



Chairman's Chatter

Inside this issue:

Chairman's Chatter	1
BBQ	2
Toilet Twinning	2
Cookery Corner	2
Seasonal Tips	3
HPHS Trading Shed	3
Stone on Plot 46 Update	4
Note of thanks	4
Dates for diary	4

Welcome to the height of the growing season. Now we have had a little rain and some sun everything should be growing like topsy, including the weeds that are of course thriving.

As we move through the planting season please put any spare seedlings or plants on the EAA swap rack by the shed that contains the mowers. Your surplus seedlings might be the gap filler someone else needs. The donations from folks taking some plants help pay for the running costs of the mowers.

Earley Green Fair

On Saturday 5th August between 11:00 and 15:00 we have a stall at the Earley Green Fair which has been held for many years between Beach Lane and Maiden Erleigh Lake. The aim of the stall is two fold:

1) To publicise the use of the trading shed and let people know it is open and available to anyone willing to invest £1.50 in a membership. We will have price lists and membership forms handy.

2) To raise awareness of the allotments as you may be surprised how few folks know Earley Town Council have allotments. This is a joint initiative with ETC to try and let folks know the allotments are there and the benefits of being a plot holder. As we all know it is sociable, fun as well as being good for our physical and mental health. We will have application forms for people wanting to join the waiting list.

If you have not been before it is a very relaxed event with forty to fifty varied stalls.

There will be a children's Scarecrow Competition judged by the EAA and any proceeds from the entry fees will go towards the Toilet Twinning project.

If you were able to help man the stall for an hour or two that would be great - and give me a chance to have a look around. If you can, please get in touch.

To help make up a display I will be taking some photos, in the next few weeks, of crops growing on different plots. If you don't want your crops featured please let me know - I will only be taking plants rather than people, if you want to be on show you will have to help with the stall on the day.

My thinking is also that a healthy waiting list for allotments is a great way of demonstrating the demand for them and safeguarding their future. I occasionally write about plots under threat, and these often involve sites with vacant plots.

Sad news

On a sad note I have to report the passing away recently of Brian James who with his wife Kathleen were some of our longest standing plot holders. Till a few years ago they maintained two plots to a high standard and tended them almost every day. We sent a card of condolences to Kathleen on behalf of all plot holders.

To be aware

Last month there was a shed break in at the north (far) end of the site. Please continue to be vigilant, politely challenge anyone you don't recognise and let me know if you see anything suspicious.

Happy harvesting

Richard

Plot 46

Tredgett@gmail.com

BBQ

The annual EAA BBQ and show is on **Saturday 2nd September** this year, 12.30 -15.00 in the car park.

The categories for this year are:

- Best Fruit and Best Veg
- Box of Produce (veg, fruit, herbs)
- Preserves, chutneys and cakes
- Flowers

There will also be a competition for the tallest Sunflower - Judging will take place on the day!

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

Toilet Twinning

2.4 billion people don't have somewhere safe, clean and hygienic to go to the loo. That's more than a third of the people on the planet.

By donating £60 to twin your toilet, you help those in desperate poverty to have access to a proper latrine, clean water and the information they need to be healthy.

Your smallest room becomes the proud owner of a certificate, complete with a colour photo of its twin and GPS coordinates so you can look up your twin on Google Maps.

Any money raised from the sale of gardening books from the shed and from the Scarecrow Competition at the Earley Green Fair will be used to twin our plot loo.

Cookery Corner - Kimchi

Something a bit different this month. Many thanks to Sally Herson for the information and recipe for Kimchi.

Historically, fermenting foods was used as a way of preserving foods long before the days of refrigeration but fermented foods contain benefits to health beyond food preservation.

The conversion of sugars and starches during the process enhances the natural, beneficial bacteria in food. These bacteria, known as probiotics or 'good' bacteria are thought to help a multitude of health issues, specifically digestive health.

Kimchi is a staple food in Korea made from fermented vegetables. It is easy to make from a range of vegetables grown on our allotments.

Recipe: This is a basic recipe. Lots of other ingredients can be added or substituted such as beetroot, mangetout, white onion etc.



Ingredients:

1 Napa cabbage (Also known as Chinese leaves). End removed and cut lengthwise and then into two inch pieces.

1 Mooli or Daikon radish either grated or cut into matchstick size pieces. About 8-10 ordinary red radish can be substituted.

8 spring or Welsh/everlasting onions, sliced lengthways and then into two inch strips.

6 cloves garlic crushed or chopped.

2 inch piece of ginger grated.

2 carrots cut into matchstick size pieces.

4 tablespoons salt.

One large tablespoon of Sriracha sauce. (Available at most supermarkets)



Rub the salt all over the napa cabbage leaves thoroughly coating and then put the salted cabbage in a bowl of water ensuring that the leaves are covered. Weigh down with a plate. Leave for at least 2 hours. Rinse the cabbage well and lightly squeeze out the extra moisture. Mix with the other ingredients until all are coated with the shiracha sauce.



Push the mixture into a jar and press down preferably until the top layer is covered in the juices but ensuring any air bubbles are removed. Cover with either a fermenting lid or a clean cloth secured with an elastic band.

Leave for 2 days on a warm windowsill making sure you press down with a clean spoon any vegetables that rise above the juices. Kimchi can be left to ferment for up to 5 days for a more pungent taste.

The Kimchi should then be sealed in a jar and put in the fridge and left for another 3-5 days to mature. Enjoy!

Seasonal Tips - June/July

Beetroot, broad beans, cabbage, cauliflower, early peas, lettuce, rhubarb, spring onions, radish, spinach can all start to be harvested now. Lift the earliest potatoes towards the end of the month and continue earthing up the rows of your other varieties.

