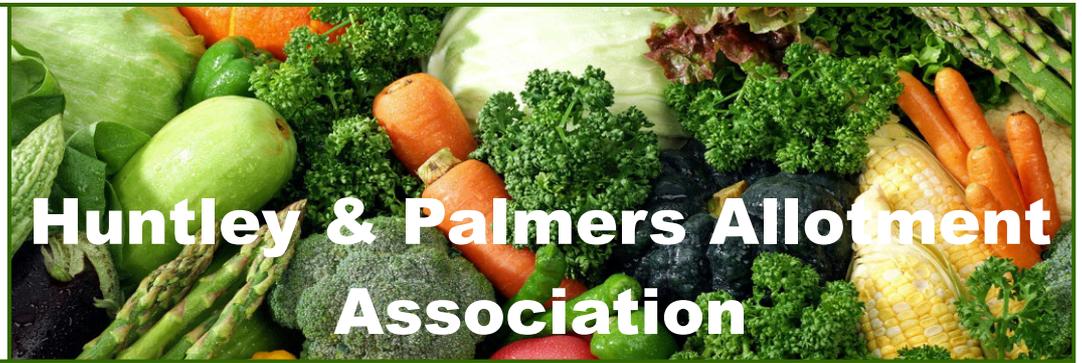


January 2019

Issue 4



Chairman's Chatter

A happy new year from all of us at the trading shed.

You can now renew your membership for 2019 – still the best value in town at £1.50. You will need a 2019 membership card to make purchases in the shed.

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The new season starts now

The winter is a great time for planning what you want to sow and grow on your allotment or in the garden in the coming year. If you have not started this yet or are still finalising which varieties to grow this year then drop in to the shed and pick up your copy of the Suttons catalogue. This contains all the details of the Suttons range and may suggest new varieties to consider giving a go.

Remember that if you use our code **G21149E** you get 35% off seeds and 10% of all other items in the catalogue. This code can be used online, via the telephone or by filling out the order form and posting it to them. The easiest way to get your seeds however is to drop in and see if we have what you want in stock.

We have stocked up the seed rack in the shed with a wider range of varieties to offer you more choice. Over 200 packets of seeds have been added to the rack ready for you to buy – come and take a look.

Seed potatoes

The seed potatoes have arrived from our supplier and will be available in the shed from Saturday 12 January 2019.

The varieties we are stocking this year are as follows:

1st Earlies

Arran Pilot
Foremost
Lady Christi

Salad

Charlotte
Pink Fir Apple

Main Crop

Desiree
King Edward
Majestic
Maris Piper
Picasso

We have held prices the same as 2018 so seed potatoes are **£1** per KG or **£2.70** for 3KGs.

We also have beans, onions, shallots in stock to buy loose. The garlic will be coming later in the month, we will let you know when it is available.

Happy planning and we look forward to seeing you soon

Richard Tredgett

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Seasonal Tips - January/February

After the Christmas feasting, it's good to get back outside. Firstly for a bit of fresh air, but secondly for a bit of exercise. But remember winter could yet have a sting in its tail.

As soon as you get your **Seed Potatoes**, set them up to sprout (rose end uppermost) in egg boxes in a cool (though frost-proof), dry shed, where they can get plenty of light and produce the short, sturdy shoots that make for earliness and a high yield. Don't let them get even slightly chilled, for that's enough to kill the "eyes".



Dig over your plot – this will aerate the soil and encourage break down. Dig in some well-rotted manure or compost that will feed it ready for spring planting. Cover with black polythene to warm up the soil.

Already, Rhubarb is breaking into leaf. Winter garlic, onions and broad beans are growing strongly.

Cut back asparagus plants and cover them in a layer of manure or compost.

Prune established apple and pear trees – whilst they are dormant. Put a top dressing of well rotted manure or good garden compost around your fruit trees and bushes this month.

For a very early crop of peas – sow seeds in pots, modules, or guttering and keep them indoors until you can harden them off and plant them outdoors in March or April.

February

Get your garlic in the ground by the end of February, unless the soil is waterlogged. You can buy the bulbs in the shed later this month. Garlic likes a sunny position with well-drained soil. Break the bulbs up and plant them, pointed end up, about an inch beneath the surface and 4 inches apart.

Plant shallot sets in a shallow drill about 18cm (7in) apart so that the tips are just showing.

Broad beans can be sown outdoors if the soil is warm enough (5°C or more), but be prepared to resow, last year many a crop was devastated by snow in March.

If you have a heated propagator, sow some of the longer season seeds that need heat for germination - peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers and aubergines.

Winter vegetable casserole

To celebrate "Veganuary", a simple veggie recipe.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 onions, each cut into 6 wedges
- 3 carrots, cut into chunks
- 3 celery sticks, cut into chunks
- 400g sweet potato or swede, cut into chunks
- 1 litre hot vegetable stock, (Kallø)
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 3 leeks, thickly sliced
- 150g pearl barley
- 2 tsp dried sage

salt and pepper

3 tbsp coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley to garnish

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°, gas mark 4). Put the onions, carrots, celery and sweet potato or swede in a large flameproof casserole. Pour in the stock and bring to the boil.

