

HAZELHURST CSA



Newsletter no 10, July 2012

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This e-newsletter brings you a regular update on Hazelhurst Community Supported Agriculture Co-operative. To subscribe, email admin@hazelhurst.coop

Events

A Hoochie Couchie Weeding Day

on Sunday 15th July, 10am onwards.

Come and help us dig out couch grass while local musicians play. Shared lunch, evening food and bonfire. All welcome for digging, music making or both

Bring your own garden fork (if you have one) and some food and drink

Hazelhurst at the Rutland

There will be a Hazelhurst social meet-up on **Wednesday 18th July** at the **Rutland Arms** (86 Brown St, S1 2BS) This is now a regular event on the 3rd Wednesday of the month

It's for anyone who is involved and/or interested in Hazelhurst to get together for a drink and a chat. If it's sunny (ha!) we'll be in the beer garden; if there are lots of us we may retire to the upstairs room; otherwise we'll be in the downstairs bar. Food is available, and any time from 7pm is likely to find some of us there. Come and join us!

News

Hazelhurst Share offer

The share offer, which we launched last February, raised £18,000. This is short of our £30,000 target but has gone a long way towards helping Hazelhurst get established as a viable enterprise. It has provided much-needed capital to get things underway, paying for equipment, inputs for the land, rent, our grower's salary, administrative and publicity costs and the countless other things that you need to start up such an enterprise.

More funding is still needed to keep us going until the business becomes self-sustaining; shares are still available and if you would like to buy shares (of any value between £50 and £5000) please do! You can find details on our website.

The vegbox – oh no, it's a vegbag! – scheme

We've been overwhelmed with subscribers to the vegbag scheme! We now have 30 people signed up to start receiving a weekly vegbag on 26th July and we have a waiting list. This year 30 is the most we expect to be able to supply. In future years there will be more.

We have a 'marketing team' hard at work getting it all set up and arranging for selling any produce surplus to the vegbag scheme. This is a very exciting time.

Grower's news



We've had some challenges this month with all the heavy rain, high winds and hungry wildlife, but the long 70 metre beds are getting established. The courgettes and squashes outside are all doing well under fleece for protection from the worst of the weather.

The supports for runner beans and peas are all in place, along with fleece cover to stop the birds. About 200 leek plants were badly nibbled when we first planted them out - we think by the local hares, but fortunately we had spares to fill the gaps. Again, we've used fleece, held up by hoops, to form a tunnel for protection.

The courgette plants in the polytunnel have begun fruiting - we're currently getting about 40 courgettes a week. We've also had crops of spinach, red mustard leaves and autumn sown broad beans outside. The leaf beet and chard are also starting to crop. The tomatoes and climbing french beans in the tunnel are also looking good and should be ready to pick at the end of the month.

We've got some cosmos flowers to plant out, to encourage aphid eating insects and we've started to sow salads for autumn and winter, so as ever, looking ahead as well as enjoying the beginning of the harvest.

Volunteering on the land

Report from Stella, Volunteer co-ordinator

The 23rd of June was our first Open Day. There was a steady flow of visitors throughout the day, some familiar faces and some new. Huw gave guided tours of the fruitery, talking about how it was designed, showing us the layout, and telling us about the varieties of soft fruit and tree fruit. He has planted a little garden of Eden for everyone in years to come. Meanwhile, his wife, Vicky, made scarecrows with the children underneath the gazebo because it did rain a bit. I served cream teas at the lock up.

Matt worked on the field with Sarah and his team, planting out the sweetcorn, talking to visitors and showing them round the growing area. Collette painted faces beautifully, children's and adults' too: green man, tiger, bear to go hunting in the long grass. And last but not least the Katharina and partner Freddy showed the children how to dig rain worms which they really



loved, especially a young lad who had a bandage on his head and was feeling sorry for himself, until he found he could dig worms. Then he was happy, especially when given a gummy worm as a reward.

We are harvesting vegetables now: salad greens, broad beans, courgettes, spinach and chard. There is so much more on the way. The trouble is, so are the weeds. The beetroot responded well to being weeded by doubling its height and now some are nearly the size of golf balls. We have started weeding the peas which Ro likes to do standing up, hacking into the couch with his pronged cultivator. Maureen and I weed more delicately round the peas themselves. Sometimes we have to replant a few after disentangling them from the ever-encroaching tentacles of the demon couch grass.

Ros tackled the intricacies of weeding the spring onion bed, the tiny little things hardly visible among the couch and thistles. When weeded you can see the rows; they too responded well to the lack of threatening competition from weeds and are now thriving - a third bigger in size since last week.

The chard is lovely, although a little nibbled by slugs, and needs harvesting regularly. The broad beans we sowed in November are just finishing themselves off, and more are on the way already. Matt's courgettes are being harvested every day and are very delicious too. Our veg is now on sale at Beanies and New Roots as 'in conversion' local organic produce.

Volunteers have been doing wonderful work and conversation is interesting too. One comment: 'Earthships are the training shoes of eco-building'. ?

Volunteer's quote of the month

Discussing if we should finish weeding the beetroot or have lunch: one gallant volunteer says, "No, we must work to the bottom so we sort of have a feeling of triumph".

Getting involved

We need a treasurer! If you have skills with money, get in touch. You can find more details at www.do-it.org

Could you offer a little time on a regular day a week to water the polytunnel crops? Contact Stella on 07541209661 or stellah231@gmail.com

Do you have any tools you no longer need? Forks and trowels particularly welcome. Any boots or wellies you don't want? We can use them!

Hazelhurst needs lots of help and there are lots of different ways you can be involved. Volunteering on the land – the days are every Wednesday and Thursday and 2 Sundays per month. Contact stellah231@gmail.com or phone Stella on 07541209661 for details.

**The next volunteering Sundays are:
15th July (Hoochie Couchie Day) and 29th July**

Or you can help with administration, committee work, finance, IT, planning, publicity, marketing, distribution, fundraising, organising events, training, giving talks, writing newsletters, or just joining in. Contact admin@hazelhurst.coop to discuss. We'd love to hear from you!

CSA Management Committee

The CSA Management Committee will next meet on **8th August**. Please get in touch if you have any comments, queries or things you think we should be discussing.

Who are we?

Hazelhurst Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Co-operative is based on a field in the Moss Valley, just beyond the ring road. Our aim is to grow and distribute organically grown, affordable food for the benefit of the community, using ecologically sustainable methods and to protect and enhance biodiversity.

What's your inspiration? Tell us about your ideas for Hazelhurst CSA by emailing admin@hazelhurst.coop. Have a look at the website www.hazelhurst.coop

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