



Chairman's Chatter

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Welcome to the season of harvest – after a long dry period we have finally had the rain we craved – on Tuesday evening 18th July an inch and a quarter fell in an hour at the University weather station, and if you were out that evening you certainly knew about it!

It does mean that both our crops and the weeds are thriving – it should be a bumper harvest for us all. I look forward to seeing some of your produce at the EAA BBQ on Saturday 2 September 2017. There are details inside the newsletter about the time and place, and how to enter the friendliest produce show in town. If you have not been before, there are no self-important judges here – as we collectively choose the winners.

The great outdoors: If you like the big outdoors more generally you may have come across the new map published by the Ordnance Survey showing all the green spaces in the UK: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/getoutside/greenspaces/>. This includes allotments as well as parks, golf courses and playing fields. It makes an interesting read and is also great for helping to plan a holiday in a new area if you want to see what you can explore on your travels.

Friends of the Earth (FOE) have used this map to identify that across the UK, Golf courses take up 10 times the amount of land used for allotments. The campaign group also found that golf courses receive agricultural subsidies, while allotments, many of which are used to grow food, receive nothing.

It called for the Government – currently considering a new farm subsidy system to replace the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after Brexit – to use public money to promote "sustainable food

production" instead of "private leisure activities". All part of Michael Gove's inbox as he gets the hang of being our Environment Secretary.

This year's AGM, any questions?
Another date for your diary is our AGM on Wednesday 8th November.

I am pleased to tell you that Jo Shaw the Deputy Town Clerk for Earley Town Council (ETC) will be attending. I would expect her to give us an update on the Mares tail on plots 5-9 and answer our questions on issues around our allotments.

Jo does a monthly site walk with David Pelling who is our ETC representative and Dave has raised a number of issues with the council over the year on an informal basis that is often quicker and easier than official channels. I am sure that some of you will have questions that you want to raise with Jo – so come along and meet the lady in person.

At the AGM we will also consider the matter of merging the EAA with the H&P Horticultural Society, to have a single organisation supporting you in all matters allotment. Please put the date in your diary and come along and have your say.

Wheelbarrow

The EAA wheelbarrow that is kept by the wooden shed and is available for members to borrow suffered a number of flat tyres recently. I am pleased to report it has now been fitted with a new tyre and inner tube and is ready for moving things around once more.

Richard

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Seasonal Tips - August/September

First sit on your allotment, with a glass of something, and admire the fruits of your labour! Now for the hard work!

Harvest regularly - courgettes, runner beans and French beans are notorious for the speed at which they grow.

Strawberry runners can be pegged down to root, then potted up ready to transplant.

Remove lower trusses from tomato plants, to concentrate the plants energies on growing and ripening the fruit.



Tomato 'ghost spot'

Water tomatoes regularly at the **base** of the plant to avoid 'ghost spot', pale rings on the skin that sometimes turn yellow or orange, though the fruit can still be eaten.

Lift onions towards the end of the month. Dry them before 'stringing' and putting into store.

Outdoor sowings of Spring Cabbages, carrots, lettuce, peas, turnips, winter spinach can be made now.

Top tip for August

Lift garlic, separate into cloves and freeze in a plastic tub. When you need garlic the cloves can be taken straight from the freezer and chopped as normal, or pureed.

September:

Later crops are coming into harvest - lift maincrop potatoes, pull leeks, pick apples, pears and late-season plums.

Cut down asparagus - tall, feathery asparagus foliage will be starting to turn yellow and should be cut down to just 2.5 cm above ground level.

String up chillies for drying – don't forget to wear gloves.

Plant new strawberry plants, the sooner they are in, the sooner they establish and therefore produce a bigger crop next year.

Harvest soft fruit. Summer prune gooseberries and currants once all the fruit has been picked.

Prune summer fruiting raspberries by cutting all the canes that had fruit on this year. Tie in all the new canes. The late fruiting raspberries and blackberries will be cropping well by now.

Apples and pears grown as cordons, espaliers or fans can be pruned towards the end of the month, leave the trees and bushes until the winter.

Want to try a new fruit - plant cranberry bushes at any time from September to November. Bear in mind they do need an acid soil, so grow them in large tubs of ericaceous compost.

Cookery Corner - Courgette and Lime cake

A different way of using the glut of courgettes.

This recipe for a super moist cake is from Three Sisters Bake by Gillian, Nichola and Linsey Reith

Ingredients:

For the cake:

- 135ml sunflower oil
- 200g caster sugar
- 3 large eggs, at room temperature
- 300g self-raising flour
- 1/2 tsp bicarbonate soda
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 335g courgette, finely grated
- grated zest of 2 limes

For the icing:

- 200g full-fat cream cheese
- 100g icing sugar
- grated zest and juice of 1 lime
- courgette ribbons, to decorate

Method:

Preheat the oven to 160C, 320F, gas 2. Line the base and sides of the cake tin with greaseproof paper.

Beat the oil, sugar and eggs together in a large bowl with an electric hand mixer for 2-3 minutes, until light and fluffy. Sift in the flour, bicarbonate of soda and baking powder and fold into the mixture. Fold in the grated courgette and lime zest.

Pour into the prepared tin and bake for 40-50 minutes, until golden brown and a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool a little in the tin, then turn out onto a wire rack.

To make the icing, beat the cream cheese and icing sugar together until smooth. Add the lime zest and juice and stir.

Once cool, top the cake with the icing and the courgette ribbons.



HP Trading Shed

Fruit Trees and bushes

We are pleased to offer a choice of fine fruit trees, plants and bushes from J Parkers a long established plant supplies nursery at very good prices. See Liz's email for varieties. Please order with your payment in the shed no later than Sunday 24th September 2017, for delivery late November - mid December.

