



## Chairman's Chatter

I am pleased to tell you that after much delay we have finally got four raised beds at the Culver Lane allotment site.

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These were installed for people who seek an alternative to a ground allotment for health or other reasons. The beds are waist high and six-foot-long by two and a half foot wide in old money allowing a reasonable number of plants to be grown.

They are filled with compost and ready to plant. In fact, following a small delay in agreeing the annual rent by Earley Town Council some existing plot holders have helped by planting spare plants in the new beds in a bit of "guerrilla gardening" giving the new plot holders a head start.

The raised beds were funded by a generous grant from the Earley Charity and erected by a team of volunteers on Bank Holiday Monday at the end of May. I would like to thank everyone who helped make this happen. Alongside the raised beds we have also provided two compost bins and bench seat for sitting and putting the world to rights on, between spells tending your plants. They are on plot two so handy for the Trading shed, car park and toilet.

This is really a pilot to see if what the committee thought was a good idea works and if we have got it right. We are therefore keen to get the remaining three raised beds in use and tested to see what the demand is and what design works best for people. I recognise that people come in many different shapes and sizes and the raised beds may need to also vary. There were certainly lots of different suggestions as to what might be suitable when we started the conversations about them.

If you or someone you know is interested in renting a raised bed, they need to contact Earley Town Council. The annual rent is £12 a year which seems great value for being able to enjoy the fun of growing crops and being in the heart of a great community.

Richard Tredgett

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The working party having a well deserved rest after assembling and filling four raised beds.

## Seasonal Tips - July/August

It is the height of summer. The days are long, temperatures are most likely at their highest. July can often be a dry month so watering is crucial as most crops require a steady, unbroken supply of water.

Shallots and garlic should be lifted and stored. Onions should be starting to die down this month: allow the stems to bend over at the neck and let them die off. They can then be lifted but make sure they dry off before storing them.

Cut down to ground level summer fruiting raspberries that have finished fruiting. Finish pulling rhubarb.

Runner beans should flower this month, water when beans have set.

July is the time to sow cabbages for next spring and your last chance to plant out sprouts, winter cabbages and autumn cauliflowers

Peas & French Beans - last chance for sowing or planting these, any later and the pods are unlikely to develop enough before the onset of frosts

Leeks - finish transplanting out leeks raised in pots or modules

Lettuce and other salad crops - succession sow more lettuce, rocket, land cress and other salad leaves for an ongoing supply into autumn

### August

Harvest crops as they are ready, and water in dry weather.

A good weekly soak is much better than little and often, except for tomatoes and cucumbers which need to be kept moist at all times. Cucumbers are the one crop that benefit from the leaves being watered over.

Keep up with the picking of runner beans to maintain cropping well into the Autumn. Continue with the lifting of potatoes.

Start to thin apples and pears down to one or two fruits per cluster.

Finish cutting back summer fruiting raspberries. Cut back blackcurrants after fruiting. Strawberry runners can be planted in pots in situ: once they have rooted they can be cut from the main plant and planted out to form new plants. Strawberry plants need to be renewed every three years to ensure fruit is maximised.

Watch out for blossom end rot on aubergines and tomatoes causing black sunken blotches on the skin, this is caused by a lack of calcium. Make sure you water regularly to ensure that the calcium in the soil is fed through the water to the plants.

## Chorizo, Potato and Runner Bean One Pot Meal

The perfect recipe to use a glut of potatoes and runner beans from the plot, full of flavour and super easy to make in a slow cooker.

### Ingredients:

1tbsp olive oil

1 medium onion, chopped

2 cloves of garlic, crushed

1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced

200g Chorizo, skin removed and diced

1kg potatoes, cut into 2.5cm dice

400g can chopped tomatoes

1 tbsp tomato purée

2 tsp sweet smoked paprika

200ml vegetable stock

350g runner beans, cut into approx. 2-3cm lengths

### Instructions:

1. Heat oil in a frying pan to a medium heat, add onion and garlic and cook gently for 2—3 minutes.
2. Add pepper, smokes paprika and diced chorizo and cook for a further 2 minutes until the chorizo releases its colour.
3. Add potatoes, tinned tomatoes and stock, stir to mix, spoon into a slow cooker.
4. Cook on low for 6 hours.
5. Cook the runner beans in boiling water for 5 minutes. Add to the slow cooker 15 minutes before serving.



