

BHAF E-news Survey Results

Thanks to everyone who took part in the survey – we really appreciate your feedback. The results are detailed below and we have given responses where possible to let you know how we tend to change or improve the e-news as a result of your comments.

1. How often do you read the BHAF e-newsletter?

Answer	Response Percent
Every month	78.6%
Most months	17.9%
Sometimes	3.6%
Never	0.0%

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Editor's comment: Thanks – its great to see that most of you are regular readers!

2. How useful do you find these sections of the newsletter?

Section	Very useful	Quite useful	Not useful	Never read
Monthly tips	57.1%	39.3%	0.0%	3.6%
Site news	53.6%	39.3%	3.6%	3.6%
BHAF Website update	32.1%	57.1%	0.0%	10.7%
Allotment Maintenance update	42.9%	50.0%	7.1%	0.0%
Book reviews	21.4%	39.3%	28.6%	10.7%
Diary Dates	28.6%	57.1%	7.1%	7.1%

Editor's comment: This is useful to know. Although a quite healthy 60% of you positively rated the book reviews (if we count very useful and quite useful) it isn't as highly rated as the other articles. And as it is possibly the most time consuming to produce this makes me feel better if I don't manage it every single month!

Any other sections you particularly like or dislike, find useful or not useful? (please specify)

- This is the first newsletter I have received so difficult to comment
- Any thing that talks about what is going on at different allotment sites.
- As a new allotment holder I am fairly new to this site but has now become saved on my browser.
- no
- could we have a swap or for sale section small adds
- I have only had an allotment in the last year and find the tips and updates from Bridgette very useful. It does help make allotment holders feel part of a community - info on forthcoming courses are also very helpful.
- all interesting and useful
- I particularly enjoy Bridgette's Bulletin

Editor's comment: Great to hear that Bridgette's Bulletins are well liked. I like the idea of the swap or for sale section – I'll introduce it in a future newsletter and see what happens...

3. Have you ever clicked through to any hyperlinks from these sections of the newsletter in order to find out more about something?

Section	yes	no	can't remember
Monthly tips	92.9%	0.0%	7.1%
Site news	60.7%	17.9%	21.4%
BHAF Website update	53.6%	17.9%	28.6%
Book reviews	32.1%	42.9%	25.0%
Diary Dates	60.7%	21.4%	17.9%

Editor's comment: Well it certainly seems like the monthly tips are popular. I'll certainly make sure that they continue. Once again book reviews have the least interest.

4. If you never click these links is there anything you can tell us to help us understand why not?

- Would read more if I had the time
- I'm just too busy
- no time
- none i can think of
- I am not a great book user. I prefer the Internet or audio media.
- Time and laziness, I'm sure they are good and I must do so more often.

5. In the Monthly Tips section (the first section after the intro) which of these do you find useful?

Tips	useful	not useful	don't know/never clicked through
Monthly tips from Harvest Project	77.8%	7.4%	14.8%
Monthly tips from John Harrison of Allotment.org.uk .	81.5%	0.0%	18.5%
Monthly tips from Royal Horticultural Society	77.8%	0.0%	22.2%
Daily tips from the Garden House Brighton.	46.2%	3.8%	50.0%
Monthly tips from Garden Fresco	38.5%	0.0%	61.5%
What to do this month in Bridgette's Bulletin	72.0%	4.0%	24.0%

Editor's comment: Good to know that you find these useful – each time I write the newsletter I read these myself and I find that its really helpful to know what I should be doing!

6. Which is your favourite or least favourite? Anything else you would like to say about the Monthly Tips?

- Monthly tips are useful but I don't have time to read them all. How about a tip from readers each month about something they have found useful. E.g. I recently found some really large hoops in a catalogue which will make excellent high cloches for brassicas - I am using them for my grapevine as the cheap arch I bought blew over and bent the metal in earlier strong winds!
- Tips from John Harrison of Allotment.org.uk, the RHS tips and Bridgette's Bulletin.
- I am quite an experienced gardener so sometimes look out of curiosity but generally don't look at this section
- Too early to say, its all fascinating
- It would be nice to have maybe the top 3 things to do this month in the actual newsletter itself, rather than having to click through
- changes each month
- Bridgette's tips
- no
- like bridgettes bulletin (not because we share similar first names)
- Gives me an idea what I am supposed to be doing.
- Most favourite would be Harvest and RHS
- All the reminder of what to do now - so much better than magazines as it is for this area.