Potatoes.

To get the best choice and prices we have to order seed potatoes by the end of August! They will be available from the second week of January 2018.

We usually stock ... earlies, ... maincrop and ... salad varieties. Pop in the shed to vote for the varieties.

Coming soon

Spring Bulbs

We will be stocking spring bulbs in the autumn at the usual good value prices. Come and see us for all your spring colour - we will send an email when they are in stock.

In each issue of the EAA newsletter, we would like to spotlight one product that is available for sale in the shed. This time it is **Green Manure** seeds.

If you have a patch of ground which has yielded up this year's crop and is not needed at the moment, why not sow 'Green Manure'.

The term 'green manures' applies to a group of annual plants which benefit the soil in various ways, similar to the result of digging in animal manure. Green manures have the advantage of being fast-growing – hence their use as ground cover.

The charity Garden Organic recently found that growing green manure can reduce the loss of the key nutrient nitrogen in the soil by up to 97 percent compared to soil left bare. So green manures seem to be the perfect solution.

Sown in summer, green manures germinate quickly and put on surprising growth over the period of a few weeks. Be sure to water young plants during times of drought. Not only do they suppress weeds and feed the soil, but also to produce a wonderful display of late summer flowers, much loved by bees. The dense foliage also provides the perfect habitat for a range of helpful creatures, such as beetles.

Phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*): best sown from April to August and dug in after two or three months before it runs to seed. Phacelia flowers, a delicate purple with numerous long, soft stamens, are delightful and act as a magnet for bees. Crimson clover (*Trifolium incarnatum*): prefers light soils. Sow from March to August and leave in for two or three months up to flowering. Bees love the crimson flowers.

Dig into the ground while still green, six weeks before planting, they will return valuable nutrients to the soil and improve soil structure.

Also available are packets of green manure containing Caliente mustard seeds. Caliente Mustard Blend has been bred specifically for biofumigation and green manuring. The naturally occurring biofumigant gas (ITC) is produced by the plants when the crop is chopped, approximately 100 days after sowing. When incorporated in the soil it has many benefits including improved soil structure, health and fertility, suppression of various soil-borne diseases and pests and increased soil microbial activity.

Grazing rye or winter vetch can be sown in the autumn and will keep the soil covered over winter. When the weather warms up, you can dig it in and it will provide nutrients ready for your hungry summer veg. If you choose a winter mix that contains plants from the legume family, such as clover and vetch, these absorb nitrogen from the air and fix it in nodules on their roots.

Summer and Winter mix green manure seeds are available in the shed. Cost varies depending on type.

A message from your Plot Rep

As your plot rep I am the intermediary between the Culver Lane Allotments and Earley Town Council.

We have, as you may be aware, regular monthly plot inspections and I accompany the representative for Earley Town Council to guide them regarding the condition and cultivation of each plot.

If for any reason you are finding it difficult to manage your plot due to health, work or other issues please let me know so that I can make sure that the Council Representative understands why your plot may not be at its best.

As an addition to this Earley Town Council are very keen to ensure that all plot holders get the best from their plots and again, if you find that a whole plot is just too much, then Earley Town Council is willing to split it in half providing you with a smaller more manageable plot.

If you have any questions or need to pass on any information to Earley Town Council please e mail me on david.pelling1@ntlworld.com

Also if you do make use of either of the 2 EAA mowers it is important to let me know so that I can keep them topped up.

Reading Town Meal

This year's Town Meal will be held in Forbury Gardens on **Saturday 30th September** 12 noon till 4pm.

The Reading Town Meal is cooked by Reading College catering students from produce grown and donated by local allotment holders and gardeners, and served free to over 1,000 people.

As usual, as a local allotment, EAA be donating some of the vegetables.

Look out for the crates under the notice boards in which to put you spare produce.

List of vegetables required:-

Salad bits

- lettuces and salad leaves
- tomatoes
- red peppers

Beans

- broad beans, runner & French

Roots, onions and potatoes

- beetroots
- carrots
- onions
- garlic
- potatoes

Pumpkins and squashes

- pumpkins
- squashes
- courgettes
- Marrows

Fruit - frozen

- apples - cookers and eaters
- pears
- plums
- blackberries
- currants - red, black or white
- gooseberries
- rhubarb

EAA BBQ

The Annual EAA BBQ is fast approaching - **Saturday 2nd September**.

This pleasant social event will be held in a marquee erected in the car park. If you are new to the plots, this is an opportunity to get to know your fellow allotmenters.

BBQs, plates, cutlery and tumblers will be supplied. Tea and coffee available.

Bring what you'd like to eat and drink and a salad or sweet to share, picnic tables and chairs.

Free to Members and children. Non members £1.00 or free if you join on the day.

The categories for entries are:

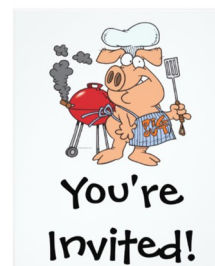
- Best Fruit and Best Veg
- Box of Produce (veg, fruit, herbs)
- Preserves, chutneys and cakes
- Flowers
- The People's Choice

Entries for each class will be accepted between 12.30pm - 1.30pm on the day. The judges for the various categories will be everybody that attends, voting papers will be distributed during the afternoon, results at 2.30pm

The exception being the 'Peoples Choice' that will be voted for by you beforehand by you.. Please mark the voting slip below with your choices, cut it out and place it in the EAA honesty box.

If you have sunflowers on your plot, they will be judged for the tallest and/or broadest head.

Look forward to seeing you at this friendly event.



1st Choice

Plot Number:

2nd Choice

Plot Number:

3rd Choice

Plot Number: