

Monday, June 11th, 2007
Issue 17

The Plot Thickens...



This month's articles...

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

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Introduction to issue 17

Summer is here at last after a warm April, some very cold weather and some very welcome rain. Everything is growing well and we have had some tasty Broad Beans and our first Courgettes. We have also been picking

some lovely strawberries, although some have been picked off before they even ripen. We have since covered them as we thought it was birds but it is still happening and now think it must be mice. Never mind some for us

and some for them! We are also having a bit of a problem with black fly on the runners but spraying with a mixture of diluted comfrey, nettle and garlic seems to be doing the trick. Leave in a bucket for three days only!

Allotment News

The plant sale went very well, despite the heavy rain. Some of the volunteers were soaked through but it was a good chance to pick up any extra plants for your plot. Sheila and Alan had to set up the tea stall in the shop and there were tasty cakes and bacon rolls on sale. There are still a few raffle prizes in the shop and the list is outside so please check your numbers.

There is going to be a barbecue on 30th June in the bottom car park. The Council have given permission for the large pile of old wood to be set fire to, so this will be done at the same

time as the barbeque. This will be in the evening starting about 6.00 pm. Mike Simpson is providing a large barbeque which everyone can use. Just bring your own food and drink. It will give us all a chance to have a good natter and hopefully get to know some of the new ploholders.

The Society are having a stall in the Floral Tent which will be in Castle Field on 4th and 5th of August, instead of at the Southsea Show which has been discontinued. It is a good chance to promote the allotments and also to advertise the Autumn Show and we will need

produce to be donated to make a good display. Leaflets will be handed out the week before letting you know where and when you can leave any surplus you may have.

John Caws (who used to be the Treasurer before Peter) has taken the plot opposite the shop and has planted potatoes already, which is good news as it has been empty for some time.

The new cookery book is going well but we still need some "tried and tested" recipes. If you have any please drop them into the shop.

Allotment News continued

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The Autumn Show will be held on Sunday September 3rd. Entry

forms will be in the shop at the beginning of August. 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. 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.

Chairman's Chatter

Well, I am afraid it is all moans this time! Where do I start – how about the skip. When it is not there please don't leave rubbish anywhere near as it means that someone has to come behind you and load it into the skip when it does come. People are getting fed up and angry! Next the gates – people will leave them open, so then the next person leaves it open and so on. When the shop is open on Tuesday and Sunday mornings the main gate is left open for those people who are garden members to use the shop but this should be the only time! If it is getting late in the evening please lock it in case you are the last person to leave. This brings me on to a meeting which took place at Highland Road Police Station. They



have a police officer who has been given the allotments as a project to sort out the problems! His name is Justin Keefe, he will patrol when it is his late shift and several allotment holders have already met him. He is overseen by Sergeant Heather Ternett (who has an allotment at Titchfield). She brought up several points – the gates being left open and people not notifying them when damage or theft has taken place! The old excuse “what's the point” is no longer valid as they are at last doing something about it, so we must keep them informed. They

have already established two of the culprits who are being watched. They have been warned off and if they persist action can be taken in the courts.

So there you have it, we must play our part and will hopefully get some results. We shall never get rid of the problems altogether but lets give the police a fair try now they are involved.

Sorry everyone for the moans, at least we do seem to have a lot of new faces taking up vacant plots so lets make sure we give them a welcome and help if needed.

Please notify the police when damage or theft has taken place! The old excuse “what's the point” is no longer valid as they are at last doing something about it, so we must keep them informed.



Recipes:

Cheesy Onion and Beetroot Tart

1 lb Onions
1 lb Beetroot
2 tbsp Olive Oil
3 oz Caster Sugar
2 tbsp Balsamic Vinegar
2 tbsp Cranberry Sauce
Salt and Pepper
4 oz Garlic and Herby soft chest, such as Boursin
1lb pack of ready made shortcrust or puff pastry.

Peel and quarter the onions, add to a pan of boiling water and simmer for 10 minutes, drain. Meanwhile clean and trim the beetroot. Place in a large non-metallic dish with approx. 1 pt water. Cover and microwave

on high for 10 minutes. Drain, cool, peel and dice into ½ inch cubes.