Editor's comment: I like the idea of the readers tips – I'll use this one for the first month. But of course this relies on readers sending in their tips – so we will see how that goes! I also like the idea of the top 5 tips for those who don't have the time to click through. Expect to see that on a regular basis too.

7. Tell us what you like and don't like about the e-newsletter. Please tell us your thoughts - good OR bad and it will NOT affect your chances of winning the book!

- Generally like the e-newsletter
- I really like the newsletter because it keeps me informed with what's going on on site.
- I had an allotment since end of Feb 2011 and the first newsletter I have received is Oct 2011?
- It's there if you want it
- I like the tips given and what to do each month at the allotment.
- I am just curious about what is happening on the allotment sites around Brighton and any news from the Council.
- I think its about the right length, with links for more info but enough to read on page.
- Nothing really
- I like the tone of voice and content, and the feeling of community that it communicates.
- interesting news on other sites
- Love the fact that it's a simple portal to lots of useful info
- I don't like computers!
- Enjoy getting it, just wish I had more time to read it some months. Although it is easy to pick out the bits of interest. Like the course info.
- Its great to be up dated about site news etc
- seems ok could have more photo with the tips
- Just helpful to have regular tips and updates on the site news
- informative a good read no dislikes
- The non-patronising way it is written
- It's useful and comprehensive and it unites allotment holders. I carry the newsletter on my iPhone so I can dip in and out.
- Full of info and news.

- I'm sorry - I've not had time recently to read it as much as it warrants but hope to in the future. However - I really like it and am very glad to receive it!!
- Like - easy to read in one sitting/quite concise. Sometimes I don't like the 'tone' - remember you're preaching to the converted and most allotment owners care about their fellow plot holders. It does feel a little 'accusatory' at times!
- Having only just become a tenant of an allotment, I find it all very interesting.
- I don't like the book reviews, or rather I don't find them useful.
- What to do now tips are the most useful

Editor's comment: Thanks everyone – I didn't do this survey just to get compliments, but its really nice to hear that you like it! I take the point about preaching to the converted, its a tough call sometimes when lots of people have complained and asked me to highlight an issue where the very few are causing a problem. Sometimes its a matter of people not deliberately causing problems – misunderstandings of the rules or miscommunications can occur. So I will try to make these points in a less accusatory way in future. But at the same time one person said they liked the non-patronising way it is written so its good that we get it right at least some of the time!

8. Do you have any suggestions about articles, stories or information you would like us to include in the newsletter?

- More stories about what allotment holders have been growing & pictures of sites (not the overgrown ones) to inspire those who are over run with weeds!
- Yeah, I think it would be good to include some sort of historical background of the sites, from what they were used for, by whom, and the sort of rubbish dumped in each site. I mention this because I found some asbestos in my plot and I would love to know who's responsible for that, and let everyone else know about it.
- not really
- Personally I think you have everything covered!!
- No, I think you have a good range of subjects to suit all levels of gardening interest.
- More about utilising waste and seaweed for organic fertilising. Companion growing
- as I have said above, would be nice to have an "at-a-glance" brief list of top 3 jobs for this month in the actual newsletter itself
- straw bale growing where to use leaf mould
- Services available to allotment holders, such as where we can get help on our allotment, clearing etc. Also about other allotment holders who may be willing to help others at a small charge with strimming, or rotavation, stuff that needs specialist equipment that most people cant afford but others have the tools, maybe they would hire them out? Also about manure deliveries and how to get them.
- Maybe brief write ups from new allotment holders - sometimes helpful to hear what didn't work as well as what does - also info on making sheds or ideas about creating paths and layout of the plot as well as growing stuff
- Links to minutes of allotment federation meetings both formal and informal meetings inc. those with council officers
- other peoples stories or experiences about gardening
- Keep going pretty much as it is.
- Not at the moment.
- I'd like to see a monthly recipe.
- There should be a report from each site rep - they get their plot free and ours does nothing.

Editor's comment: You might have noticed that I have already started a recipe section – I saw this comment when I checked the results last month and thought it was a great idea – will certainly keep it as a regular feature.

I will continue to try and include links to meeting notes with the council – we do include minutes to AGMs and site reps meetings (and these are always on the website) but will try and include minutes for other meetings too – where I can access them (as I am not able to attend these meetings I rely on other people sending them to me. I will try and include some of these other ideas too – although again I will need to rely on other people providing the information as I am just the messenger and with the time it takes putting the newsletter together I don't have time for research into history etc – but hopefully other people will!

