

HUNTLEY & PALMER'S ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

newsletter



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Chairman's Chatter

2022 - phew what a scorcher

So what do we make of 2022 - dominated in garden and allotment terms by the extreme weather? There were multiple storms in February with the highest gust recorded in England of 122 mph at the Needles on the Isle of Wight - less than sixty miles from Reading. This was followed by a long hot, dry summer and an autumn that did not start to approach

the "normal" temperatures till mid-November. Who knows what 2023 will bring weatherwise?

A new trend in allotments

With many parts of the country facing long waiting lists for an allotment, and local authorities under pressure to turn allotments into much needed housing there is an interesting new development in providing allotments.

Roots, a commercial company has opened an allotment site outside Bath and plans a larger site outside Bristol offering allotments to rent. These are rather different from the set up we are used to:

- The allotments MUST be managed both organically and using the no dig method
- The rent includes an initial supply of seeds and other “goodies”
- They will be happy to sell you watering and or weeding services if you need them due to time pressure or taking holidays.

The biggest difference however is the price for an allotment -their largest plots are 4 pole (described as a group plot) and cost £49.99 per month! At the Culver Lane site you would pay that per year for a six pole plot.

Something to think about when the allotment fee falls due and we moan that it has gone up again from the previous year. You can look at their website here: <https://www.rootsallotments.com/>

Time to start again

So here we are back at January and the time to buy and start chitting your potatoes. See inside for the details of the varieties the Trading Shed is stocking this year and that annual dilemma: what potatoes shall I grow this year?

Happy planning!

Richard Tredgett

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A Huge Thank You

I am delighted to pass on a huge thank you to everyone who donated crops to the Veg4Reading crate during 2022. Between July and October Veg4Reading donated over three quarters of a tonne of fresh food most of which came from allotment sites across Reading - including Culver Lane. The food is used by various community groups to help feed those in need, especially welcome in these difficult times.



Allotment Jobs - month by month

My general advice for these months would be to keep warm and make the most of the lull in activity. But there is always something you can find to keep you busy, especially if you have a garden at home to look after too.

If you have some spare time why not volunteer to help out at the shed? Now we don't have to use Arkwright's till it is a fairly safe occupation!

January

- * It's time to order your seed potatoes which is handy as there is a list of what will be available in the shed in this issue! So get ordering and chitting. Also you might want to order your seeds.
- * If it's mild, you can plant garlic and shallots outside but available light is always an issue when you want to start any early seedlings. Onions can be started from seed now but they like it cool so watch out for warm days in the greenhouse.
- * You may have some leeks, brussels, parsnips, swedes and winter kale to harvest if you're lucky.

February

- * Be careful in February because it can sometimes turn quite cold. While you are eager to get started with your plot, do be patient.
- * However, early broad beans and peas can be planted but you might decide to start the peas in a cold frame or greenhouse.
- * Tradition would have us plant parsnips out now but you will get better germination if you leave them until next month.
- * Under cover you can start off your seedlings for summer cabbages and onions but may want to wait for anything else.
- * There's still time to plant fruit trees and bushes and early this month you can prune apple and pear trees while they are still dormant. It's also time to prune gooseberries and currants. With currants shorten the sideshoots to just one bud and remove old stems from the centre of the bushes.
- * You can also start to force rhubarb at the end of the month if that is something that you do.

Julie (Plot17)

Cookery Corner

Mediterranean roasted butternut squash salad

If you still have a supply of Butternut Squash and are wondering how to use them, try this salad recipe.

Roasted chunks of lightly seasoned butternut squash, paired with olives and sun-dried tomato and shavings of cheese in a flavour packed salad that is perfect for lunch, dinner, or batch cooked for a BBQ side.

Ingredients

- 400 g Butternut Squash, in 2cm cubes
- 2 Tablespoons Olive oil
- 1 Teaspoon each Dried oregano, garlic powder and rosemary
- 0.5 Teaspoon Cumin
- Salt and pepper
- 200g Lettuce or salad leaves
- Lemon (juice only)
- 10 Olives
- 6 Sun-dried tomatoes or halved cherry toms
- 30g Hard cheese
- 1 Tablespoon Balsamic vinegar

Instructions

1. Pre heat your oven to 180°C (160°C fan)/ 350°F / Gas Mark 4
2. Put the cubed squash into a bowl and mix with the oil, herbs, spices and salt and pepper.
3. Put on a baking tray and spread out
4. Roast in the oven for 30 minutes or till softened
5. Put the salad leaves in a bowl and dress with the lemon juice
6. Transfer the salad to a serving bowl and top with the roasted butternut squash, tomatoes, olives and cheese.