## Trading Shed

The following Spring bulbs will be available in September, (we will email members when they arrive).

Golden Harvest Daffodil: £1.10 for 10 bulbs

Appledoorn & White Dream Tulips: £2.00 for 10 bulbs

Large crocus, White, Blue & Purple: £1.20 for 10 bulbs

Delft Blue Hyacinth: £3.95 for 10 bulbs

Prepared pre packed bulbs: £1.95 for 3

Tete A Tete multi headed Narcissi: £1.45 for 10 bulbs

Sabrosa & Minnow Narcissi: £2.20 for 10 bulbs

There will be overwintering onions, Autumn shallots & Aquadulce broad beans in stock.

### Do you like your onions? See attachment

We know that some of our customers buy and grow a lot of onions. To those customers we are offering the chance to buy a net of loose onions at cost price. The good news is that this means you get the onions for the same price that we bulk buy them from our suppliers. The bad news is that we need you to order them by 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019 for delivery in January as we are now having to put our January order together. Also, to secure

this price and your purchase we ask you to pay now.

### What is on offer:

13 different varieties of seed onions sold loose in a net

Available in 5KG, 10 KG and 20 KG nets

Prices vary by variety but for a 10 KG net you will typically be paying £18.00 which is excellent value

Please email or come in to the shed to see the varieties and prices on offer and also to place and pay for your order.

### Have even more fun at the allotments?

July and August are quiet months in the shed and an ideal time to start learning the ropes, to help out as a volunteer in the Trading Shed. If this appeals to you, we are always interested in people, who have a few hours to spare and can sign up for a shift now and then. Don't worry, if you're completely new to the allotments, I was, when I first got involved and it's been a great way to meet a friendly group of people. Come and join us.

Julia Tredgett. Email me at

[handptradingshed@gmail.com](mailto:handptradingshed@gmail.com)

## Earley Green Fair - Saturday 3rd August

The annual Earley Town Council Green Fair will be held at the Beech Lane end of the Maiden Erlegh nature reserve between 10:00 and 15:00pm.

This is a gathering of local community and environmental groups along with charities offering information and refreshments, so it's a great opportunity to find out more about the 'green' organisations in the area.

Come along and visit the Huntley and Palmers Allotment Association stall where we will be showcasing the Culver

## Raised beds

The raised beds are up and running, thanks to the Earley Charity Grant.

The first tenant has made a good start, adding dwarf green beans to the guerrilla planted leeks and lettuce leaves.

The Earley Charity



*by hook or by crook*



## Annual HPAA BBQ

The annual HPAA BBQ will be held on the Culver Lane Allotments site on Saturday 31st August 2019, 12.30pm – 3pm.

This free event is open to all members of the HPAA, everyone welcome, £1 for non members.

BBQ's, one for meat, one for veggie, plates, tumblers and cutlery will be provided but please bring something to sit on, what you would like to barbecue and drink and a salad, side or a dessert and serving spoon which can be shared. Tea, coffee and squash will be available

Also during the afternoon in the marquee there will be a produce show, entries on the day. The categories are:

- \* Best fruit or vegetable
- \* Best box of 6 vegetables
- \* Best container of flowers
- \* Best food item using plot produce.

These will be judged by everyone present on the day.

If you wish to enter any category, bring it/them to the marquee after

12.30 on the day, register and receive a number, paper plates will be provided to display fruit/vegetables. Entries will be accepted until 14.00, no limit on entries.

After 14.00, marking sheets will be distributed, one for each category and you score each entry, 1, 2 or 3, tasting the plot produce if required. The scores are added up and the winners announced, very democratic!

Please join us for this friendly get together, a great opportunity for plot holders both old and new to meet.



A selection of last year's entries in the produce show

## Dates for your Diary

**Reading Town Meal Saturday 28th September, Forbury Gardens**

This is the fifth town meal where food donated by many groups including local allotment holders will create a free meal for all comers. Expect a giant vegetable curry to be followed by fruit crumble. The meal is accompanied by music from local bands, family fun activities, plus the chance to learn more about growing your own food, shop with local producers and find out what local community and sustainability groups are doing in Reading.

Both the Reading Road and Culver Lane allotment sites will be collecting donations of produce the weekend before. These are then turned into a meal by students at Reading College.

