



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Allotment Newsletter

Time to get digging



Vegetable Harvest

This list is only a snapshot of some of the vegetables you could be harvesting now.

broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbages, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, leeks, parsnips, swedes, turnips.

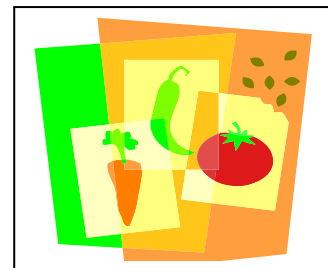
LIAISON GROUP NEWS

Our last meeting was held in early January and we had a very good meeting full of ideas and the way forward. The minutes of the meeting are published on the website. Our competitions are listed below and we have added a separate BBQ which will be held in June. Our Scarecrow competition will be split into two categories this year with one for Adults and one for Children under 16 to take part in. Wreclesham allotment site has not had any scarecrows for 2 – 3 years so it would be good if you could take part this year. Below you will find a list of dates for the events that are taking place this year. Please make a note and try and support the events whenever possible as they are for you.

Our allotment website needs some upto date pictures of more recent happenings on the allotment plots. Have you got any pictures of the cold weather we have just had for instance. For those of you who missed the seeds from Thompson and Morgan you certainly missed a very successful offer. Thanks to Jenny Williams and her team who successfully dealt with the offer.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 25 th February | Winter Lecture with Jim England |
| 27 th June | BBQ at West Street Greenhouses |
| w/c 29 th June | Scarecrow Competition |
| w/c 6 th July | Allotment Competition |
| 26 th July | Allotment Show at the Maltings |
| w/c 12 th October | Pumpking competition |



If you buy seeds from the Garden Centre now is a good time. You will have a choice but do not leave it too late as popular varieties will be sold out

WINTER LECTURE 2009

Theme Growing Vegetables

Date 25th February 2009

Time 7pm – 9.30 pm

Venue Council Chamber in South Street (subject to change)

Speaker Mr Jim England

Jim has just recently retired from the RHS Gardens at Wisley. He was the superintendant in charge of the trials field and the model vegetable plots near the rock gardens. He will be sharing some interesting anecdotes about his time at Wisley with us.

If you would like to come along to this evening please return the reply slip at the bottom of this newsletter. This will make sure we have enough chairs and tea and coffee for everyone.



SLUGS

Digging over the soil in winter time will bring slugs eggs to the surface where they are more likely to be killed by frosts or eaten by birds. I think we have all seen slugs eggs but if you haven't they are pearly white about 3 mm in diameter and are found in clusters.

In April increasing temperatures and wet weather provide good conditions for slugs to grow and multiply. No single method of control will be completely effective so you should try several strategies. Here are a few ideas

- Hunt for slugs at dusk or dawn with a flashlight
- During the day slugs congregate in moist dark places. Create suitable hiding spots and then gather slugs from them. I have found overturned grapefruit halves work
- Remove debris from your plot to remove slug hiding places
- Place beer traps around the edges of beds. Place sugary beer into a container so that the slug is able to crawl into the container easily. (Could be considered a waste of beer)
- Raise seedlings indoors and plant out when they are more able to sustain attack.

Capability Browns first name was Lancelot. He was known as Capability because he was always telling his clients that their landscapes had great 'capability' for improvement

GENERAL TASKS

With the days starting to lengthen why not try to start warming the ground by putting some fleece over a patch. This will warm the ground so that the seeds you put in will germinate much better.

Many of you have rhubarb on your allotments, why not try forcing some. Place a bucket or something similar to exclude the light over the crown. You will then in a few weeks have some lovely pink sticks of rhubarb to cook.

Don't forget to order or buy your potatoes early as the variety you want may be sold out, they are available in Garden Centres now.

Now is the time, if you haven't already, to get cracking with the digging of your allotment plot. It is better for yourself and your back to do a little at a time rather than try and tackle it all in one go. If the ground is wet do not try and dig it as you will wreck the soil structure.

Whilst digging add some of your own compost to the ground but avoid doing this where you are planning to plant root crops.

FRUIT

If you are planning to plant fruit trees and bushes (raspberries and other cane fruit) you really need to be getting on with it. These trees and bushes should be



planted no later than the end of March. In fact the sooner they go in the better. Pruning of apple and pear trees should be done this month and certainly no later than the end of February as the fruit buds will be starting to swell.

Gooseberries should be pruned now.

Shorten side shoots on red and white currants to just one bud and remove old stems crowding the centre of the bush. Do not prune blackcurrants this way as they fruit on new shoots made the previous year.

Autumn fruiting raspberry canes can now be cut down.

DO NOT cut down summer fruiting raspberry canes as you will have no fruit. Summer fruiting raspberries fruit on the canes they made in the previous year.

GENERAL NEWS

It has been suggested to me that I start a list of more experienced allotment holders to advise the not so experienced holder. This would be site specific and I already have a volunteer at Alderley Farm site. If you are an experienced allotment holder and would be willing to give up some time to help others please let me know. It would be good if we can get this moving along as it would definitely guide the not so experienced amongst us in the right direction.

An update on the contaminated manure. If you are not sure about the manure check with the supplier whether it came from a farm or equine business where Forefront, Pharaoh or Banish were used. Request herbicide free manure where available.

You can also test the manure using this recommended method.

1. Thoroughly mix 1 part manure with 1 part multi purpose compost in a clean bucket. Prepare enough to fill 4 5 inch pots
2. Fill another 4 clean pots solely with multi purpose compost. These will be untreated comparisons.
3. Place each of these pots in a separate saucer to prevent water from one pot reaching another.
4. Water the pots and leave to stand for 24 hours.
5. Plant each pot with 4 Broad Bean seeds.
6. Observe subsequent growth for a 4 week period and note any ill effects in the pots containing the manure mix such as cupped leaves and fern like growth on new shoots.

These symptoms may indicate aminopyralid residue in the manure. Signs of other kinds of damage will most likely indicate other issues such as damping off or bacteria infected soil.

More information can be obtained from

www.pesticides.gov.uk/garden.asp?id=2480

www.defra.gov.uk/farm/wildlife/weeds/index

Allotments boomed in both World Wars, following calls from the government for families to grow as much of their own as possible. Britons were also encouraged to rip out their flowers and shrubs and convert their gardens into vegetable and fruit plots, while many public parks were turned into market gardens. In the 1st World War George V led by example by replacing his flower beds at the front of Buckingham Palace with potatoes. Over 1.5 million allotments were in use during the 2nd World War. **FOOD FOR THOUGHT !**

Farnham Food Initiative.

This has proved a successful project in fact so successful that they have taken on a new site at Runfold. They are looking to increase the membership and have 2 meetings organised. The first is on the 4th February at the Kiln, Badshot Lea and the second is on 24th February at the Maltings, both start at 7.30 pm. If you are interested to see what they are doing and have achieved so far just pop along to either venue and you will be made most welcome
Good gardening



Kevin Taitt

Grounds and Services Manager

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WINTER LECTURE 25TH FEBRUARY

*I will/will not be attending the lecture

* please delete as appropriate

Name.....

Number of people attending.....

Allotment site where plot held.....

Please return to: Farnham Town Council, South Street, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7RN

No later than 20th February