

Monday, June 29th, 2009
Issue 26

The Plot Thickens...



This month's articles...

- Introduction
- Allotment News
- Chairman's Chatter
- Top Tips
- 2 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 26

The longest day has come again and so its downhill all the way to Christmas now! Hopefully we will have some lovely weather in between and some much needed rain to make those crops grow! Usually Wimbledon

fortnight is a betting man's favourite for monsoon type weather in the South of England but we shall see. Thank goodness we don't get a hose-pipe ban here but please don't hog the water if there are other's waiting!

The courgettes are prolific as usual and there is a nice recipe for courgette soup included in this news letter! Also don't forget the recipe for courgette cake which is always a favourite in our house!

Allotment News

It will be show time before we know it, please help if you can! There is a list in the shop if you would like to help i.e. selling ice cream, tombola etc. The show is only on for 2 ½ hours so if you could just help for part of that time it will give other helpers time to look in the produce tent and have a cup of tea etc. Of course help is needed to put up the tents etc. (see Chairman's Chatter). The list of entries is up on the shop notice board with a few new categories. Entry forms will be in the shop soon!

Still ongoing about the bonfire and empty plots, but Mike Simpson has a meeting

with the Council next week!

A bit of good news Gerald Vernon-Jackson, leader of Portsmouth City Council came to the last Committee meeting and Steven Rees, our go between, is coming to the next one. So lets hope we can get something done as there is now a 3 year waiting list for plots. On the same note, I have given up part of the plot that I worked, still have enough room to grow everything we need, and hopefully, will have more time to enjoy the plot!

There is now a skip at Hope Cottage once a month but apparently it was too full so the contractor would not take it away, so please

be sensible and if it is full wait until next time with your rubbish. Please try and compost everything you can! The heap near the car park is being removed sometime soon so we all need to take responsibility for our weeds. Unfortunately some people have been tipping rubbish there so what was a useful heap has now become an eyesore. Annual weeds can be composted. Bind weed and Couch Grass can be left in water and when it has rotted down poured onto your compost to act as a catalyst to break it all down or even used as a potent but pongy fertilizer!

Chairman's Chatter

Don't forget if you can help with the Autumn Show, Friday 4th September, Saturday the 5th and finally Sunday the 6th.

Well, I expect most of you have heard of the meeting which took place on the showground. In case you haven't, the Council went as far as measuring out thirty new plots, having had the grass cut. We were then told of a meeting which was for the Parks Department to inform us what was going to happen! Well on the Friday at 3 pm two of the Parks Department, the Leader of Portsmouth City Council, Gerald Vernon-Jackson and Councillor Terry Hall (now the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth) plus a

huge turnout of plot holders (the News said 40 we think at least 70) met on the Show Ground! After the case was put for the Show, the whole scheme for turning the space into plots was scrubbed and we can have a show this September and in the future. This would have been a simple way of making more plots but we are still waiting for something to be done about the vacant and overgrown plots, of which there are many.

Talking of the Show again we would like all the help we can get, erecting the marquees

and on the show morning the stalls. More about that nearer the time.

New plot holders don't know that when the shop is open the gate is left open, but please at all other times close it.

The scrap metal was recently sold (well half of it). The price has gone down but we still put £45.00 into the funds. No fridges or gas bottles, but anything else metal!

Still no news about burning the wood on bonfire night but we will keep trying.

Top Tips

1 Feed your tomatoes and get them ripening before blight hits. Feed them every week from the moment the first fruits set, Comfrey liquid (the foul smelling (I quite like it) result of steeping comfrey in water for a few weeks) is perfect, but any tomato feed will do. I also use the liquid seaweed on sale in the shop, it lasts for ages as you only need a capful in litre of water but there is also a tomato feed which,

Brian tells me, has a couple of added ingredients for tomatoes! A new school of thought has it that the traditional pinching out of side shoots may encourage blight by opening up wounds, so if you have space and a sturdy trellis, experiment with tying them instead. Some people spray with Bordeaux mix but last year the blight didn't seem to strike until September. The year before I remember it was much earlier.

2 We seem to have a lot of black fly about this year on the beans! I still swear by the mix of comfrey, nettles and garlic left in water for 3 days then sprayed on. I still have the black fly but this mixture seems to act as a fertilizer and the beans grow so fast that the bugs get left behind. If you are not trying to be organic the Bug Clear on sale in the shop works quite quickly!

