

Monday, April 2nd, 2007
Issue 16

The Plot Thickens...



This month's articles...

- Introduction
- Allotment News
- Top Tips
- Chairman's Chatter
- Recipes
- ...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 16

Spring is here at last after all the heavy rain and hopefully all the plots are now dried out. Some were completely underwater and apparently the bus that brings the special needs

people down got stuck in the mud and also one of our Committee members! I expect soon we will all be wishing it would rain! Talking to some of our allotment holders who

have had plots for a long time it appears that some of the drainage system which had been dug out long ago has filled in over the years and needs to be dug out again!

Allotment News

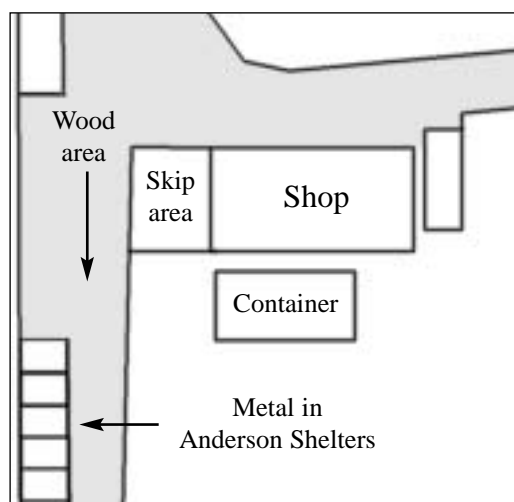
Welcome to all the new plot holders – the Council have been clearing plots and quite a few new people have been seen! We wish you well with your new venture, its hard work but well worth it when you pick your very own crops.

There are still plenty of seed potatoes in the shop and also Broad Beans, shallots and onions and peas which can go in now. Seeds can be planted now the

ground is warming up but it is best to cover them with fleece in case we get another frost. We've had tadpoles in the ditch for about a month now which is a bit earlier than last year so it must be warmer.

Well done to the Chairman Mike Simpson and the team who cleared the scrap metal in the Anderson Shelter. They did very well and also raised some money for the funds. It saved a lot of

space in the skip. The wood still needs to go on the pile in the car park at the bottom. (More about this in Chairman's Chatter!) For the benefit of new allotment holders, who have probably inherited lots of rotten wood etc. a diagram of where to put wood etc is below. While we are on the subject please do not put unsuitable rubbish on the compost heap i.e. diseased crops etc.



This diagram shows where the scrap wood and metal can be put. Metal should be put in the Anderson Shelters near the shop. Wood can be put on the large car park at the bottom of the allotment.

All other non-biodegradable waste can be put in the skip.

Allotment News continued

The small plot in front of the shop is now vacant. It has been dug over and is ready to plant if anyone wants to take it on.

The Council have put in a new water main but have still got to tarmac the road. They are also going to tarmac in front of the shop and Roger Young has said they will do the roads afterwards. They have run out of money but the new budget begins soon. The Chairman is trying to arrange a meeting with someone from the Council about the footpath which is being reopened along the top of the allotments.

The small plot in front of the shop is now vacant. It has been dug over and is ready to plant if anyone wants to take it on. The deal is that it is free but half the produce is given for sale at the Autumn Show. If anyone is interested please let someone know in the shop.

Gina, Sheila and Alan have agreed to organize

the stall for the Floral Show which is going to take place on Castle Field on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th August. They made a very good job of it last year and it takes a lot of hard work. Apparently the allotments have had a stall there for about 15 years! This is taking the place of the Floral Tent at the Southsea Show which is not being held this year. We believe that having a stall at the show is very worthwhile as it raises the awareness of allotments and keeps people interested which in turn helps to keep them open. Also the Autumn Show is advertised at this event. We do need donations of produce to make a good show and will let you know where and when nearer the event. Also a new cookery book is being produced (number 10) and recipes are needed as

soon as possible. Please take them into the shop – these should be tried and tested and if you have any old ones that Mum used to make that will be lovely. The cookery books sell very well and are very good value for money. Copies of the previous ones can be obtained from the shop. It has been agreed with Roger Young that Garden Angels can use the big compost heap for tipping their plants, grass cuttings etc. In return they will build two compost bins and shred everything and the resulting compost can then be used by everyone. They will also hire a JCB to keep the area tidy. So it seems a very good deal! So all you ploholders can take your old wood down to the heap and on the way back collect some good compost and keep yourself fit as well!

Top Tips

You should start off chillies and sweet peppers now so as to be sure of a decent crop. Flowering will start later and by the time the fruits have set they wont have enough hot summer weather left to ripen the crop. Although summer

seemed to go on and on last year!

Prune gooseberries and red and white currants now by cutting back side shoots to two buds. Force rhubarb by covering with a bin and keeping out the light to get sweet succulent

stems but if you have recently split up your corms it wont be suitable for forcing this year.

For all newcomers please feel free to pop into the shop where you can get information on what to plant now!

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Chairman's Chatter

We recently took two trailer loads of scrap metal to the scrapyards which resulted in £65 for the funds!

Rubbish, yes we are all responsible and it looks as if we may have to pay even more to get our dustbins emptied. This brings me to the point, the skip. Please when it is not there don't tip your rubbish. When the skip does come (supposed to be the 9th of the month) someone has to clear it all up and put it in the bin. Also if the bin is full please don't pile the rubbish on top as the driver knocks it off before he will take it.

