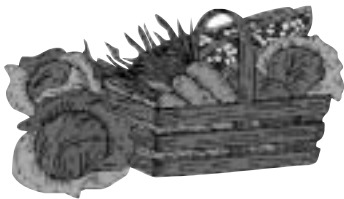


Monday, August 20th, 2007  
Issue 18

# The Plot Thickens...



## Autumn Show

Sunday 2nd September

### *This month's articles...*

- Introduction
- Allotment News
- Chairman's Chatter
- Top Tips
- Reader's Letter
- Recipes
- ...and finally

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 18

Welcome to all you new plot holders! We've seen a few new faces about and wish you lots of luck and happy digging! If you need any help come into the shop or ask your neighbours. Everyone is happy to give you advice and you may even get a free cucumber or too. If you want some inspiration read Paul Pitt's letter!

It's been a varied summer with all the rain but nice not to have to water the allotment! All the spuds have been

rather large due to all the rain but we also, along with most plot holders lost all our tomatoes to blight.

The main item on the agenda is the forthcoming Autumn Show which takes place on Sunday 2nd September. The show opens at 1.30 pm and costs 50p. For those entering the show with produce it has to be in by 10.00 am at which time the tent will be closed for the judging, so everyone has to get their skates on! The

entry forms are in the shop now and also the raffle which will be drawn on the day at 3.00 pm. A big thank you to all those who help put the tents up and to all the ladies who make cakes and for the donations of produce to sell on the day! You are all brilliant and without your help the show could not go on! It is very worthwhile and brings pleasure to a lot of the locals too, so keep it all coming! For more on the show see the Chairman's Chatter!

## Allotment News

**U**nfortunately due to the torrential rain the barbecue which was to be held in June had to be cancelled but all the wood got burnt at a later date and the Council cleared all the rubbish, which was very good!

**W**e also did not manage to have a stall at the Floral Tent on Castle Field as some of the helpers had a holiday booked and there was no one to take

the produce etc. down there. Apparently the show went well and Moneyfields allotments had a stall and won a gold medal so well done to them!

**T**he King's Seed Catalogues are now in the shop and can be collected for your perusal. They have to be completed and returned to the shop where Brian collates all the orders and sends them off to Kings. Also for you new plot holders if you have a bit

cleared and want something to be growing over winter the Broad Beans and Japanese Onion sets will be in the shop in September/October for planting out.

**T**he new cookery books (no. 10) are in the shop and will also be on sale at the show and for £1 are good value for money. There are some lovely recipes to use up all the lovely veggies you have produced this year.

# Chairman's Chatter

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*The Autumn Show is on Sunday 2nd September - the more people who can help the better - lets make it a super day out for everybody.*

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We need your help to erect the show this year! We will start at 6 pm on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August when we will erect one of the marquees and expect this to take about 2 hours. We thought this would be easier than erecting them all on the Saturday. On the Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September we would like as many helpers as possible

starting at about 9.00 am to finish off. Again at 4.30 on the Sunday to take it all down. Lets hope the weather is better than last year! Any help on the day (Sunday) will be welcome to assist on the stalls or the tea tent!

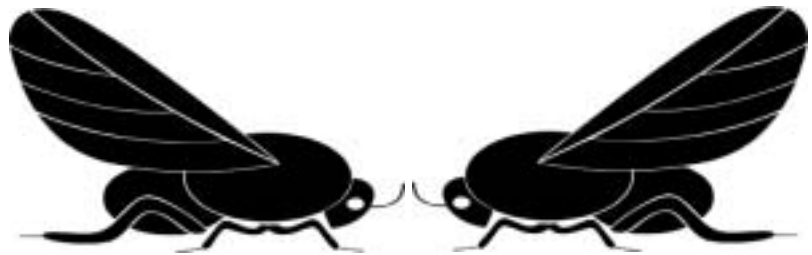
We would also like the following:-

Any spare produce or

plants, clean bric-a-brac, china plates for the plate smashing, cakes (large and small) for the stall and catering tent.

Any of the above can be delivered on Saturday or Sunday morning.

The more people who can help the better - lets make it a super day out for everybody.



## Top Tips

In the last newsletter I mentioned the black fly on the runners and the mix of Comfrey, nettles and garlic! Well, I did spray them with the mixture. I had a bit of trouble with the spray which kept blocking up so in hindsight I should have strained it. I tried about 4 different sprays and managed to block up mine and my neighbour Jean's too! Anyway in the end I just threw it on and managed to cover myself as well! It smelt awful and I did too but it worked wonderfully well and I can recommend it to anyone, my runners

were spectacular! It would be good also for the broad beans if you get black fly but I find that if I grow them over winter and pick out the tops when they are big enough I don't seem to get it!