Heat the oil in a frying pan making sure it covers the base and sprinkle in the sugar. Add the onion, beetroot, salt and pepper and cook over a low heat for 15-20 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally, until the onions are caramelized. Stir in the cranberry sauce and the balsamic vinegar and simmer for another few minutes,

Slide the mixture into a deep 10 inch flan dish

and top with chunks of the soft cheese. Roll the pastry into a 12 inch circle and place over the tart filling. Carefully push the pastry down the sides of the flan dish to form the edge of the finished tart.

Cooking times will vary according to which pastry you use. As a rough guide, cook shortcrust pastry at 190C/gas mark 5 for 30-35 minutes. Leave to cool for 5 minutes. Loosen the sides with a knife and turn out, pastry side down. Serve hot or cold.

This recipe is delicious and will be in the new cookery book.

You can see all the back numbers of **The Plot Thickens...** on our website:
www.eastneyandmiltonallotments.co.uk



Top Tips

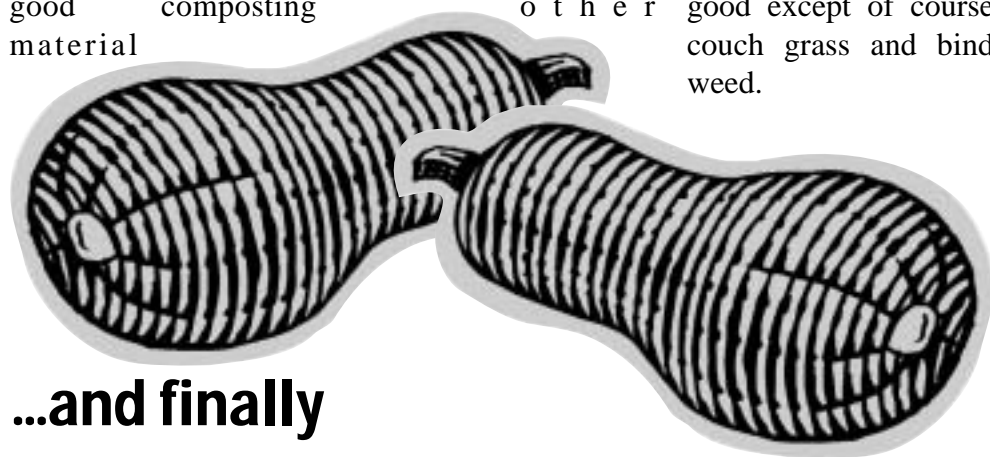
Garden Angels bring down a lot of really good composting material and also shred a lot too. It is all free so help yourselves and can be found down at the bottom of the path which goes past the side of the shop.

Cardboard rolls and small cardboard plain packets can be used in the compost heap and also don't forget the Comfrey and Nettles too. Comfrey leaves contain nearly as much nitrogen as farmyard manure and twice as much potassium. Garden Angels bring down a lot of really good composting material

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When organic matter is sent to landfill sites it is unable to decompose properly as it is squashed under the

waste. It then produces methane gas which is damaging to the earth's atmosphere. Garden and kitchen waste composts easily and helps to improve the quality and structure of the soil. Used tea bags, fruit and vegetable peelings, anything really except left over food. All the weeds are good except of course couch grass and bind weed.



...and finally

Watering Vegetables: Some watering of vegetables may be needed and as a rule of thumb water every 10-14 days. Apply 25 litres per sq.m. (two and a half large watering cans full) unless of course it has rained recently when you don't need to bother. Obviously you have to water seedlings often but these can be done adequately with a watering can. Fruiting crops such as peas, beans and sweet corn respond best to water every 10 days in their flowering period. Root crops and onions are least reliant on extra water so should have

the lowest priority. Potatoes are an exception: watering these at flowering time will greatly increase the numbers of tubers. Leafy vegetables such as lettuce and cabbage ideally need a constant supply of water throughout their growth. If not possible around 25 litres 10-20 days before their intended harvest will produce significant improvement in crops.

Please try not to hog the taps if other plot holders are waiting, be considerate. Also please keep dogs on a lead at all times and don't play your radio

too loud, listen to the birds instead.

Bob and Nesta Nevatt who have a plot at Eastney Lake grew 230 Butternut Squash last year and reportedly have just eaten their last one. Can anyone beat this? Also Bob if you grew this many surely you had three good enough for the show? Hope to see you there this year, winning some rosettes!

And finally, finally please report any vandalism to the police and get a case number.

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