allotments Trading Shed known as the Seed Box. Woburn Sands Allotment Society has now become an associate member of the Flitwick group. This means that any members of our Society may buy items from the Seed Box.

Each member of the Committee has a membership card which is available to any WS member for a returnable £5.00 deposit. The Seed Box is behind the Leisure Centre on the Steplingley Road. It is open at the following times:

February – November: Fri 7.30 – 9.00pm

Sat 2.00 – 4.00pm

February – May: Tues 6.30 – 7.30pm

The Seed Box has an extensive range of items and is worth a visit – but please make sure you take a membership card.

Potato and Onion Orders

Thank you for collecting your orders so promptly. Many thanks to Edgewick Farm for allowing us to store and distribute them from there.

Volunteers Needed

We need to carry out work to clear ditches and cut back some of the hedging at the Bow Brickhill Road end of the field. This will be done over a weekend – date to be arranged. If you are able to help in any way please contact Marie.

View from the Field

Peter Leadbeater's next instalment about plant diseases, deficiencies and disorders will be in the March and subsequent newsletters.

Small Ads.

Two greenhouses are available both 8'x 6':

One is just an aluminium frame with no glass.

The other is standing in Theydon Avenue and will need to be taken down and moved.

For the first there is no charge.

The second does have a cost which will need to be negotiated with the owner.

Please contact Marie for details - 585284 or secretary@wsallotmentsociety.co.uk

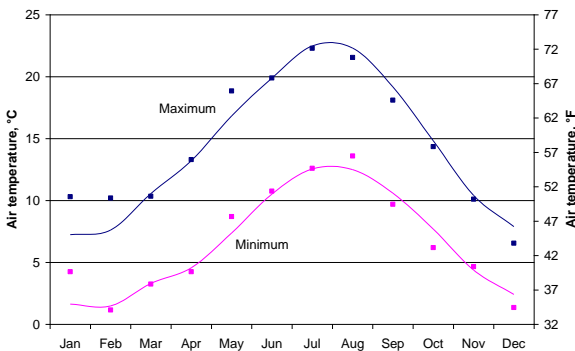
2008 Weather at a Glance

An article by Dr Paul Hamer who has two plots at the top of the field and whose extensive experience in agricultural and climate research includes supervising students and Research Officers on projects relating crop yield of potatoes, sugar beet and tea to climate.

Chat to any allotment holder and the topic of conversation will include discussions about the weather we have had and the weather we might expect in the next few days. Too much rain and we are unable to work the allotment, too little and seeds don't germinate and established crops can suffer from stress and loss of yield. Low temperatures, particularly in the Spring means crops are slow to develop and late frosts can have a devastating effect particularly knocking back emerging potatoes' leaf canopies and wiping out the blossom from fruit trees.

We all know how variable the weather can be from day-to-day and year-to-year so the best way to look back at last year's weather is to compare with long-term averages.

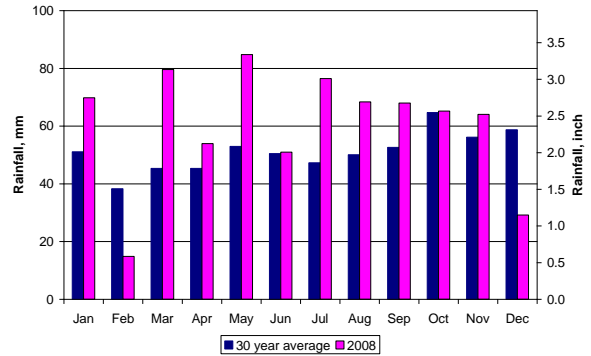
Air temperature is normally recorded once a day using a maximum and minimum thermometer placed in a specially constructed screen to shield the thermometer from rain and heat from outside sources and allow the free flow of air.



The lines are the long-term average air temperature and the symbols the values for each month

The year started very mild with temperatures in January being about 3°C above average and the maximum temperature in February also 3°C above average although the minimum temperature was similar to the average. For the remainder of the year temperatures were near to the normal for the time of year except for May when temperatures were about 1°C above average. The yearly average temperature was near to the normal.

In contrast, 2008 will be remembered for being a very wet year with 20% more rain than normal.



Rainfall, averaged over 30 years, shows that February is the driest month of the year and October the wettest. Last year the months of March, May and July were exceptional wet and the months of August and September, when we are trying to harvest our crops, were wetter than normal.

Over the year the hours of bright sunshine were similar to the long-term average. For the first four months of 2008 the hours of sunshine were above average, May was duller than usual and June made up for the lack of sun in May. August was exceptional with the lowest sunshine recorded for 40 years. There was little improvement in September with the sun shining for less than 4 hours per day, an hour less than normal. October made up for the lack of September sun – too late for most of the harvest but good weather for digging!

