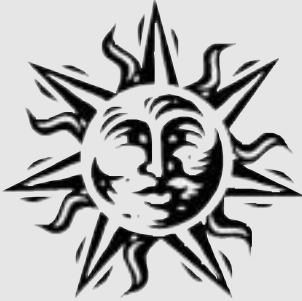


Thursday, May 4th, 2006
Issue 11

The Plot Thickens...



This month's articles...

- Introduction
- Allotment News
- Chairman's Chatter
- Top Tips
- Recipe
- ...and finally

Don't forget if you have any articles to contribute for the next Newsletter, please leave them in the shop.

Editor: Carol Bannister
Design: Andrew Leonard

Introduction to issue 11

Well here we are again, the weather is warming up at last and everything is coming up, although rather later than usual. It is lovely to see everyone working away at their plots and everything growing. What a lovely time of year it is! I had a walk round yesterday and most of the plots

look very up together. We are so lucky to have such peaceful surroundings to get away from the bustle of everyday life in the big city. There are still a few plots that need work and hopefully the Council will be allocating the unused ones in the fullness of time. I think there is

still a big waiting list. I know it is a busy time of year but if you have a bit of spare time do walk round. We tend to stick to our own little area but it is quite interesting to look at the other plots and most people are quite happy to pass the time of day and pass on a bit of knowledge.

Allotment News

The next main event at the allotments is the Spring Plant Sale. This will be held on Sunday 14th May at 9.30. There will be plants on sale and also home made cakes and tea etc. The raffle prizes are in the shop and tickets can be bought now. The raffle will be drawn at 11.00 on the day of the plant sale. If you have any spare plants you can donate and can make a cake it will be gratefully received. All the profits go to swell the allotment funds and will help to pay for the new tent, but more about that later!

Val Peach is trying to organize a

coach trip to West Dean Gardens. She is now looking at Saturday 15th July. The charge would be £10 which includes the coach and entry to the gardens. West Dean has lovely gardens and also a thriving kitchen garden and promises to be an excellent day out. As the prices of coaches is quite expensive she is trying to gauge how many would be interested in the trip beforehand so if you would like to go please leave your name and telephone number in the shop and she will get back to you. Also, Roger Young (Portsmouth Horticultural Society and Portsmouth City Council) is organizing a

coach trip to Abbey Gardens at the end of June (details can be found on the notice board outside the shop).

I have been asked to remind all plot holders that dogs should be kept on a lead on the allotments and of course that any dogs mess should be cleared up!

Also, we do not have a hose pipe ban at the moment but please can you keep your use of the hose down to 30 minutes and not hog the taps. There has been a ban on sprinklers for some time! I hear there is to be some welcome rain this coming weekend!

Allotment News continued

If you have not done it yet, now is the time to pay your subs!

Most people have now paid their subs of £2.50. Don't forget this allows you to use the shop and also to enter produce in the Autumn Show. (In the new tent, which hopefully will be much easier to erect.) There are still potatoes left in the shop and also onions and of course a good variety of seeds and runners, broad beans etc. All the various composts are sold at competitive prices and I can recommend the Rooster - it smells lovely! The liquid seaweed is excellent for feeding everything and Brian tells me that it can be sprayed on plants as a foliar feed too!

Chairman's Chatter

Well at last we have purchased the marquee for the September Show. A couple of weeks ago, myself, Brian Forcey (Trading Officer) and Andrew Leonard (Show Secretary) went to Bedford to finalise our purchase. For those who have just joined I will put you in the picture. When we decided (the Committee) that we had to purchase a marquee the company who we were dealing with had sold out! We decided to give them a substantial deposit (£1,000). In the mean time we had to erect our old marquee for the show and we got away with it again. If it had rained the show would have been ruined as the roof was rotten and full of holes. When we took it down we put it in the skip so we couldn't use it again. Back to our trip, the price of this year's product had gone up by £700 but the company stood by their original deal and we got it at last year's price. Last Thursday we took delivery. Brian, Lindsay Murday and myself soon had it stowed away in the container. Now comes the crunch, we need to erect it to see how it goes together. I suggest one Saturday morning after the plant show, with as many volunteers as possible, we will have a dummy run. The date will be put on the notice board at the shop. It's all new so if we can look after it, it should last for many years to come.

Please report any vandalism to the police, the more complaints they get the more chance of some action!

Stop Press. On the allotment the other night I was approached by a security guard. It seems they have joined forces with the Park Rangers and will be doing regular patrols. Lets hope it works - it must do something!

Top Tips

Top Tips for cooking the tops of your Broad Beans and Chard.

A tip from the Chairman's wife Barbara - if you pick off the tops of your Broad Beans to stop black fly, these can be steamed like Spinach and are very tasty. I tried this last year and it was very good. Also a tip from Jean Acheson for a tastier way to cook Chard - fry onion or garlic in olive oil, chop up the stalks and fry, then put in the green leaves and cook down - delicious.

Recipe for Parsnip and Apple Soup

Serves 6

Ingredients:

2 pints of veg stock
1 lb Parsnips
1 lb apples
¼ pint of cream
1 medium onion
1 large clove of garlic
2 tsp curry powder
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tbslp butter
½ tsp cardamon
salt and pepper
chives or parsley

Method:

Thinly slice the parsnips, apples and onions. Heat the butter, and when foaming, add the parsnips, apples and onions. Cook gently not



allowing them to colour. Add the curry powder, spices and crushed garlic, cook for 2 minutes, stirring well. Pour in the stock stirring well. Cover and simmer gently for about 30 minutes, or until the parsnips are soft. Season to taste. Liquidise or sieve, if it is too thick dilute with a little stock or water.

Add the cream and re-heat but do not boil. Serve garnished with chopped parsley.

Enjoy!

(Some plot holders may still have parsnips in store, if not worth keeping the recipe until next season, it sounds delicious)

Recipe for Parsnip and Apple Soup, tried and tested by the newest member of the Committee, Janet Howarth.

...and finally

You may have seen two students walking round the allotments filming and may have given them an interview. They were doing a film as part of their degree and said that they really enjoyed their time at the allotments. They said that everyone was most helpful and really interesting to talk to. When they finish college they hope to go into the business but are relocating to Brighton. They said they will try to come to the plant sale and will have copies of the film for anyone interested. (See Lindsay raising the flag

at the shop).

I had a phone call from a lady doing research for a new television cookery show which is being filmed this summer. It is about people growing their own organic produce and cooking it while still fresh from picking. I gave her some phone numbers of people who may be able to help and there are rumours that the chef James Martin of Ready Steady Cook and recently seen on Strictly Come Dancing will be coming to film at the allotments and cooking down there. So

watch this space.

Andrew has added more information on the web site (eastneymiltonallotments.co.uk), which everyone thinks is brilliant, and is getting on with the arrangements for the judging of the produce at the Autumn Show.

The Council have now agreed to dig up the old floor in the shop and completely renew it. They are going to wait until the Autumn when the shop is less busy.

A chance to see yourself on film, on TV, or on the internet!