9. How experienced are you as a gardener?

Answer	Response Percent
Very experienced	10.7%
Quite a lot of experience	32.1%
A little bit of experience	46.4%
I am a new gardener this season	10.7%

10. Tell us if you think the newsletter caters for someone at your level of experience well or not?

- How about tips for growing something specific. E.g. I had to search the net to find really good info about growing and pruning my grapevine as the instructions that came with it were a bit vague.
- Yes, there is always something new, which I did not know about.
- Yes
- Not too bad, need more on cultivation
- yes i do
- Yes, it's perfect
- yes
- Its okay, it is easy to read and gives hints and tips
- whatever level you never stop learning
- yes
- Yes
- it caters very well
- Yes
- Yes - very much so
- yes
- I think the newsletters cater for beginners, but the links take me to more detailed information.
- Yes, there is a lot I don't know even though I have a lot of experience.

Editor's comment: Well, it sounds like I have it roughly right for the level of experience – but I will try and include specific growing tips. Lets see what people particularly want to know about – I'll put a call-out in the newsletter for things you want me to cover next month.

How long have you been receiving this e-newsletter?

Answer	Response Percent
First time	10.7%
2-3 months	14.3%
4-6 months	10.7%
7-12 months	32.1%
more than one year	32.1%

Do you remember how you signed up? Emailing the editor, signing up on the website, other or you don't remember?

- Seedy Sunday I think
- do not remember
- I signed up whilst working and then signed up again when I retired and my son bought me a laptop.
- It originally came from the RAGS newsletter put together by Mel which I was receiving.
- dont remember
- don't remember
- signed up on website
- Don't remember
- don't remember
- Was sent it from someone else and then signed up
- on the website , i think
- Can't remember
- ithink i signed up on the website
- I asked my allotment neighbour for your e-mail address.
- Don't remember
- I signed up when I was allotted my allotment!
- not sure
- Signing up on the website
- I think I used to receive RAGS newsletter and my details must have been transferred when the RAGS one was replaced by the BHAF one
- At Seedy Sunday

This question is about the BHAF Website (www.bhaf.org.uk) not the newsletter:

	Most weeks	Most months	A few times a year	Hardly ever	Never
How often do you look at the BHAF website?	10.7%	14.3%	39.3%	21.4%	14.3%
How often do you read Bridgette's Bulletins on the website?	7.1%	14.3%	32.1%	25.0%	21.4%
How often do you look up information on the Advice and Tips section?	7.1%	17.9%	25.0%	32.1%	17.9%
How often do you look up information about your site, store hut or local group on the website?	7.1%	3.6%	35.7%	35.7%	17.9%
How often have you submitted an article, comment or forum question/answer to the website?	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	10.7%	85.7%

Please tell us what you like and don't like about the BHAF website

- Good site with a huge variety of information.
- I like most articles, tips and newsy gossip most.
- Some sections that can be accessed are very old info I have read before. The BHAF Newsletter irritated me the most with inaccurate info and the phone number to phone in comments never took calls. This has lowered my opinion of BHAF considerably.
- I use to look at it to stay in touch, may be more regular now.
- i like hearing news and tips from other sites and what and where the maintenance teams have been performing. (we dont see much of them at mile oak)
- I hardly use the computer;prefer the printed page
- easy to navigate and find what you want
- This questionnaire has prompted me to look at the website and I was very impressed and will look at it regularly now. I had only read the newsletter to date.
- I appreciate it's existence and have no complaints - but purely for transparency purposes I believe allotment tenants should have the right to view the minutes of the allotment federation meetings and meetings with the council. I understand a small proportion of tenants rents are automatically paid to the federation so access to minutes should be straightforward. Thanks for your efforts as I understand everyone contributes in a voluntary capacity.
- i enjoy the connection learn lots of little bits here and there
- It seems to cover an awful lot of various and interesting topics for gardeners of all levels.
- I really must look at it more often in future.

- **Editor's comment:** Thanks for this. I take the point about old information. I know this does happen – if this person could let me know the particular page I will check and update it. Unfortunately I don't know something is out of date until someone tells me, so I rely on the readers to let me know if there is a problem. Regarding the meeting minutes – these are actually reproduced on the website – see http://www.bhaf.org.uk/category_id_42_path_0p11p.aspx which has sections for AGM minutes and site reps meetings. I will try and make sure that this is highlighted in the newsletter too.

THANK YOU

The competition is now closed (although you can still take the survey and your comments will be taken into account). Our winner, chosen at random, is Nikki Serge from Whitehawk Hill. Nikki please contact me to claim your prize!



Allotment Gardening

Bridgette Saunders

