

Hope allotments blog – August 2021

The second half of July became very hot and dry with the accompanying problems with keeping the plots watered. At St David's allotments we are very lucky that we have access to mains water. I've known allotment sites where there has been no running water at all and you had to collect rainwater which would be almost impossible for us as we have half an acre of vegetable plots. The only problem we have is that we aren't allowed to use hoses or pumps and any water used must be carried in watering cans. This is because, as so often happens, one person abused the system and everyone else now suffers the consequences.

Talking of water. A recent report indicates that our rivers are once again getting so polluted that they will soon be full of nothing but dead fish and algal blooms. This is another symptom of industrial farming although this time the culprit is factory farming rather than crop sprays and pesticides being washed into the rivers. The cause is the huge amount of droppings or manure from these meat production units which are either spread on local fields and the runoff goes into the rivers or the waste is stored in heaps from which the runoff goes into the rivers. Either way the rivers become full of unwanted nutrients which feed the wrong types of organisms and upset the natural balance. You can't win.



This is a perfect example of a plant which can be either a 'weed' or something that you want in the garden. It is called Ipomoea or morning glory and is a cultivated version of bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis* which is a real pest in our allotments although it has pretty white, or white and pink, flowers. In fact you can see *Convolvulus arvensis* growing in the bottom right of the picture just to prove my point!

There's always something after crops! This is the work of badgers our baby sweetcorn.



your
eating

Looking forward to September:

'The season of mist and mellow fruitfulness' Keats was referring to the whole of autumn when he penned those lines but I always think of September as the start of autumn.

There are still plenty of crops to harvest from courgettes to potatoes and although September tends to be damp it is normally warm and wet which is perfect weather for sowing grass seed if you want to create a lawn.

Harvest festival occurs in September in the UK, normally around the equinox 21-23 September which is the official start of autumn, and village shows provide the opportunity to demonstrate your prowess at growing fruit and veg. We will have a stand at the Northampton Flower & produce show being held in the Doddridge centre, 109 St James's road, Northampton on 11 September so come and see us there.



Finally,

For all of you who said that Robin's Dahlia was red – wrong! It was green. It is the flowers that are red.

Have a happy gardening month and see you in September.

Joe - the Hope gardener