

Monday, December 8th, 2008
Issue 24

The Plot Thickens...



This month's articles...

- Introduction
- Allotment News
- Chairman's Chatter
- Top Tips
- Coach Trip
- Recipes
- ...and finally

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

Introduction to issue 24

Hello everybody, welcome to the Christmas Newsletter! I hope you all got your plots tidied up before the wet weather set in and that you are all looking forward to a bit

of a rest over Christmas. It will soon be planting time again and the over wintering beans, onions etc. all seem to be growing nicely. The seed potatoes will be on sale

in the shop in late January and also onion sets. There will also be a new lot of seeds. Brian has ordered a varied supply and as usual they will be good value for money!

Allotment News

The Christmas raffle was held on Sunday when everyone enjoyed a mince pie and glass of mulled wine. A big thank you to Shirley Gunn for her donations of a beautiful fruit cake, four Christmas cakes, shortbread and large decanter of Blackberry Liqueur. (Above and beyond the call of duty.) John Peach won the large bottle of whisky kindly donated by Jan Jenkins and a lot of people went home quite happy!

As you all probably know the bonfire did not get burnt as the Council have said 'no bonfires'! It all seems a bit of a shame as it would save the rate payers a lot of money spent in having to take it all away! The News

did a feature about it but missed the point that it is not set light to as a social occasion but merely to clear a lot of old wood that would have been put in the skip! I have to admit that it does say on our contract that we sign when we take over a plot that bonfires are not allowed at any time but rules are for made for discussion and changing after all!

A sad bit of news – four foxes have been found dead on the allotments! Apparently the PDSA have taken them away to find out why they died and we should know shortly! If you put poison down to kill rats and mice the Protection of Animals Act requires users to take precautions to

ensure other animals are not poisoned. There was a case a few years ago where a police dog was poisoned by eating biscuits which had been contaminated with poison and the people responsible were prosecuted. Any baits must be enclosed for safety. If you know of anyone who is putting poison down please tell them it is against the law to do so unless it is contained! We have footprints occasionally on the plot and also a few piles of poo which are easily cleared away but what a lovely sight to see the foxes roaming around and the grandchildren are enchanted by them! They are not vermin and do a lot of good on the allotments eating slugs etc!

The shop is now closed for the Xmas break and will re-open on Sunday the 18th January.

Chairman's Chatter

Well, hope to see you at the Christmas raffle and if not Happy Christmas, New Year and keep those weeds down!

Well Christmas is nearly here and time to think of all the things we want which will do as presents. Soon the shop will close for the period till the new year. Brian Forcey the Trading Officer and Trevor Stark will do a stock take and Brian is arranging for the shop to be restocked.

As you may have seen from the notices and the

News we were banned from having a November the 5th bonfire! Needless to say the Council have done nothing and the heap gets bigger by the week! What will happen to the compost heap, I don't know as it is getting to the point where it will be too big to shred. The Council and Garden Angels (who have an agreement with the

Council) add to the heap daily.) (The Council did not shred it in previous years and it rotted it down lovely in time! There is already some good soil underneath! Ed.)

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Top Tips

A bit late now after all the wet weather we have been having but its best to cover over any bare soil with a mulch of compost, leaves, straw, cardboard or similar to stop the nutrients being leached over the winter. The added benefit is that come spring the worms will have done most of the work for you, incorporating the organic matter with the soil below. I'm not in favour of carpet or

polythene as carpet has lots of chemicals which leach into the soil and if you think about it how can worms live and do their work properly under polythene?

Not really a top tip but something I read in the Allotment and Leisure Gardener! Supermarkets aim to provide fruit and vegetables which are attractive, available all year round and convenient and cheap.

To achieve this chemicals are being used to increase yield and to prolong shelf-life. Potatoes are often treated with up to 14 chemicals, 9 for cosmetic reasons only. Lettuces can be sprayed up to 11 times with 23 chemicals.

The message is clear, if you care about what you are eating 'keep it local', grow it yourself and try to eat what is in season!