To spray or not to spray! Along with most plot holders I had blight on my tomatoes and had to ditch the lot! My neighbour John still has beautiful tomatoes! He sprays with Bordeaux Mix at the first sign and sprays again later in the year. He also takes off most of the leaves and this seems to have done the trick. I am against

spraying but am considering it for next year. I am of the opinion that as Bordeaux contains copper sulphate this cannot be as bad as the tomatoes we buy in the shops which I imagine are sprayed with all sorts of chemicals! Having said that we did not have blight until September last year. Perhaps I might spray half and leave half next year! Has anyone got any thoughts/ideas about spraying with Bourdeaux? After all it is only a mineral, perhaps it is OK?

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*To spray or not to spray! Along with most plot holders I had blight on my tomatoes and had to ditch the lot!*

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# A Seasoned Beginner

This article was sent in by Paul Pitt, one of our newer and younger allotment holders. We are always delighted to receive your contributions. So if this one inspires you to put pen to paper, then please send the results to the editor.

It's now been 2 years since I took up a tenancy on Milton Piece and what an enlightening experience it's been.

Like most first time plot holders, I was faced with a knee-deep mixture of couch grass and bindweed. After several dedicated months of digging (and a dance lesson from Ray, one of my neighbours at the plot), I had soil arranged in manageable beds.

In preparation for the coming growing season I'd borrowed allotment books from the library and scrutinized internet web sites. It's difficult to describe the feeling when the Accent potatoes I'd planted on a cold spring morning showed their first green sprouts. There has been some failures, mostly down to me not following the advice given, but no-one could know I had white rot in the ground until that first batch of onions were pulled.

Of course I've had to suffer some ridicule at work and from my friends. I now go by the

strangely affectionate nickname of "Compost". Strange that the teasing stops when the new potatoes, tomatoes and butternut squash come into season.

One of the greatest things about the allotments, and the reason I'm still toiling away, is the feeling you've left the city. Who would have thought that there were birds of prey, rabbits, foxes, slow worms and frogs right on my doorstep.

It still seems ridiculous that for less than £1 a week, I have a piece of land to retire to in the evenings or weekends. Somewhere I can indulge my love of growing vegetables and harvest fresh food for my family. What could be greater than watching your children pick their own strawberries or nibbling freshly picked sweet corn. How many other seven year olds know what rocket tastes like or what a freshly pulled beetroot looks like?

To any new or prospective plot

holders, I offer this sincere advice. Despite the vast amount of information in books and other media, the greatest wealth of knowledge is your neighbours. The people who work plots around you may have been doing so for many years. They know the soil and climate better than any other source. They have seen almost all the diseases or problems you are likely to encounter. They should be your first port of call when things aren't going right.

Secondly never underestimate the amount of time required to maintain a plot. Whether your plot is 5 or 10 rods the actual amount of physical activity required isn't that excessive (look around at your neighbours!). What is required is a dedicated and constant amount of visits to keep those weeds down, paths trimmed and ensure everything stays watered. 'Little and often' accurately describes the mindset required!

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*For those of you who don't know Paul Pitt, he has a full time job, a wife and two young children to look after. He should be an inspiration to us all! Well done Paul and keep up the good work, we have a lot of new allotment holders who can take heart from your letter!*

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## Recipe:

# Runner Beans with Tomatoes

1 tbsp olive oil  
1 onion peeled and finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped  
1 tin of chopped tomatoes, or 500g fresh tomatoes, peeled, deseeded and roughly chopped  
500g runner beans, topped, tailed and sliced diagonally

Heat the oil in a large saucepan or frying pan over a medium-low heat. Add the onion and sweat for 10 minutes until soft (don't let it colour). Add the garlic and cook gently for a minute or two, then add the tomatoes and stir well. Stir

in the beans and bring to a gentle simmer. Turn down the heat. cover the pan and cook very gently, stirring frequently for at least 20 minutes until the beans are very tender. If the mixture seems to be in danger of sticking add a splash of water or stock. Serve warm or cold.



## ...and finally

Could you please make sure you drive slowly on the allotments as there are a families with small children about!

Please remember to clean and return any Trophies you might

have won at last years Autumn Show to the Trading Hut by Sunday August 26th.

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

There is a dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team for Milton area headed by Sergeant Terrett, so please get in touch with her at Southsea Police Station on 0845 045 45 45.

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