June is the end of the asparagus season, so stop cutting and give the plants a top dressing of general fertiliser to help build up the crowns for next year. Start to harvest the first of your soft fruits.

Successional sowings of beetroot, kohlrabi, lettuce and winter cabbage seeds can all be done now. Make a last sowing of French beans and peas. Sow a quick maturing early pea, such as 'Early Onward', so that you can harvest the peas before the colder nights of autumn. Water your seed drills well before sowing any seeds – this way the young plants will develop a good root system. It is worth starting them off in trays indoors and then transferring them outside after a couple of weeks. Sow every 2 - 4 weeks for a continual supply of produce.

Outdoor tomatoes can also go into their final position. Use a cold frame to condition them or move them back into the house at night for a few days.

Leek sown earlier can be planted out when they are pencil thickness.

Watch out for **aphids** (black fly on broad beans and greenfly on various crops) and thrips on brassicas –

spray the plant with soapy water (diluted washing up liquid) or squash the flies with your thumb and finger. You can buy insecticides if you prefer, including a fatty acid soap to spray on the plants.

Carrot fly is a particular problem between May and September – when female flies lay their eggs. To deter low-flying female flies, cover plants with horticultural fleece or place two foot high barriers around the plants (plastic bottle cloches work well).

Cabbage root fly attacks the roots of brassicas. Female flies lay the eggs on the surface of the soil next to the stem of the plant. When transplanting out young plants, place a piece of carpet (or cardboard or fleece) around the base of the plant to create a collar, this will stop the flies from laying their eggs on the soil. Again the biological control (pathogenic nematodes) can be used to deal with any larvae.

Hoe at every opportunity to remove weeds and break-up the soil. This allows water to soak down into the earth.

Train in climbing beans and continue to put in supports for your peas. Water along the rows of peas to swell the developing pods.

Carry on with the thinning out of seedlings of earlier sown crops.

Don't forget to water, we only need a few days of sun and the ground will soon dry out.

HPHS Trading Shed

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 **Horticultural Grit**

Horticultural grit is a key element in all soils to add improve structure and drainage, while providing small pockets to hold essential air and water.

Washed horticultural grit is free from lime and other elements. This gives it a neutral pH that will not affect soil acidity levels.

Why use horticultural grit?

Soil structure is of the utmost importance to an impressive plot. Horticultural grit can help with this, providing these key benefits:

Neutral pH

Opens up heavy clay soils

Improves drainage

Helps reduce 'clumping' in sticky clay soils

In addition to these advantages, horticultural grit can be mixed with coir instead of Vermiculite which is more expensive.

Another use is as a slug deterrent, spread liberally on the ground, you need to make sure that the grit layer is at least 5cm wide and there are no gaps, as an alternative to slug pellets - also sold in the shed. A 20kg sack of grit is £5 and it is also available in a 3kg bag for a £1.

Used as a top dressing after potting up containers to give a decorative finish as well as aiding drainage and keeping the weeds down.



Strange stone on Plot 46 - Update

Back in late July last year a friend, Kevin Haywood a Geological Archaeologist came to have a look at the mystery stone on our Plot 46.

I shared his report in the February newsletter earlier this year. He felt that the stone was worthy of further investigation and so in April this year, Kevin, Dave & Linda Pelling and I prepared to lift the stone.

The stone's dimensions are 1m x 60cm x 18 cm and being made of Portland Stone makes it rather heavy. We cleared the grass from around the stone and started to excavate under the stone in true Time Team fashion.

We were rewarded with a piece of brick, which was of indeterminate age.

We decided to lever up the stone, and held it vertical long enough to see that there wasn't anything carved on the side faced down. Disappointingly this ruled out Kevin's suggestion that it had part of a medieval tombstone.

Ordinance Survey maps were consulted for the area going back to 1872. The present day site of the allotments was originally part of Mace Field which would have straddled the area now occupied by the railway, part of Palmer Park and the allotments.

In 1669 Mace Field was divided into strips and owned by families of Englefield, Fettiplace, Barker and Blagrave, so the cultivation of our land by hand goes way back.

This does not discount the suggestion that the stone had been used for a machine base, but suggests it has been moved here from another place.

In the 19th century Mace Field was owned by a Francis Cholmeley and after it had been bisected by the South East Railway, Robert Palmer bought the land to the south to stop there being any chance of a railway works being built, which would have interfered with Huntley & Palmers virtual monopoly of labour in Reading. He subsequently gave the land to Reading to make Palmer Park.

With the stone put to one side we carried on digging and washing finds. The most notable was part of a medieval roof tile and a piece of flint that had been heated. It would suggest that it could have been a pot boiler. Heated up in a fire and then added to water to heat the water.

The finds cover a variety of periods. I will bring them to the BBQ in September so you can have a look at them and make your own suggestions as to what they might be.

If you have anything you have found on your plot that might think would be of interest, please bring it to the BBQ and maybe Kevin could have a look .

Julia Tredgett

Plot 46



OS map 25 to a inch 1892 - 1905

Note of Thanks

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the collection to mark John Snow's retirement after almost thirty years as Chair of the trading shed. We used the collection to buy John a day out on a steam train from Reading to Minehead and back.

Peter kindly volunteered to accompany John. Needless to say both thoroughly enjoyed themselves and had a great day out. John sends his grateful thanks and if you catch him in the shed he will tell you all about it.

Dates for your diary

Earley Green Fair	Saturday 5th August 2017
	Beech Lane 1am - 3.00pm
EAA BBQ	Saturday 2nd September 2017
	Culver Lane 12.30pm - 3.00pm
EAA AGM	Wednesday 8th November 2017
	Parish Rooms 7.30pm