2 Top Tips in this issue!

*A lovely creamy soup
and useful for using
up those courgettes
that grow too big if
you happen to miss
one.*

Courgette Soup

Ingredients:

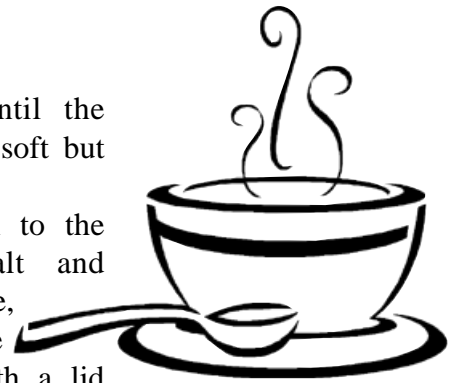
1 lb Courgette
1 ½ oz Butter
1 small Onion
1 Turnip
2 Carrots
2 pints of Stock
Salt and Pepper
5 fl oz of Cream

Method:

Peel the courgette and chop roughly. Melt the butter in a pan and add the courgette, the finely chopped onion and the peeled and diced turnip and carrots. Fry over

gentle heat until the vegetables are soft but not brown.

Add the stock to the pan, with salt and pepper to taste, bring to the boil, cover with a lid and simmer for about 30 minutes until all the vegetables are tender. Blend the soup in a liquidiser or rub it through a sieve. Return to the pan, heat through and check the seasoning. Gradually blend in the cream and



heat without letting the soup reach boiling point.

This soup is also nice made with Marrow or Butternut Squash which has been peeled, de-seeded and chopped!

Red Currant Compote

Ingredients:

1lb Red Currants
7 oz Caster Sugar (or to taste)
1-2 tbsp Brandy
5 fl oz Cream or Yoghurt

Method:

Strip the currants from the stems with a fork, rinse in a colander and drain thoroughly. Put alternate layers of currants and sugar in a bowl and leave in a warm room for several hours until the sugar

has dissolved.

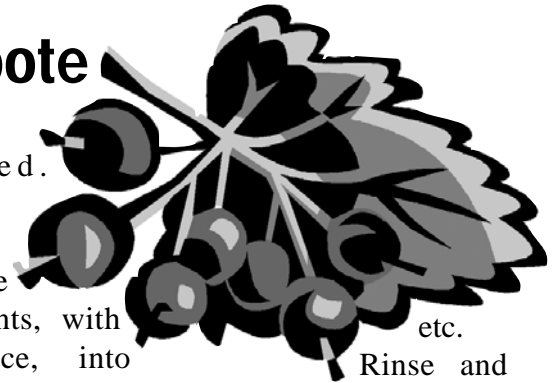
Stir in the brandy.

Spoon the red currants, with their juice, into

serving glasses, and chill the compote in the refrigerator for about 1 hour.

Serve with cream or yoghurt.

Frosted red currants are attractive as a garnish on cakes and ice creams



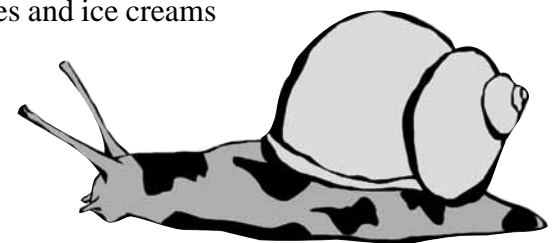
etc. Rinse and drain clusters of the currants, thoroughly brush with beaten egg white and dredge heavily with sugar. Leave on a wire rack to dry before use.

*This is a lovely
recipe and very easy
to make!*

...and finally

The Snail

At sunset, when the night-dews fall,
Out of the ivy on the wall
With horns outstretched and pointed tail
Comes the grey and noiseless snail
On ivy stems she clambers down,
Carrying her house of brown



Safe in the dark, no greedy eye
Can her tender body spy,
While she herself, a hungry thief,
Searches out the freshest leaf.
She travels on as best she can
Like a toppling caravan.

*After the rain the
other day (we did
have a bit), my
husband collected
100 snails from the
front garden which
prompts me to
include this poem by
James Reeves*
