

Monday, August 2nd, 2010
Issue 30

The Plot Thickens...



Autumn Show 2010

This month's articles...

- Introduction
- Allotment News
- Chairman's Chatter
- Recipes
- Top Tips
- ...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 30

Welcome to all the new plot holders that have taken residence over the last few weeks. We hope that you get on well and will be soon growing some lovely crops. It is hard work but well worth it. There are two new plot holders near me who have made a lovely job of their plots and are now reaping the benefits. One of them in a matter of weeks! Hopefully, now, all the plots will be taken up and the waiting list reduced.

I expect most of you have heard the news that Mike Simpson, the Chairman of the Association, had a heart attack last week. He received medical attention really quickly and I am glad to say that he is doing very well and should make a full recovery. So Mike if you read this we all wish you well and hope to see you at the allotments soon! Mike does such a lot for the allotments that we all hope that he will soon

be fit again! (Since writing this, Mike is home and should make a full recovery and we were really pleased that he also managed to write his piece for Chairman's chatter!)

The Allotment Association received a grant from Grass Roots, thanks to some hard work from John Caws the Treasurer and also Hilary Day who has a plot at Hope Cottage! John has written about this below for the Newsletter.

Several months ago the Committee applied for a Grassroots grant of £5,000 (max allowed), to update and purchase new marquees and pedestal tables for the Autumn Show. This would allow us to be more self-sufficient.

(We had to borrow tents from the Scouts and the local Church, which we were very grateful for but of course had to pay for! Ed)

The application was

successful and we have been awarded £3,147 towards the cost, also the Portsmouth Community Trust awarded us £1,500.

Four new marquees and 15 heavy-duty pedestal tables have now been purchased and these should give many years of good service.

Many thanks to Hilary Day of Hope Cottage for all her help and hard work in preparing the applications.

John Caws
(Treasurer)

Before we know it the Autumn Show will be here (September 5th) and the new schedule can now be seen on the Notice Board outside the shop. It is much the same as usual with the photograph this year being 'an Evening on the Allotment'. All newcomers are more than welcome, it is mainly for fun and much easier than you would think to enter!

Allotment News

Thank you everyone who donated plants and cakes to the Plant Sale held in May. There was a good attendance and most of the plants were sold. Special thanks to Lindsay for all his hard work growing plants to sell, also to Janet for the raffle and of course Sheila and Alan for the bacon sarnies and tea. Incidentally if you have any suitable raffle prizes for the Autumn Show please take them into the shop.

The Harvest Supper is to held on Wednesday 22nd September at the Nelson Bar as last year, which is the caravan site on the front near the Eastney Swimming Baths. The cost will be £5.00 per ticket and the tickets will be available at the Autumn Show or in the shop. The price includes a meal and you will have to tell us in advance what you would like to eat. Come along even if you don't have any cups or certificates to collect. It is a fun evening and you will get to meet

other like minded people.

A bit of a moan – please, please don't hog the hosepipes. If there are people waiting we are limited to 20 minutes each but obviously if no one is about you can use it for a little longer. Don't forget that water has chlorine and other things in it that plants don't really like. Seedlings can be watered by watering can from your water butt and the plots only really need watering once a week if it hasn't rained.. Why water those weeds and make more work for yourself! So please be thoughtful to your neighbours.

Also please lock the gates! There have been a number of break ins of late and if the gates are locked at least it is a bit of a deterrent! I know the main gate has people coming and going all day but if we could get into the habit of locking them it will save any unwelcome

visitors getting in with their cars. If you are broken into please phone the Police and get a case number. A community policeman has been seen about the plots and please be vigilant if you see anyone and phone them. The number is 0845 045 45 45 and the people to speak to are either PCSO James Warne or PC Erica Leigh.

According to the Council maps there should be pathways between all plots and there have been some instances of people encroaching on the paths and roads with sheds etc. Please keep to your own boundaries and also please do not park on roads unless for loading or unloading and prevent others from driving down. It would be helpful if cars were left outside the allotments unless really necessary, there is always parking to be had in Locksway Road if the car park is full!

Brian has asked me to let you know the Kings Seed Catalogues will be in the shop towards the end of August for you to order your discounted seeds.



Well it will soon be show time. Once again we will need lots of help erecting the marquees and the stalls.



Chairman's Chatter

Well it will soon be show time. Once again we will need lots of help erecting the marquees and the stalls. The Committee have purchased new metal framed marquees for this year so it should be good. Any new plot holders, do try and enter, there are loads of classes, its free and its fun.

