

Monday, October 6th, 2008
Issue 23

The Plot Thickens...



This month's articles...

- Introduction
- Allotment News
- Chairman's Chatter
- Top Tips
- 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 23

Its Autumn again and the busy picking of the summer months is nearly over! At least we didn't have to spend time watering the plot and that was a bonus. Now hopefully the weeds will die down

and we can get the plots tidied up for the winter. The weather has been lovely for the last fortnight and it was nice to see the sun. One thing I noticed this summer was that the butternut squash was

not so prolific as in previous years due to the weather. They didn't get off to a very good start, although having said that my neighbour has some whoppers!

Allotment News

The Autumn Show went really well this year, the weather was good and there were a lot of very good helpers and thanks to you all! There were plenty of entries too and Elena Baynham was just pipped to winning the spade for the most points in the vegetables by John Langley, so well done to them both and all who entered, it was a wonderful display! It was nice to see some newcomers too!

Also congratulations to Bob and Evelyn Brown of Milton Piece who came joint third for their allotment in Portsmouth in Bloom.

There were a few sheds broken into last Thursday the 18th and whoever did it also tried to set fire to my compost heap. Thanks

to the person who threw some water on it the next morning when it was still smouldering and put it out. Don't forget to report any crimes as the more that gets reported, the police will be persuaded to do something about it!

It will soon be bonfire night when the big wood pile at the bottom of the allotments will be set alight so bring your wood down. And don't forget it is the one day we are allowed to burn all our rubbish on our own allotments.

There are quite a lot of new allotment holders that have just managed to get their plot so good luck to them and if you need any help or advice please come into the shop where we will try and help you.

The Japanese Onion sets are on sale in the

shop for planting in the next few weeks for overwintering and also some lovely shallots. Also, of course Broad Beans which can be overwintered and give you an early crop, hopefully escaping black fly.

The next thing on the social agenda will be the little gathering on the last day of trading for this year in the shop. This falls on Sunday 7th December between 9.30 and 11.30 when you can come into the shop and have a free mince pie and glass of mulled wine. Also there will be a Christmas raffle which will be called at 11.00 that morning. Do come and have a chat it is nice and sociable!

Chairman's Chatter

Well that's it for another year! The show was, I think, one of the best supported we have had. Friday night's team led by Trevor Stark made short work of erecting the marquee which came from the 54th Scout Group and was the venue for the refreshment area. On Saturday, a really fine and hot day, again a super crowd of volunteers put up the main show building, this year in the form of a framed building, hired by the Church, who had double booked the large white marquee we had last year. With one person who had been sent to supervise, this went up before your very eyes and Janet Howarth was soon arranging tables ready for Sunday. The other white marquee which we own, again seemed to fly up, so by 3.30 we were looking for something to do! Sunday went just as well, even a few drops of rain didn't stop 560 people paying to go in.

The judges were full of praise for the produce and the layout. When it was over, once again a good crowd took everything down bar the roof of our marquee when it rained. Monday morning saw just half an hour's work to take it down and stow it away in the dry. I can't thank you all enough for your efforts it was great. Special thanks to Janet Howarth, the Show Secretary, and Trevor Stark, the man in charge of erecting the marquee, and Andrew Leonard who produced all the posters etc. At this time of writing I don't know how the finances are but John Caws, the treasurer seems to have a smile on his face. Of course it does cost a lot to put on the show with the hiring of the tents, engraving of the cups, rosettes to buy and certificates to have printed, and all the other costs the show entails, but we shall see!

The supper to give out the awards was this year held at the "Cockleshell" Community Centre at Eastney. It was well attended, the food was excellent and a vote of thanks to the ladies who worked so hard with Rob England as team leader. All have said the same, it was a super evening!

Well the council have finally made a move on the vacant plots having strimmed them. They have let them and we welcome all our newcomers, some of whom have already started planting!

Just one little moan, whatever possessed someone to tip a whole lot of broken glass in the metal shed? I hope no one gets cut when we next load the scrap!

