



Chairman's Chatter

I hope you are enjoying the fruit of your efforts as you harvest this seasons crops. We saw a great selection of this year's triumphs at the annual BBQ on 31 August – there is a report with photos inside your newsletter.

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Single use plastic– a challenge

There has rightly been a lot of talk and challenge about society's large scale use of single use plastic bags. The 5p charge for lightweight shopping bags has massively changed our collective behaviour with an 86% fall in use across the country and more recently many stores have removed them completely. They have been replaced in shops with heavier duty plastic and textile bags that can be reused many times.

Looking around the trading shed there is a lot of single use plastic:

- * Many of the granular products including compost and fertilisers come in plastic sacks containing maybe 25KG of fertiliser or 40 – 50 litres of compost.
- * Grow bags are really just compost in a large plastic bag.
- * Many of the sacked products are then weighed out by us to make smaller quantities (typically 3KG) that are convenient and popular with our customers – things like Growmore and grass seed, using more plastic bags.

There are a number of steps we, and you, can take to improve the plastic foot print of our activities. We all talk about recycling but there is a hierarchy to reducing your footprint and recycling comes after reducing (don't use so much in the first place) and reusing (use it more than once).

| | In the shed | On your plot |
|----------------|---|---|
| Reduce | We are looking for paper bags that could replace plastic ones for smaller quantities, but have not found any yet that are strong enough. Suggestions for suppliers welcome. | You are already doing this by growing your own food rather than buying it from a shop that will often try to put it in a plastic bag. |
| Reuse | Plastic bags used for fertilizer or grass seed can be refilled if you bring them back—or indeed other containers can be filled for you. | Plastic planting pots can be reused several times—there is a large crate of them by the old EAA shed if you want some or to share your surplus. |
| Recycle | We have a recycling bin in the shed for anything that can go in a kerb side black plastic box. | When plants have finished growing you recycle them using a process we all know as composting. |

Any suggestions or ideas for reducing plastic use in the shed or in the garden will be welcomed – email me or chat to the volunteer in the shed when you next visit

Seasonal Tips - November

There is just enough daylight to clear and tidy up the allotment of any old crops in preparation for next year. Dig in lots of well-rotted organic matter but not if the ground is frozen.

When digging up winter vegetables, clearing debris or weeding try to work from wooden planks to avoid compacting the wet soil.

When the ground is cleared, cover beds with sheeting - use polythene or weed suppressant membrane, this keeps weed growth at bay and allows you to sow earlier next spring.

Most of the leaves will have fallen by now, place the leaves into a bin liner, moisten them if they are dry, then pierce holes in the bag with a knife or garden fork, tie the top loosely and stack the bags out of sight for up to two years, result a good soil improver..

Start to harvest winter cabbage, Brussels sprouts, leeks and parsnips. **Parsnips** are ready to be lifted when the leaves die off. However, they can be left in situ, which is useful as the frosts sweeten the root.

Lift the last of your **leeks** before the soil becomes frozen, and heel them in to a trench beside a convenient path. They will keep well for several months like this and can be easily brought indoors when required

With long, thin stalks, strong winds can sometimes be a problem for **sprouts**. Try staking them if the weather is particularly gusty, and mounding the soil up around the bottom of the plant. Remove any lower leaves as they turn yellow. The flavour of sprouts sweetens after a frost.

Garlic needs a good spell of cold weather to form fat bulbs, plant cloves now to spend winter in the ground. Onion sets and shallots are best left until the New Year.

Rhubarb can last for years but may lose vigour, so divide the rootstock to make new "crowns". Lift the existing crown and use a sharp spade to divide it into sections, each with a bud. Replant each section with the bud just showing, in well-manured ground.

December is a good month to winter prune apple and pear trees to control their shape and size. You can also prune black/red/white currants and gooseberries.

After pruning, leave the netting off of your fruit trees and bushes, including fruit cages, this will enable the birds to access the ground and clean up all those bugs and creepy-crawlies.

