



Earley Allotment Association Newsletter

Seasonal Tips

Inside this issue:

<i>Seasonal Tips</i>	1
<i>Potato Blight</i>	1
<i>Some basic laws of economics</i>	2
<i>Cub Night</i>	2
<i>Cookery Corner</i>	2
<i>AGM</i>	3
<i>Deer Update</i>	3
<i>Annual BBQ</i>	3
<i>Ladybirds</i>	3
<i>Schedule of Events Past and Future</i>	4
<i>Committee News</i>	4

What with the rain and the deer, the allotments are suffering this year, but hopefully we can now look forward to a warm dry spell.

August is a great time to enjoy the rewards of your labours earlier in the year.

Harvest onions and garlic when the foliage collapses and let them dry in the sun if you want to store them. If some onions have shot up seed heads, these will not store but instead of discarding them, cut the bulb lengthways and remove the hard core and chop the remaining flesh and freeze them.

Store onions, garlic and shallots in net bags in a cool, dark airy place.

Carrots, peas, beetroot and salad crops should be available in abundance

now, if you're lucky you might still have some broad beans. Pick French beans every few days to keep plants productive. Pick courgettes regularly while they are small if you don't want marrows.

Sweetcorn are ready when the silks go dark brown, test every cob before you pick. Peel back the outer husk and press a thumbnail into one of the kernels. If the water runs clear, leave it on the plant; milky white and it's ready for picking.

A storage tip, use 'Stayfresh' bags from Lakeland, they say vegetables stay fresh for up to six weeks, they do work.

Second early potatoes should be ready now, carefully lift them and lay them out to dry before

storing in hessian sacks in a cool dark place.

Jobs to keep you busy this August:

Pinch out runner beans when they have reached the top of their supports and encourage plants to produce flowers by watering at the base daily.

Prune summer fruiting raspberries

Pin strawberry runners, still attached to the parent, into pots filled with compost to root. Once they are growing well, sever the runners.

Any spare ground? Sow green manure, this will take about six weeks to mature then it can be dug in.

Give plants an occasional thorough soaking rather than watering little and often.

Potato Blight



Early Blight



Late Blight

Watch out for early potato blight, commonly known as target spot, as the fungus grows in concentric rings which can be seen on the brown patches.

Not as serious as the more widely known late blight, control is usually unnecessary and rarely affects cropping.

Late Potato Blight is a more serious. The picture on the left shows the first signs of

potato blight. If you see this on a couple of your potato plants the only course of action is to cut the plant down to ground level immediately.

This will prevent the disease reaching the potato tubers under the ground.

Burn the foliage immediately because this is a highly infectious disease. The spores will live in the soil for a couple of years if

they are not destroyed. The same fungus also causes Tomato Blight.

If the foliage is destroyed immediately Potato Blight is noticed, there is a very good chance that the potato tubers under ground will be unaffected.

Leave tubers underground for no more than three weeks to allow skins to harden and to prevent slug damage.

Some basic laws of economics

SOCIALISM: You have two cows and give one to your neighbour

COMMUNISM: You have two cows; the government takes both and gives you some milk.

NAZISM: You have two cows; the government takes both and shoots you.

BUREAUCRATISM: You have two cows; the government takes both, shoots one, milks the other and throws the milk away.

CAPITALISM: You have two cows. You sell one and buy a bull. Your herd multiplies and the economy grows. You sell them and retire on the income.

AN AMERICAN CORPORATION: You have two cows. You sell one and force the other to produce the milk of four cows. Later, you hire a consultant to analyse why the cow dropped dead.

A FRENCH CORPORATION: You have two cows. You go on strike because you want three cows.

A JAPANESE CORPORATION: You have two cows. You redesign them so they are one tenth the size of an ordinary cow and produce twenty times the milk. You then create a clever cow cartoon image called 'Cowkimon' and market them worldwide.

AN ITALIAN CORPORATION: You have two cows, but you don't know where they are. You break for lunch.

A SWISS CORPORATION: You have 5,000 cows, none of

which belong to you. You charge others for storing them.

A CHINESE CORPORATION: You have two cows. You have 300 people milking them. You claim full employment, high bovine productivity and arrest the reporter who reported the numbers.

A GREEK CORPORATION: You have two cows. You borrowed money to buy ten cows. Now you have no cows, but you owe tax on 100 cows.

Cub Night

The allotment site played host to a very successful Cub Night on Monday 28th May in the evening.

40 cubs from the 72nd Reading (Anderson) Cub pack attended along with volunteers from the EAA. They were split into groups, some undertook a quiz, some a bug hunt, while the others helped sowing, planting and weeding on the designated allotments. During the evening they all changed around so they all had the same experiences. The cubs appeared to enjoy themselves and hopefully by the end of the evening, they gained a basic knowledge of vegetable growing.

This seemed an excellent way of introducing youngsters to the world of allotments as well as getting some willing hands to help on the plots. This event could well be repeated next year.

Cookery Corner

Our recipe this month uses the ubiquitous courgette. Besides the usual ratatouille and risotto, gratins and even wine, courgettes can be used like carrots in cakes, they help make the cake moist.

This is a light teatime cake that's not too sweet. Will store in an airtight tin for a week.

Lemon Courgette Cake

Prep: 15 mins Cook: 45 mins

200g (7oz) grated courgette

150g (5oz) caster sugar

1 egg

125ml (4 fl oz) vegetable oil

200g (7oz) plain flour

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

¼ teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 teaspoons lemon zest

1 Preheat oven to 160C/Gas mk 3. Grease loaf tin.

2 In a bowl beat together courgette, sugar, egg and oil. In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, salt, bicarbonate of soda and baking powder, stir in cinnamon and lemon zest.