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Top Tips

1 Untie your tomatoes from their supports and lay the plants horizontally on a bed of straw. Cover with cloches and the crop will turn red in no time. Alternatively pick them and put them in a bowl with a banana and they will soon ripen up.

2 To save tomato seed cut open your favourite tomato and spread the seeds with the pulp on a piece of kitchen paper. Put somewhere to dry and then fold up and put the whole lot into an envelope and mark it. In the spring lay out the paper and cover with a thin layer of compost and you will have seedlings galore!

3 Just a reminder that if your leeks have gone magotty cut them down to ground level and they will soon grow back and you will have lovely leeks all winter!

3 great tips for you this issue!

Carrot Soup

Ingredients:

1lb carrots prepared and chopped
2 sticks celery prepared and chopped
1 small onion peeled and finely chopped
4 oz turnips peeled and chopped
1 rasher of bacon chopped
1 oz butter
1 ½ pints chicken stock
bouquet garni
pinch of nutmeg
2 oz flour

¼ pint of milk
2 tbsp single cream
chopped parsley for garnish.

Method:

Melt the butter in a sauce pan and fry the bacon and vegetables for a few minutes, add the stock and bouquet garni tied to the pan handle. Season well, cover and simmer gently for about 45 minutes. Remove the

bouquet garni and puree the mixture in a processor or blender. Place in a clean pan and re-heat, add nutmeg, blend the four and milk until smooth and gradually add to the soup stirring over a low heat until it thickens. Check the seasoning, just before serving stir in the cream and sprinkle with chopped parsley.

*Carrot Soup recipe
sent in by Joan
Morgan*

Pumpkin and Cinnamon Muffins

Ingredients:

10 oz plain flour
1 tbsp baking powder
2 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp salt
3 eggs
6 fl oz milk
3 oz butter melted
6 oz soft brown sugar
12 oz grated pumpkin flesh
1 tbsp pumpkin seeds (roast your own or from a pack). To roast place on baking tray and sprinkle with a little salt. Roast on a high

heat for 20 minutes.

Method:

Heat the over to 200c/fan oven 180c/gas mark 6. Grease a ten hole muffin tin lightly with oil or butter or line with muffin papers. Sift the flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt together and put aside.

In a large bowl combine the eggs, milk and butter. Add the brown

sugar and beat well. Add the flour mixture and beat to give a lumpy batter. Stir in the grated pumpkin flesh.

Divide the mixture between the greased muffin tin, filling each one right to the top. Sprinkle over the seeds. Bake for 20-25 minutes until well risen and firm to the touch. Cool slightly in the tin, then turn out and cool on a wire rack.

*And in this season of
pumpkins how about
trying:-*

...and finally

A bit of good news sent in from Val and John Peach.

“Having picked up a leaflet on the door mat inviting John and I to attend Central Southsea Neighbourhood Forum, we decided to go along to Goldsmith Infant School, Bramble Road.

We had a great evening, learning a lot about plans for Portsmouth in the future, how many properties are being built, etc. etc. When

question time came, as we are allotment holders and we have read of the closing down of some sites, we had to ask about green spaces and our allotment site at Eastney and Milton. (There are 1,441 allotments on 10 sites across Portsmouth.) The Planning Officer for the Council produced a map of the draft plans which take us up to 2026 and I am pleased to say that our allotments are safe at

least up until then.”

Thanks to Val for sending this in and if anyone has any articles to have printed please bring them in to the shop!

Our neighbours at Eastney Lake have just been given a small hand mower by a friend! It is absolutely marvellous, cuts the grass perfectly without noise, the smell of petrol and also breaking down!

*Don't forget if you
are stuck for a
Christmas present
for your family or
friends, the Recipe
Books on sale in the
shop are very good
value at £1.00 each
and you can buy all
10 booklets for just
£8.00. Then they
will know what to do
with all that lovely
produce you provide!*