What has gone well is the metal store. We recently emptied it and took two trailer loads to the scrapyards which resulted in £65 for the funds. This saved at least two skips, well done. Well done also to Brain Forcey, Lindsay Murday, Andrew Leonard and John Peach who gave up their time to clear and load the scrap. Also the wood pile which is on the top car park is getting large (not the rubbish pile which the

Council say they are going to shred!) and Roger Young has given me the OK to burn it. Perhaps when we do we could arrange a bar-b-que.

As I am sure Carole had mentioned elsewhere the next event is the plant sale so please let us have any surplus plants (we all put in too many seeds don't we!). Last year was a big success, let's make this year even better.

Recipes:

Brian Forcey's Guinness Cake

8 oz S.R. Flour
½ tsp baking powder
4 oz Butter, softened
4 oz Soft Light Brown Sugar
1 tsp Gound Mixed Spice
¼ pint Guinness
2 Eggs
12 oz Mixed Dried Fruit

Put Guinness and fruit into a bowl, cover and stand overnight. Grease and line a deep 7 inch cake tin. Strain Guinness from fruit and put with all other ingredients, except fruit, into a bowl and beat for 2-3 mins until well mixed. Stir in the soaked fruit. Pour into the prepared tin and bake at 325f, 170c,

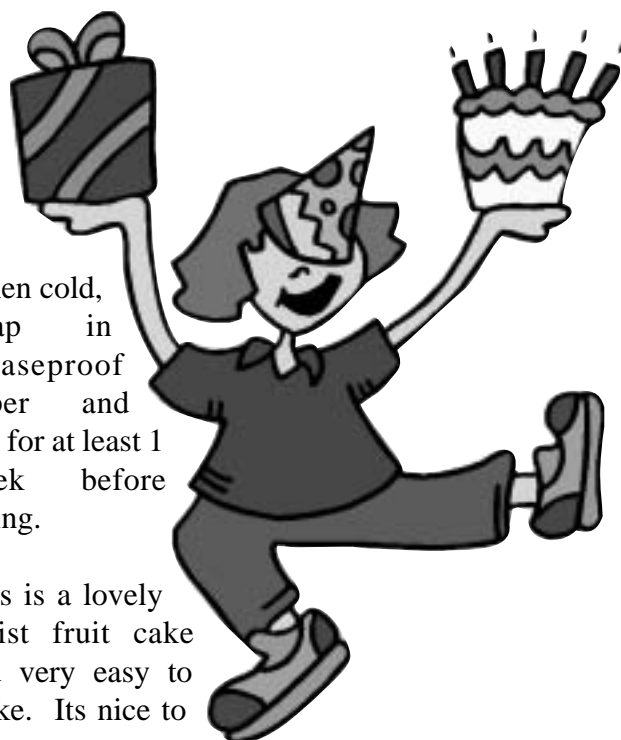
Mark 3 for about 90 minutes or until well risen and firm to the touch. Leave to cool in the tin.

be able to leave it overnight and pop it in the oven in the morning.

Thanks Brian.

When cold, wrap in greaseproof paper and foil for at least 1 week before eating.

This is a lovely moist fruit cake and very easy to make. Its nice to



This recipe can also be found in Cookery Book number 9, on sale in the Shop

Baked Beetroot with Goats Cheese and Caraway Seeds

6 medium sized beetroot
250 gm Goats Cheese

For the dressing
2 tbsp white wine vinegar
half a tsp Dijon mustard
5 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp caraway seeds
Slices of Garlic Bread

Put the oven on at 200c/Gas Mark 6. Cut the leaves and stalks from the beetroots then wrap each one loosely in foil or baking parchment. Roast the beetroot for about an hour until tender right through. Test with a skewer – it should slide

through without much pressure. Remove and unwrap the beetroot and peel off their skins as soon as they are cool enough to handle.

While the beets are cooling pour the white wine vinegar into a mixing bowl and add the Dijon mustard, a grinding of salt and black pepper, then beat in the olive oil. Toast the caraway seeds lightly in a dry, non-stick frying pan then add them to the dressing.

Cut each warm peeled beetroot into thick



slices or segments dropping them into the dressing as you go. Slice the goat's cheese thickly and toss it gently with the beets and their dressing.

Serve with garlic bread.

Beetroot provides the sweetness in this tasty salad starter or serve as an accompaniment. It was nice to find a recipe for baked beetroot rather than boiling them!

...and finally

The AGM was a great success with a very good talk and slide show from Brian Kidd. More than 50 people attended which was great. We hope to have a similar event next year.

Don't forget the plant sale on Sunday 13th May (previously planned for April 29th but it was thought that this was too early). It starts at 9.30 am, tea, coffee and home made cakes will be on sale. There will be a raffle which will be drawn at 11.00 and the tickets are on sale in the shop now. If you have any spare plants to donate please bring them to the shop the day before or on the

morning, also if you could make a cake that would be great. It is a good event and an opportunity to buy those plants you have not had time to grow yourself.

Plans are afoot for the Autumn Show which will be held on Sunday September 3rd. The categories for the photograph competition will be "Wildlife on the Allotments" and "Vegetables" which can be interpreted how you like so start snapping now! The cake section will still be Victoria Sandwich and also "Muffins" to a recipe of your choice. Further details on everything else to be published

later. There will also be a cup for the "newcomer" who gets the most points in the show. This does not mean a newcomer to the allotments but the first time someone has entered the show. Details will be found on the entry forms which will be in the shop later in the summer.

And finally, finally please report any vandalism to the police and get a case number and don't forget the recipes as soon as possible please! Happy planting to everyone, have a nice summer and hope you all get bumper crops.

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