

March 2021

Issue 14



Chairman's Chatter

Welcome to the new season – as I write this we have had a bright and sunny day that bought many members out onto their allotment. Whilst we all know there could still be frosts that zap tender plants, it is great to find it warming up and things getting going – including the weeds.

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<i>Chairman's Chatter</i>	1	This is the time of year when we meet new plot holders and welcome them to the site and also answer their many questions as they plan and plant the first years crops. As
<i>Seasonal Tips</i>	2	ever we need to temper their wild enthusiasm with a little caution. You can take all the
<i>Cookery Corner</i>	2	advice offered (even if it conflicts, as it probably will), read all the books and websites,
<i>Trading Shed</i>	3	and follow what they say on Gardeners Question time, and it still might go wrong. I
<i>Bug Alert</i>	3	sowed parsnips four times last year and nothing came up – and I did the same as I have
<i>Compost Part 2</i>	4	done for the last ten years and for the previous nine years grew passable parsnips!

Don't despair, just smile and put it down to experience, and try again next year.

Huntley and Palmers AGM

Apologies again for the lack of AGM in 2020 – it was supposed to happen in March 2020 but something kicked off around then and it never happened. This year it will be by zoom at 19:30 on Wednesday 17th March 2021. All members should get an email in the days before inviting them to attend the AGM.

Our new website

With grateful thanks to Brian Hackett, we have a new website giving members lots of information including details about the Trading shed. Take a look at <https://hapaa.org.uk/> and see what is available there. If you have ideas for what could be added please use the contact form on the website to let us know your ideas.

International Compost Awareness Week 2021

I bet you did not know about this – neither did I till I was doing some casual googling (if that is a verb) but it is not long till International Compost Awareness Week.

Those who have had a plot for a while will tell you that composting is a great way to turn a waste product into valuable resource and save wasting time travelling to the local recycling centre (or tip as most of us know it). I am sure I am preaching to the converted but just in case, here are two useful resources:

For guidance on how to get top class compost take a look at <https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/compost> or of course the RHS who are a great and free point of reference for all things gardening: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=444>

How to do it cheaper

Our local council are really keen on composting as a way of avoiding them having to handle your waste. They therefore subsidise compost bins to encourage us to get one, or more – details here: <https://getcomposting.com/en-gb/special-offers/>

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Seasonal Tips—March/April

March

The longer days are the real trigger to new growth and you will find that with the help of a little protection you can really go for those early sowings. Your best friend this month is the weather man try to keep up to date with the local forecasts, better still ask the advice of the gardeners around you who have years of experience to draw on.

Sowing and Planting

Plant out early cultivars of potatoes as soon as possible and follow on planting out at regular intervals with the second earlies and first maincrops until the end of the month. Transplant any early peas, broad beans, cabbages or lettuce you may have started off earlier. Plant out onion sets, shallots and garlic before they start to produce shoots, reject any that are shooting they will only bolt during the summer.

If you can offer the protection of a greenhouse sow the seed of celery, celeriac, French beans (they are hardy enough to be planted out before the runners), cauliflowers to transplant on the open soil next month.

April

Vegetables

Draw up soil around the base of peas and broad beans to support them and increase the rooting area.

Earth up early potatoes when they have made 8" growth.

Plant out indoor-sown peas. Sow broad beans and peas.

Sow early varieties of carrot when the ground has warmed up.

Sow indoors or in polytunnel Brussels sprouts, cabbage, early leeks, climbing or dwarf beans, cucumbers, courgettes and peppers and sweet corn for later transplanting.

Plant up new asparagus and globe artichoke beds.

Sow herbs oregano, thyme, dill, fennel and parsley from seed.

Fruit

Harvest rhubarb by pulling a few stalks at a time. Put the leaves on the compost heap.

Once leaf buds open, start formative pruning of plum and cherry trees.

Cookery Corner - Homity Pie

Ingredients

- flourey potatoes 600g, peeled and cut into large dice
- leeks 2, sliced
- butter for frying
- garlic 1 clove, crushed
- spinach 200g, chopped
- soft cheese 5 tbsp
- mature cheddar 150g, grated

Pastry

- plain flour 100g
- wholemeal flour 100g
- smoked paprika ¼ tsp
- butter 100g, cubed and chilled
- egg 1, beaten

Method

1. To make the pastry, put the flours, paprika, butter and 1/2 tsp salt in a food processor and whizz until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the egg and whizz until it forms a dough (add a splash of cold water to make it come together). Roll out and use to line a 20cm metal, loose-bottomed tin (a sponge tin is ideal). Chill.

