

June 2020

Issue 11



## Chairman's Chatter

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Hello there

I hope you and your family are staying safe and well.

It certainly seems that many people are using their allotment as a part of their staying well plans, taking their daily exercise on their plot and as a result the allotments and sites look better than they have as they have in a long time. Every cloud has a silver lining.

The good news is that our sites have stayed open and people have been able to make safe and sensible use of the allotments. Across the UK a small number of allotment sites have been closed by the local authority, causing upset and frustration amongst plot holders especially as this is peak sowing and planting time. I suspect just before there was a lot of rushed sowing and planting "just in case" and it will be interesting to see if this slightly earlier than usual start affects the crop later in the season.

Less good news is that members at the Reading Road site were sadly victims of break-ins last month with over fifty plus sheds broken in to. As always when this happens there was lots of damage but not much was taken. As ever the message has to remain that sheds are really just fragile wooden boxes and if you value it, don't leave it there. Sadly this won't stop the damage and frustration caused by a break-in, but it will avoid the added upset of a valuable or long loved tool or tools being taken.

On a happier note, many people are realising that "growing stuff" is fun and a healthy pastime, especially when many of us have a little more time on their hands. Our supplier Suttons have clearly struggled to keep up with a boom in orders for seeds to supply our seeds by post service and the RHS have reported record levels of visits to their websites.

Overall the Royal Horticultural Society website is a useful and trustworthy first place to look for help and information <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/grow-your-own/vegetables> although nothing beats walking around the allotment site to see what is growing well and chatting to other plot holders who often have many years of experience growing in a similar soil type and the same climate as you have on your plot.

Stay safe at this time and enjoy being out in the fresh air sowing, planting and growing food for your family

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## Huntley & Palmers Allotment Social Group

If you have a plot at the Culver Lane site and use facebook you can join the new social group set up by Ann and Andy – with thanks to them for the technical know-how and having the idea in the first place .

The site is called **Huntley & Palmers Allotment Social Group** and is a great place for asking for help, sharing spare plants or helping spread a smile at this unusual time.

The page can be found at [https://www.facebook.com/groups/203992004220667/?ref=group\\_browse](https://www.facebook.com/groups/203992004220667/?ref=group_browse)



## Cookery Corner - Asparagus and Leek Tart

Asparagus is at its best this month so this tasty recipe will make use of this special crop. If you don't have any we have successfully made it with shop bought fresh and even tinned asparagus.

Perfect for a savoury brunch

Serves 2 and takes 30 minutes

### Ingredients

- \* 80g puff pastry
- \* 1 Large leek, chopped
- \* 1 tablespoon fresh or dried thyme
- \* 1 egg, beaten for brushing
- \* 8 asparagus tips
- \* A sprig or two of rosemary
- \* A spray of oil
- \* Half a dozen cherry tomatoes, halved (optional)

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 6 / 200c / fan oven 180c
2. Roll out the pastry to form an 8cm (3.25 inch) square and place it on a non-stick baking sheet.

Push up the edges of the square slightly to make a ridge.

3. Steam the leeks or if you don't have a steamer simmer gently for three minutes. Drain and combine with the Thyme.
4. Brush the pastry square with the beaten egg glaze and then add the leek, the asparagus and cherry tomatoes if using.
5. Season to taste, place the rosemary on top and finally spray with the oil. Bake for 15 minutes or until the pastry is cooked and golden
6. Eat and enjoy.



## Seasonal Tips—June/July

Just **30 minutes** of gardening on your allotment can burn around **150 calories**, the same as doing low impact aerobics.

### June

Start picking strawberries and gooseberries

Continue to earth up potatoes - just in case

Harvest asparagus

Thin out seedlings of beetroot, carrot and lettuce

Tomato plants can be planted out on your plot

Pinch out the growing points of peas which have flowered

It's your last chance for planting runner bean seeds

Plant out leeks from your seed bed

Strong runners on strawberry plants should be chosen for propagation

Start digging up early potatoes (8-10 weeks after planting)

Feed tomatoes regularly

Sow early turnips for an autumn crop

Net blackcurrant bushes

Sow Florence fennel on the longest day

Keep fruit bushes and trees well watered and weed-free

Cut back strong herbs such as mint and chives before they flower.

### July

Keep hoeing and harvesting crops as they mature.

Shallots and garlic should be lifted and stored.

If growing cordon tomatoes, remove side shoots that emerge between the main stem and leaf stem.

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

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

Onions should be starting to die down this month: allow the stems to bend over at the neck and let them die off. Then you can lift the onions, but make sure they dry off before storing them.

Brussel sprouts, cabbages and cauliflowers - 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.

Keep up the watering, this is crucial as most crops require a steady, unbroken supply of water, especially tomatoes.

## Trading Shed—Seeds

Whilst we remain closed for over the counter transactions our "seeds by post" service has proved very popular – we are well over 100 orders so far! The good news is that we have just received a further delivery from Suttons and are well stocked with seeds for sowing and growing.

New with this delivery include different varieties of Chard, Cucumber, Kale and Squash. In addition if you want to liven up your lock down cooking, we have seeds for Basil, Coriander, Dill, and Parsley.

Details of the seeds available are on the regular emails that come out and once you have ordered and paid the seeds will pop through your letter box in return for the £1 P+P charge.

If for any reason you are not getting the mailings about these please email us on [handptradingshed@gmail.com](mailto:handptradingshed@gmail.com) and we can add you to the mailing list.