

January 2022

Issue 18



Chairman's Chatter

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As we start a new year, I was heartened to read research by the University of Sussex which found that your allotment can be as productive as intensively managed farmland in terms of the weight of produce it provides. The Citizen Science project asked volunteers to record the amount they harvested using the good to grow Harvestometer (no I don't think you will find that in the dictionary) that can be found here: https://www.goodtogrowuk.org/join_us/.

The big difference between large scale agriculture and allotments or gardens however that the researchers found is the diversity of wildlife supported, since a patchwork of allotments created biodiverse habitats for pollinators and wildlife, a "win-win" for the environment, according to the research.

Sad news

I am sad to report that the former chair of Huntley & Palmers Horticultural Society John Snow passed away just before Christmas after a short illness.

John ran the H&P for about thirty years, organising the annual shows, and till a few years ago running the Trading shed and leading the organisation as well as managing his own allotment. It should be noted that when he stood down it took a number of people to take on the roles he had undertaken.

Several members of the committee attended John's funeral and have made a donation in his memory on behalf of the association.

Other news

In common with many other products that you buy we are seeing price rises in the goods we stock in your trading shed.

This has particularly been an issue with fertilisers where surging natural gas prices in Europe resulted in widespread production cutbacks in ammonia—an important input for nitrogen fertilisers.

As you would expect your trading shed remains very competitive compared to other places you can buy your supplies, however I am afraid there are likely to be price rises across a range of products this year.

Dobies Garden Centre (you may have heard of them) are the latest organisation to stop allowing any peat in their bagged composts as a part of their efforts to become more sustainable. From first of January this year their bagged composts are 100% peat free, well ahead of the deadline that the government are currently consulting on. You can comment on the government consultation here: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/soils-and-peatlands/endingtheretailsaleofpeatinhorticulture/> and have your say. The consultation closes on Friday 18th March 2022

Happy New Year and I hope to see you soon

Richard Tredgett

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Seasonal Tips January/February

January

Plan this year's vegetable plantings, ideally rotating crops by not planting in the same place as last year.

Complete winter digging of bare beds and cover the ground to warm beds for early crops.

By mid January, start 'chitting' tubers of early potatoes in trays in a cool, light, frost-free location.

Continue to harvest sprouts, kale, cabbage, leeks and parsnips as needed.

Keep kale, winter cabbages and other brassicas covered with netting to protect them from hungry pigeons.

Begin forcing rhubarb for an early crop by placing a bucket or forcing jar over the crop.

Apply winter washes to fruit trees to control overwintering pests.

Put up a bird feeder on your plot and regularly replenish it.

February

Sow broad beans and peas outside, plant shallots and garlic. Jerusalem Artichokes, plant tubers direct outside in a single row.

Prepare a new asparagus bed by digging in well-rotted manure and order asparagus crowns

Plant out summer brassicas and spinach seedlings in late February. Apply lime to the soil at 270g per sq m, 8oz per sq yd. where brassicas are to be grown. This will help reduce the risk of infection by Club root.

Later in the month, if the soil isn't too wet, start to dig in overwintered green manures.

Tomatoes and Cucumbers - if raising plants for a greenhouse sow seeds indoors now, to ensure germination use a heated propagator then maintain the temperature at a minimum of 21C

Prune autumn raspberries, cutting all canes down to the ground.

Cookery Corner—Beetroot & Red Onion Tarte Tatin

If you are trying Veganuary, or live meat free all year this tasty recipe will make good use of some of your overwintering beetroot.

Ingredients

- 400g beetroot, cut into wedges
- 1 red onion, cut into wedges
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp rice wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp soft brown sugar
- 2 star anise
- flour, for rolling
- 500g block puff pastry
- 1 orange, zested

Method

STEP 1

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. In a bowl, toss the beetroot and onion in 2 tbsp of the oil, the vinegar and sugar. Add the star anise and season well.

Heat the rest of the oil in a large, ovenproof non-stick frying pan then nestle in the veg so that they cover the surface of the pan. Cover with foil and cook in the oven for 45 mins.

STEP 2

On a well-floured surface, roll the pastry to a thickness of 0.5cm and cut out a circle the same size as your frying pan. Carefully take the pan out of the oven, remove the foil and wiggle the beets and onion around in the pan to make a compact layer. Put the pastry on top, tucking it in all around the edges, then return the pan to the oven and bake for 35 mins or until the pastry has puffed up and is a deep golden brown.

STEP 3

Slide a palette knife around the edge of the tart, then put a plate on top of the pastry, serving side down. Flip the pan over to turn the tart out onto the plate – be careful not to burn yourself with the handle. Top with the orange zest and a sprinkle of sea salt, then serve with a peppery salad on the side.

With thanks to the BBC good food magazine



Trading Shed

What we stock

One of the challenges of running a trading shed is knowing what to stock. If you don't stock it you can't know whether there is a demand for it. We do try new lines, for example two years ago we had not in living memory sold bags of farmyard manure, now it is one of our best sellers. If there are things you think we should stock but don't, please let us know by talking to the volunteers in the shed.