Cookery Corner—Squash Pots

A warming vegetarian supper for two

Ingredients:

2 small squashes
150g green lentils or Puy lentils
1 onion (chopped)
1/2 leek (chopped)
100g mushrooms (chopped small)
1 carrot (chopped small)
Bouillon powder
Olive oil
English mustard
Sage and thyme
Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Pre heat oven to 180C
2. Cover lentils with cold water and bring to the boil. Cook until they are fairly soft. (around 20 mins) You might need to add water as lentils absorb quickly

3. Cut a lid from each of the squashes and scoop out the seeds
4. Scrumple piece of tin foil or parchment and put inside squashes to prevent sides collapsing
5. Place squashes on greased baking tray in oven for 20 mins
6. Heat a glug of oil in a pan, add onions, leeks, mushrooms, carrots and herbs and sweat until onions are transparent, stirring all the time.
7. Add cooked lentils, 1 tsp bouillon powder, 1 tsp mustard, seasoning to taste. Add water if necessary (you want a moist mixture but not soup-like)
8. Remove foil/parchment from squashes and use the lentil mixture to fill them up. Place back in oven adding the lids to the tray , cook for 25 mins.

Serve with celeriac and potato mash or swede and carrot mash and buttered cabbage.

Trading Shed

The shed will be open on Saturday and Sunday at usual times until the end of November and will close for December. It will reopen in January, the exact date depends on the delivery of the seed potatoes.

The following varieties will be available this year:

| All Potatoes Priced at £1.00 for 1kg or £2.70 for 3kg | | |
|---|----------------------|--|
| Type | Variety | Characteristics |
| 1st Earlies | Arran Pilot | White skin colour. Very Early. Good Flavour. Boil well. Bake well. |
| | Foremost | Russet skin colour. Good scab resistance. Boil well. Bake well. |
| | Red Duke of York | Large, oval red skinned tubers. Moist yellow flesh with superb flavour. A good all rounder, excellent for roasting. |
| Salad | Charlotte | High yield. Waxy long light yellow tubers. Good flavour. Boil well. |
| | International Kidney | Long oval shape with yellow flesh. Good flavour. Boil or Steam. When grown on Jersey this variety is known as Jersey Royals. |
| Main Crop | Desiree | Red skin colour. Fairly waxy. High Yield. Drought resistant. Boil well. Bake well. Roast well. Chips well. Mash well. |
| | King Edward | Part red skin colouration. Good flavour. Boil, bake, roast, chip and mash well. |
| | Pentland Crown | Oval shaped tubers with white skin and flesh. Floury texture perfect for boiling and mashing. Excellent disease and drought tolerance. |
| | Maris Piper | Uniform in shape and size. Good yield. Good flavour. Boil well. Good chipper. Bake well. Roast well. Chips well. Mash well. |
| | Picasso | Stunning red eyes. Massive yields. Mild taste. Stores well. Some resistance to blight. Boil well. Bake well. Roast well. |
| | Sarpo Mira | High resistance to blight. Good boiler. Bake and mash well. Good in salads. |

Also available loose in January will be:

| Onion Sets - £1.10 for 500g | Shallots - £1.90 for 500g | Beans - £1.60 for 125g | Peas - £0.70 for 125g |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Red Barron | Golden Gourmet | Masterpiece Long Pod | Kelvedon Wonder |
| Sturon | Pikant Red | Aquadulce | |
| Stutgarter Giant | Red Sun | | |
| Turbo Spring | Yellow Moon | | |

While the shed is still open do not forget to pop in and pick up the new Suttons catalogue, you can order directly from Suttons using the code GS1100F and get 35% discount for Seeds and 10% for other things, or buy seeds from the shed with 25% discount. There are also Fothergills catalogues available, but unfortunately no discounts on their seeds.

For preparing your plot for winter there is Black Film ground cover available in a four-metre width sold by the metre length at the great value price of 75p per metre and woven Phormisol – weed suppressant matting that comes in a one-meter width and is available by the meter at 80p per metre.

If you prefer There are also green manure seeds suitable for overwintering, one packet will cover 10²m, 12 sq yds.

When the shed reopens in the New Year, do not forget to renew your membership, at £1.50 for the year, this is less than a cup of coffee at Costa, (other coffee retailers are available), but free tea and coffee is always available in the shed.

Annual HPAA BBQ 2019

There was a good turnout for the BBQ on Saturday 31st at the Culver Lane Allotment site, it was good to see some new faces. The weather was kind to us, the barbecued food was good and a pleasant afternoon was had by all.



There was a good variety of produce on show in the competitions which were judged by everybody there.

- The winners in each category were:
- Best box of vegetables Makatar beat Dougie by one vote
 - Best fruit or vegetable Richard Tredgett - Japanese Squash
 - Best container of flowers A tie between Julie Snow and Kate Corder
 - Best plot produce Jean Hackett - Tayberry Bakewell Tart



Makatar and Kate Corder

Also on hand was James the beekeeper, to answer any general questions about bees and the planned hives that will be placed on plot 37.



Happy Christmas to all HPAA members