With thanks to hungryhealthyhappy.com

Get your Potatoes, Onions, Shallots, Peas, Beans & Garlic for the New Year

For the first weekend of Trading Shed opening, which is Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th January we are asking you to pre-order your potatoes and these will be collected in pre-booked time-slots. This is because the first weekend can be very busy with members keen to get their potatoes of choice. The order form can be found on-line from Monday 2nd January at <https://hapaa.org.uk/> or from the email sent to members on Monday 2nd January.

For the second weekend, which is Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd January there will be an option to pre-book your potatoes to make sure you get the varieties you particularly want and these will be available to collect when you come into the shed. There will be no pre-booked time-slots for this second weekend. Below is a list of the perishable goods we are selling in the shed this new year.

Potatoes - 1kg - £1.10 3kg - £3.10		
Type	Variety	Characteristics
1 st Earlies	Red Duke of York	Deep red and more vigorous than Duke of York. Wonderful flavour. Good for chipping, baking, roasting and mashing.
	Foremost	Russet skin colour. Good scab resistance. Boil well. Bake well.
	Arran Pilot	White Skin Colour. Very early with good flavour.
	Pentland Javelin	Eelworm and scab resistant. Suitable for all soils and a good boiler.
2 nd Earlies	Lady Christl	Waxy yellow tubers with good taste. High yield and disease resistant
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 well. Bake well. Roast well. Chip well. Mash well.
	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.
	Organic Setanta	Good resistance to blight and common scab. Good taste.
	Record	Good for roasting or frying with real flavour. Good all round disease resistance.

<i>Salad</i>	Charlotte	Reliable, high yielding. Waxy long light-yellow tubers. Good flavour. Boil well.
	Pink Fir Apple	Long knobbly pink tubers. Cooked whole and delicious hot or cold.

Onions, Shallots and Garlic		
Type	Variety	Characteristics
<i>Onion Sets</i>		250g - £1.00
	Stuttgarter Giant	A flat shaped yellow skinned set with good yield and keeping properties. Plant in February. RHS Award of Garden Merit.
	Sturon	A round onion which stores well and has high yields.
	Rumba	Better shape than Sturon with good storability and vigour. Produces fewer doubles
	Red Baron	A red skinned flat-round onion. Good in salads. Plant later. RHS Award of Garden Merit.
<i>Shallots</i>		500g - £2.50
	Yellow Moon	Disease resistant, yellow and round in shape, good for storage and in salad.
	Golden Gourmet	Yellow with a mild flavour. Good for pickling and can be planted from February onward. RHS Award of Garden Merit.
	Topper	Excellent for pickling. Resistant to bolting. Mild favour and excellent skin quality. High yielding and stores well. Can be planted out earlier.
	Red Sun	Perfect for salads, mild with good storage characteristics.
<i>Garlic</i>		Price TBA
	Cledor	Soft-neck. An improvement on an old French variety 'Rose du Var'. Produces round white bulbs with strong skin and great flavour. Harvest late Jun- Aug
	Flavor	Hard-neck. An Italian pink type, produced in France, that matures late July. Store well once opened.
	Picardy Wight	Traditionally smoked in France due to its longevity. It will keep to May the following year.
<i>Garlic</i>		Price £2.50 for two cloves
	Elephant	Elephant Garlic cloves produces big bulbs and big fat cloves. You grow it just like you would any regular garlic. Each clove at planting turns to around 4 cloves at harvesting.

Beans and Peas		
Type	Variety	Characteristics
Beans	Enorma Runner 125g - Price £1.60	Short-jointed plants producing an enormous crop of very long, smooth, slender beans of excellent shape and colour. RHS Award of Garden Merit winner.
	Masterpiece Long Pod Broad Bean 125g - Price 90p	Excellent length of pod and table quality. A fine green seeded broad bean and excellent for deep freezing. RHS Award of Garden Merit winner.
	Aqua Dulce Broad Bean 125g - Price £1.05	A long podded, white-seeded tasty board bean that's early to mature. Recommended for autumn and winter sowings throughout the UK for the earliest crops the following spring and summer.
Peas	Kelvedon Wonder 125g - Price 70p	Thin-shelled pointed, narrow pods in pairs. Heavy yielding and of fine flavour. It is also resistant to mildew and suitable for March-July sowing. RHS Award of Garden Merit winner. Early variety

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