We can also do orders at cost price from our wholesaler. They sell a variety of things that may be of interest:

- * Tools
- * Large quantities of materials that we usually only stock in small quantities such as 100 litre bags of perlite
- * Particular fertilisers or soil improvers that we do not routinely stock such as dried blood or clay breaker

Cost price purchases are made on the following basis:

- The price you see in the catalogue is the price you pay, however please check the quantity – a few things are priced for ten rather than one for example dibbers. If it says ten then this is the number you have to buy.
- As this is a cost price 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 most but not all months of the year.

Details of all the items available are listed in our suppliers catalogue – copy available in the trading shed. If you need things urgently this is probably not for you as the next delivery date could be several weeks away. Collection will be from the shed during the usual opening hours.

If you are interested then email us at handptradingshed@gmail.com to confirm prices and dates.

Tools

Message from Scott Golding:

'On behalf of the committee at READING RD I would just like to thank you and the H+P team for the donation and support that you have given to our Launchpad project. It is much appreciated'.



Peter Wynn from Huntley and Palmer's Allotment Association presenting their kind donation.

New Mower

In August last year, a plot holder borrowed the new mower and returned it with the cutting blade seriously bent at right angles. No one reported this incident and it was only discovered when the next person tried to remove the mower from the shed.

With much force and a blowtorch the blade was straightened, but when re attached, the mower ran very erratically.

The work could not be carried out under warranty and a local

mower servicing company suggested that the damage had bent the crankshaft. After dismantling it was found that the boss that connecting the blade to the engine was seriously bent. Replacement parts were purchased at a cost of £100 and the cost of the engineer's time will add at least £160+ to the final cost. A lot considering the mower was less than a year old and cost £350.

Accidents do happen, but please if you borrow the mower and damage it in any way, please let Dave know.

Email: david.pelling1@ntlworld.com



Six month Vegetable planting guide

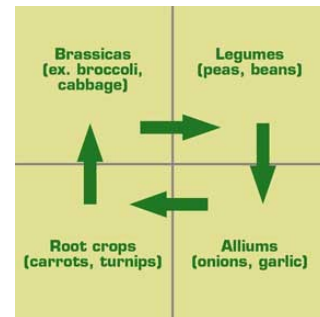
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Wk 1		Broadbeans 1	Peas 1 Carrots 1 Beetroot 1 Leeks Sweet peppers Cabbage (summer) Calabrese	Peas 3 Carrots 3 French Beans 1 Beetroot 3 Swedes 1 Broadbeans 3 Brussel sprouts	Peas 5 Carrots 5 French Beans 2 Beetroot 5 Swedes 2 Chicory 1 Kale	Peas 7 Carrots 7 French Beans 3 Beetroot 7 Swedes 3 Chicory 2
Wk 2	Radishes 1	Radishes 3	Spinach 1 Radishes 5 Lettuce 1 Spring onions 1 Onions (seed or sets) Shallots (seed or sets) Celery	Spinach 2 Endives 1 Radishes 7 Lettuce 3 Spring onions 3 Salsify / Scorzonera Cabbage (winter)	Spinach 3 Endives 2 Radishes 9 Lettuce 5 Spring onions 5 Squash Pumpkins	Spinach 4 Endives 3 Radishes 11 Lettuce 7 Spring onions 7
Wk 3	Leeks (under glass)	Turnips 1 Potatoes (chit) Rhubarb	Turnips 2 Peas 2 Chard 1 Carrots 2 Beetroot 2 Broadbeans 2 Aubergines	Turnips 3 Peas 4 Chard 2 Carrots 4 Beetroot 4 Runner Beans 1 Marrows & Courgettes	Turnips 4 Peas 6 Chard 3 Carrots 6 Beetroot 6 Runner beans 2 Cucumber (indoor)	Turnips 5 Peas 8 Chard 4 Carrots 8 Beetroot 8 Runner beans 3
Wk 4	Radishes 2	Radishes 4 Tomatoes (indoor) Prune fruit trees	Radishes 6 Kohl rabi 1 Lettuce 2 Spring onions 2 Tomatoes (outdoor) Parsnips Celeriac	Radishes 8 Kohl rabi 2 Lettuce 4 Spring onions 4 Broccoli Cauliflower Sweetcorn	Radishes 10 Kohl rabi 3 Lettuce 6 Spring onions 6	Radishes 12 Kohl rabi 4 Lettuce 8 Spring onions 8

Companion planting

Plant these vegetables together to make the best use of space and deter pests.

BETROOT	Brussel Sprouts	Broccoli	Cabbages	Swiss Chard	Onions
CABBAGE	Spinach	Brussel Sprouts	Kale	Broccoli	Swiss Chard
CARROTS	Peas	Lettuce	Cabbages	Leek	Radishes
POTATOES	Peas	Beans	Cabbages	Corn	Squash
TOMATOES	Cabbages	Carrots	Onions		
ONIONS	Lettuce	Cabbages	Beetroot	Carrots	Parsnips
RADISHES	Spinach	Cucumber	Peas	Lettuce	Carrots
SWISS CHARD	Cabbages	Beetroot	Onions		
PEAS	Cucumber	Beans	Turnip	Radishes	Carrots
CUCUMBER	Beans	Cabbages	Radishes	Corn	
LETTUCE	Beetroot	Radishes	Carrots	Parsnips	
PARSNIPS	Lettuce	Radishes	Onions		

Crop Rotation



Do not grow together