3 Stir the flour mixture into the courgette mixture just until blended. Pour the batter into the prepared tin.

4 Bake for 45 minutes in the oven until a knife inserted in the centre comes out clean.

5 Remove from oven and cool in tin for 10 minutes before turning out on to a wire rack to cool completely.



AGM

Please make a note that the AGM will be held on Monday 15th October, 7.30 -10pm at Earley St Peter's, Fowler Room. The formalities will be followed by a veggie quiz and there will be free refreshments.

Come and have your say about your allotment association.

Deer Update

The deer has still to be positively identified and exactly where he/she is getting on to the allotments.

Early Town council are on the case, they may be willing to block up any access points when these can be identified.



Male Roe deer

Annual EAA BBQ and Competitions

On Saturday 1st September we are holding our Annual BBQ at the Allotments between 12.00 and 15.00. We will supply the BBQs, one for the meat eaters and one for vegetarians, BBQ utensils, serving tables, plates, desert bowls, cutlery, tumblers and napkins and a marquee in case it rains.



If you'd like to come along, could you bring what you'd like to eat and drink and either a salad or sweet with a serving spoon to share. Picnic chairs and tables if you so wish as well.

We are also holding some competitions on the day. There will be a "**Best Vegetable/Fruit Competition**" with a prize of a £10.00 gardening voucher.

Enter the best example from your plot on the day and take part in the voting.

A "**Produce from the Allotment**" competition where you can enter anything edible made from your produce such as carrot cake or red currant jelly. Entries judged by other entrants.

Enter on the day to win a £10.00 gardening voucher.

Best recipe will appear in the next newsletter.

There will also be a **children's sunflower completion** with a prize for the tallest and broadest sunflower head. To enter email: suzanne_and_derek@hotmail.com with your plot number. The sunflowers will be judged on the morning of the BBQ



This event will be free to Earley Allotment Association Members and children and £1.00 to non-members or free if you join on the day.

Ladybirds

Encourage Ladybirds to your plot. Ladybirds are important to local ecosystems and provide natural pest control to gardeners.

Ladybirds (sometimes called ladybugs) are beetles. There are 46 different types in the UK, but only 26 look like a classic ladybird, brightly coloured and patterned. Most have the common red and black colouration you will find there are other combinations such as yellow with black spots, and white with black spots.



Many species are named after a number of spots. 2 spot, 7 spot and 10 spot ladybirds are all common.

Most ladybird varieties are excellent predators of pest insects and can usually be found in the garden from March to October.



Ladybirds can eat over 5000 aphids (or other soft body insects) during their lifetime which is usually about a year.

It is not only the adult ladybird that seems to have an insatiable appetite for aphids, their larvae will also forage aggressively for aphids.



ladybird larvae

Adult Ladybirds lay up to 50 yellow eggs per day on the undersides of leaves. This equates to up to 1500 eggs in their lifetime although some of the eggs are infertile, thought to be used as a food source for juvenile ladybird larvae.

The ladybird larvae aren't the handsomest or prettiest of insects, but they are real aphid and blackfly guzzlers.

Ladybirds will only come onto your allotment if it is poison free. Leave mulch and a few piles of leaves for the ladybirds to hibernate in during the winter.

Ladybirds are the allotmenters and gardeners friend.

Schedule of Events Past and Future

During the associations first year, there has been a varied programme of events.

What would you like to see included next year? Contact any committee member with any suggestions .

3 rd September 2011	BBQ
17 th October 2011	Inaugural Meeting 19.30 – 20.30
19 th November 2011	Issue 1 – Newsletter December/January
27 th November 2011	Allotment Induction Session with Michelle Leak
10 th December 2011	Seed Swap and Mulled Wine
14 th February 2012	Issue 2 – Newsletter February/March
1 st April 2012	Issue 3 – Newsletter April
21 st April 2012	Seed/Plant Swap
28 th May 2012	Cub night
1 st June 2012	Issue 4 – Newsletter June
1 st August 2012	Issue 5 – Newsletter August
1 st September 2012	BBQ plus Best Vegetable/Tallest Sunflower/Produce made from the Plot?
1st October 2012	Issue 6 - Newsletter
15 th October 2012	AGM with refreshments and vegetable quiz at Earley St Peters, 7.30-10pm
1st December 2012	Issue 7 - Newsletter
December 2012	Seed Swap and Mulled Wine

Wanted More Committee Members

Have you got some time you would like to spend helping to develop our fledgling Allotment Association? The committee meets every two months to discuss ideas and progress ongoing projects. If you would like more information please contact one of the committee members.

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Committee News

On 3rd July your committee held a meeting, the following is a précis of the proceedings.

Richard Holdstock has decided to stand down from the post of chairman and has resigned from the committee. It was acknowledged by all that without Richard, the Association wouldn't exist and it was all due to the hard work he

had put in over a considerable period in getting the organisation set up. We hope to fill the vacancy in the near future.

The BBQ scheduled for Saturday 1st September was discussed. As well as 'Best Vegetable', 'Tallest Sunflower' and 'Biggest Sunflower Seed head' already announced, we decided to add

some cookery categories - i.e. carrot cake, potato salad.

It was agreed an information poster should be posted on the notice board for newcomers re: free manure etc.

The temporary shed is ready for assembly subject to approval by ETC.

A focal point at last!