2. Cook the potatoes in a pan of boiling salted water until just tender, then drain really well.
3. Cook the leeks with a knob of butter in a frying pan until soft, then add the garlic and cook for another minute. Stir in the spinach and cook until completely wilted, then stir in the soft cheese.
4. Heat the oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5. Tip the leeks, spinach and potatoes into a large bowl. Add ¾ of the cheddar and lots of seasoning. Toss everything together, then tip into the chilled pastry case. Sprinkle over the rest of the cheese and bake in the oven for 40-45 minutes or until golden. Cool for 10 minutes in the tin, then carefully turn out and serve.



Trading Shed

Sowing seeds in March?

We have over 100 different seeds in stock that can be sown this month at 25% off the full price. Come into the shed to have a look or use our members discount code GS1089G to order on-line for a 35% discount plus p&p.

John Innes Seed - peat based compost £4.00 for 25L

John Innes No 1 - peat based compost £4.00 for 25L

John Innes No 2 - peat based compost £4.00 for 25L

John Innes No 3 - peat based compost £4.00 for 25L

General Purpose Composts

We are stocking four different general-purpose composts at the moment. Two peat free and two peat based.

New Horizon £4.80 for 50L

New Horizon All Plant Compost has been specially created to be the perfect compost for all fruit and vegetables, herbs, & seedlings. It contains Coir and Westland BIO3 which is a revolutionary new compost formulation engineered to out-perform all peat-based blends. The ingredients start nourishing the plant immediately.

Works best with seedlings, containers, fruit and veg and herbs.

Coir Blocks £2.20 for 650g makes 9 litres of compost

Easy to use – Just put your compressed Coco brick in a container, add warm water and let it sit until the water is absorbed, fluff it up and it can be used as it is for germinating seedlings. For pricking out or potting on use 2 parts coir to 2 parts perlite to 1 part sieved compost and 1 part loam.

Bug Alert

Have you seen this insect?



The brown marmorated stink bug, an Asian insect has been found in three places in this country, London, Essex and Suffolk.

J. Arthur Bower's Multi-Purpose Compost £4.00 for 50 L

This is a reduced peat compost made from a mixture of peat and wood fibre. It will provide your plants with all the nutrients they need for strong healthy growth during the first 4-6 weeks. After that, feed them every 7-14 days during the growing season. Suitable for flowers, vegetables, shrubs, pots, baskets.

Bloom & Grow Multi-Purpose Compost £4.00 for 56 L

This is a 100% Irish Peat compost with a nutrient enriched formula and wetting agent to ensure easier watering. Used for bedding plants, potting, containers and hanging baskets.

Seasonal Products in The Shed

Grass seed can be sowed in the spring when the soil is warm and there is plenty of moisture.

We stock two types of grass seed:

Horticultural Supplies Grass Seed Mix No 1A without rye, which is a fine mixture for front lawns and areas that get very limited use. Apply at the rate of 30g per sq m. 500g for £3.00.

Horticultural Supplies Grass Seed Mix No 6 with rye, is a hard-wearing mixture and is drought tolerant. Apply at the rate of 15-20g per sq m. 500g for £2.10.

On-offs

We are able to get one-offs for you from our supplier, if for example you're after a watering can rose or another product that we don't currently sell in the Shed.

Email handptradingshed@gmail.com with your request.

The RHS has said that gardeners should be on their guard for this insect that could become a pest over here. Be careful though, not to confuse it with our harmless shield bugs.

The stink bug gets its name from the unpleasant almond smell it emits as a defence against predators. If the bug gets into grapes used for wine making, the smell can taint the flavour of an entire vintage.

Farmers growing soft fruits and vegetables such as plums, cucumbers, and tomatoes consider the bug a pest because of its habit of piercing holes in crops, ruining their appearances and making them more vulnerable to fungal diseases.

International Compost Awareness Week Part 2

Below is an identification chart of the most common perennial weeds, please **DO NOT** add these to your compost heap/bin.

 <p>Bindweed leaves</p>	 <p>Bindweed flowers</p>	 <p>Bindweed roots</p>
 <p>Couch grass</p>	 <p>Couch grass roots</p>	
 <p>Ground elder shoots</p>	 <p>Ground elder roots</p>	
 <p>Dandelion roots</p>	 <p>dock roots</p>	