Any new plot holders, do try and enter the Autumn Show, there are loads of classes, its free and its fun.

(You must be a member of the Association which only costs £2.50 per year! Ed)

Many times newcomers have won awards. The

judges are professionals and they have no idea whose produce they are judging. We will also need bric a brac, crockery for smashing, cakes for the stand and catering, we cannot ever get enough. Jams chutney etc. Just call at the shop they will tell you everything. All we need is a fine weekend.

We have a new face from the Council, David Mormon, who wants to work the E&MAHA to our mutual advantage. He has already got the

main gate fixed so will you please shut it, even if it is open when you approach. We just do not want people walking in and around the plots. The men's toilets were recently vandalized, we just do not need this, so please see that your children leave it as clean as they found it. Chris makes a wonderful job of keeping the toilets clean!

Watch the notice boards for more details of the show.

Rhubarb and Ginger Jam

Ingredients:

13 lb Rhubarb
3 lb sugar ½ Demerara,
½ white
1 tsp Ground Ginger (or
to taste)

Method:

Rhubarb needs no added water so mash the fruit in the pan to extract the juice. Simmer gently until a smooth puree. Slow cooking extracts the maximum amount of pectin from the fruit.

Add the sugar and stir over a low heat until dissolved. Add the ginger, bring to the boil and boil as rapidly as possible but watch that it does not boil over.

Stir occasionally, but not too often as it lowers the temperature of the jam. Test early for setting point. Always turn off the heat as you test. The jam has reached setting point when either a little on a cold saucer

wrinkles when pushed with a finger or any cooled jam left on the spoon hangs in a 'flake'. Alternatively when the jam reaches 220 degrees F. when tested with a sugar thermometer.

Remove any scum from the top, allow to cool, then pour into hot jars. Fill jars to within ¼" of the top, put a cover on the jam of waxed paper and seal with lid. Store in a cool dry place.

A nice tasty jam recipe with a bit of a twist!

Shirley Gunn gave me this recipe for using up any leftover marrow or an overgrown courgette

Courgette Bake

Dice the marrow and steam it lightly until soft, beat up an egg and pour over. Mix in

grated cheese and put a little on the top. Bake in a medium oven for about 20 minutes and

you have a nice lunch or light supper dish! Lovely!

Top Tips

1 To prevent your strawberries from touching the soil cut our large donut shaped rounds of bubble wrap and put it round the plant as a collar. (This may also deter slugs).

2 Mix four tps lemon juice and two cups of water in a spray bottle. Spray the mixture on plant leaves being attacked by aphids. The limonoids in the lemon

oil in the mixture kill the pests. Aphids excrete a sweet fluid called honeydew, a favourite food of the ant. Ants are known to protect colonies of aphids so they can feast on an endless supply of honeydew. The ants will also move the aphids from one plant to another to help sustain the colony. Another good reason to get rid of ants! Predators usually gobble up aphids,

unless, of course, the sprays used on plants to kill aphids also repel the beneficial insects. I still use the garlic, comfrey and nettle mixture, left for three days and then sprayed or thrown on.

3 To soften the hard coating of beans for planting place the seeds between two damp sheets of kitchen paper overnight.



...and finally

Don't forget the Autumn Show to be held on the 5th September, it is a fun day, so even if you are not entering please come along and enjoy. Deb has everything in hand and this year as there will be no vouchers from Garden News it has been decided to give winners of the Top Tray and Top Vase vouchers to spend in the shop! For new plot holders there are a lovely array of cups and trophies to win and you get to keep them for a year (and polish them). It is free to enter! It is only 50p to get in to the show on the day and

there will be a raffle, bric a brac stall, cakes, pickles and produce to buy. Also some tools, a plate smashing stall, ice cream and it is quite something to see all the prize winning produce! Help is needed on Saturday morning to erect the new large marquees (which should be much easier) and to get out the tables etc. All help will be gratefully received! Also cakes and donations of spare produce will be most welcome.

Just read Charles Dowding's plan for mini leaves, as outlined

in his excellent book Organic Gardening. He plants out lettuces at a distance of 20-25cm, lets them develop and then discards the outer leaves (which reduces hiding places for slugs), before picking the next layer of leaves every few days, always leaving a central head of small leaves behind. This way, each plant crops for around three months. Sounds good to me, I always have a lovely crop of lettuces early on in the year then my next sowings never seem so good, so I think I will try this method.



The Plot Thickers...

*There are 3 Top Tips
in this issue!*

*Don't forget the
Autumn Show will be
on Sunday 5th
September 2010.*