Add the garlic, leeks, pearl barley, sage and seasoning. Stir to mix the vegetables together. Cover and transfer to the oven to cook for about 1 hour or until the vegetables are just soft, and the barley is tender.

Sprinkle with the parsley and serve with thick slices of farmhouse bread.

Other vegetables to add include parsnips, turnips and peeled chunks of butternut squash. The casserole can be simmered gently on the hob for 45–50 minutes, instead of cooking in the oven. Stir occasionally



Trading Shed

Most of the supplies for the Trading shed such as composts and fertilisers come from a company called Horticultural Supplies based in Suffolk. They have a large catalogue and we unsurprisingly tend to focus on the stuff we buy regularly.

They do however offer a selection of tools such as forks, spades, hoes, and loppers that may be of interest to members. As a trial we will offer the facility to buy these tools at cost price for members.

Before buying please be aware of the following:

- * The price you see is the price you pay, however please check the quantity – a very few things are priced for a multiple amount for example dibbers are priced for ten rather than one. If it says ten then this is the number you have to buy.
- * As this is a custom purchase please note that payment will be required when the goods are ordered. Items can only be returned if they are faulty, not if you change your mind.
- * Items will be delivered when we have a delivery from Horticultural Supplies which is usually March (once the spuds have all sold and freed up space for compost) and May. If you need things urgently this process is probably not for you.

Attached to the email of the newsletter are the details of the tools that are available. Many other things are available – last year for example we bought a 100-litre sack of perlite for a member. The catalogue has 70 pages and a copy is available in the trading shed to look at there – sadly we do not have enough for you to take one away. All items are offered on the above basis.

To make a purchase, please come in to the shed to place and pay for your order. We will let you know when the delivery has been received. Deliveries from Horticultural Supplies are usually during the week but collection will be from the shed during the advertised opening hours.

This season, as well as the tried and tested seeds available in the shed, we will be offering a selection of different varieties. Also available is a selection of bee friendly and butterfly attracting flower seeds.

Please see the email attachment for the complete list of new varieties available.

The Shed re-opens this weekend for seed potatoes, loose beans, shallots and onion sets.

Saturday 12th January and Sunday 13th January 2019:

10am to 12.30pm and then every weekend.

Manure

This is a popular time of year to top up the organic matter in your soil which is often achieved by adding well-rotted manure.

Manures are strictly speaking derived from animal faeces, urine and bedding, typically straw but sometimes wood chips or hemp fibre. Manure can be 'fresh' straight from the farm or stable, or it can be well-rotted. The latter is much more hygienic and easier to use, but the former can be richer in nutrients. Any manure with recognisable straw or wood chips is best stacked and allowed to rot for a season, ideally under cover or at least covered with a plastic sheet to exclude rain.

A source we have used for a couple of years now is Mick whose mobile number is 07769 876908. Mick is based in the Hurst area and he is happy to deliver a load of between three and four tonnes for **£30**.

Pete providing scale to a fresh delivery. He has given permission for his photograph to be used



Some folks share a load which reduces the amount of wheel barrowing you need to do to spread it around your plot or garden as well as halving the price per person.

Crop Rotation

The principle of crop rotation is to grow specific groups of vegetables on a different part of the vegetable plot each year. This helps to reduce a build-up of crop-specific pest and disease problems and it organises groups of crops according to their cultivation needs.

Crop rotation is used in allotment plots and kitchen gardens for most annual vegetable crops. Perennial vegetables (such as rhubarb and asparagus) do not fit into the rotation. Certain annual crops such as cucurbits (courgettes, pumpkins, squashes, marrows and cucumbers), French and runner beans, salads (endive, lettuce and chicory) and sweetcorn can be grown wherever convenient, merely avoiding growing them too often in the same place.

Plan your crop rotation before the growing season starts (now), and mark out the plots on the ground so you know where to plant each crop.

Benefits of crop rotation

Soil fertility: Different crops have different nutrient requirements. Changing crops annually reduces the chance of particular soil deficiencies developing as the balance of nutrients removed from the soil tends to even out over time.

Weed control: Some crops, like potatoes and squashes, with dense foliage or large leaves, suppress weeds, thus reducing maintenance and weed problems in following crops.

Pest and disease control: Soil pests and diseases tend to attack specific plant families over and over again. By rotating crops between beds, the pests tend to decline in the period when their host plants are absent which helps reduce build-up of damaging populations of spores, eggs and pests. Common diseases that can be helped avoided by rotation include club root in brassicas and onion white rot.

Example three-year crop rotation

Move each section of the plot a step forward every year so that, for example, brassicas follow legumes, onions and roots; legumes, onions and roots follow potatoes and potatoes follow brassicas. Here is a traditional three-year rotation plan where potatoes and brassicas are important crops:

Year one

Section one: Potatoes

Section two: Legumes, onions and roots

Section three: Brassicas

Year two

Section one: Legumes, onions and roots

Section two: Brassicas

Section three: Potatoes

Year three

Section one: Brassicas

Section two: Potatoes

Section three: Legumes, onions and roots

The detail of your crop rotation depends primarily on what you and your family eat and therefore choose to grow. There are many books and websites that will help you work out the crop rotation that suits you. If this is all a mystery, come and have a chat, and a coffee, with the folks in the shed on a Saturday or Sunday morning.