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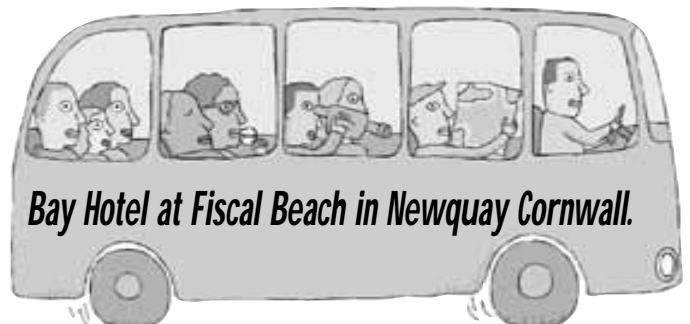
Coach Trip

Val Peach has kindly arranged another coach trip. It is to the Bay Hotel at Fiscal Beach in Newquay in Cornwall. A party of us went on Val's trip last year to the same hotel and had a brilliant time. The hotel and food were lovely, also the views of the bay so it is really pleasing that she has managed to get it again at a very good price. It is for four nights, bed, breakfast and evening meal and includes the trip down by coach and

two other day trips, one of which is to the Eden Centre and the other to be arranged. The coach leaves on Monday 20th April from a local pick up point and returns on the Friday. The inclusive cost is

£222.00 per person. If you are interested please ring Val on 92732644 as she needs to know numbers as soon as possible so she can determine if it is worth going ahead with organising the trip.

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Easy Chard Pie

Ingredients:

500g Chard
1 onion finely chopped
200g feta cheese, crumbled
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
270g packet filo pastry
Olive Oil

Method:

Remove the chard leaves from the stems, then chop both leaves and stems, keeping them separate. Bring a pan of water to the boil, cook the stems for three minutes, then add the leaves and cook for another three to five minutes, until tender. Drain well, squeezing

out any excess liquid. Put in a bowl, add the onion and feta and season to taste.

Brush a pie dish or swiss roll tin with olive oil, lay a piece of filo pastry in it, leaving the edges hanging and brush with oil. Place another piece of pastry on top and brush with oil. Continue building the pie in this way until half the filo has been used. (There were six large sheets in the pastry I used – if too big for your tin, just cut them in half and overlap as necessary.)

Put the chard mix on top of the filo. Brush another piece of filo pastry on both sides with olive oil and place on top of the chard, then cover with another piece of filo, brush with oil, and continue until all the pastry has been used up.

Pre heat the oven to 200C/400F/gas mark 6. Roll the ends of the filo together to make a neat edge. Brush all over with olive oil and make two or three steam holes in the top. Bake for 30-40 minutes until the pie is crisp and golden.

A tasty way to use chard of which I still have some growing on the plot!

Turkey, Carrot and Coriander Soup

Ingredients:

1 onion, peeled and sliced
1 tbsp sunflower oil
3 carrots, peeled or scrubbed and cut into chunks
1½ pints of turkey stock or water and chicken stock cube
Pepper and salt to taste
1 tsp ground coriander
200g (6oz) leftover

turkey cut into chunks
1 dessertspoon fresh coriander chopped

Method:

Lightly fry onion in oil, add carrot and stir for a minute. Season and add the ground coriander, turkey and stock and simmer until the carrot is cooked. Alternatively use

leftover cold carrot and cook for less time.

Blitz with a food processor or in a blender until smooth, reheat gently if necessary. Add the fresh coriander just before serving and serve with chunks of fresh bread.

A smooth and satisfying soup for using that left over turkey.

...and finally

The Annual General Meeting will take place at the Cockleshell Community Centre near the Eastney Swimming Baths on Wednesday January 14th at 7.30 pm. There is a car park adjacent and parking across the road. This is a chance for you to air your views and also for the

re-election of committee members. New members are always welcome! Gina and Sheila will be serving tea and biscuits.

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!

All that remains is to wish you a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year and hope to see you at the AGM.

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