



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.

GENERAL NEWS

Firstly, from all of us at the Town Council may we wish you a “Happy New Year” and a successful growing year on your allotment. Mind you it can’t be any tougher than 2006 I wouldn’t think.

We have just recently held our first Allotment Liason Group meeting. This proved very worth while with every site represented and 2 Councillors present. Here are a few items that came out of the meeting.

- Competitions for 2007. This will be explained later.
- Mr Guy from Wrecclesham allotment site is Chairman of the group with Mr Nicholson from Alderley Farm allotment site acting as Vice Chairman.
- Monthly inspection procedure was explained. This will be explained later.
- Trees were also a problem on some sites especially Wrecclesham. In future trees that are going to be planted, the position will have to be agreed with the Council. Those people that have trees at the moment, please consider your neighbour.
- Manure that is delivered is causing a problem once again at Wrecclesham. If you are having manure delivered please clear the **WHOLE HEAP** as it makes life difficult for other plot holders.
- Rubbish on allotments. This is a problem on all sites and if you have rubbish please remove it from the site not dump it on an existing heap. At West Street someone has dumped a bath, if it was you please remove it.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

19 th February	Winter Lecture
9 th – 13 th July	Allotment Competition
15 th – 20 th July	Scarecrow Competition
28 th July	Allotment Show

Hopefully by giving you these dates now you can start planning your allotments to be at their best for these dates.



WINTER LECTURE 2007

Theme Pest and Diseases on Vegetables
Date 19th February 2007 **Time** 7pm – 9.30 pm
Venue Council Chamber in South Street (subject to change)
Speaker Mr Andrew Halstead

Andrew is the Chief Entomologist for the RHS based at Wisley Gardens, So we could not get anyone better qualified to talk to us. You will find enclosed a slip for you to return if you are coming to the lecture. This will make sure we have enough chairs and catering.

I have been asked to explain what the judge looks for when judging the allotments for the Annual Allotment Competition. Here goes.

- Variety of vegetables and fruit that are grown on the plot.
- Quantity of vegetables and fruit grown.
- The health of the crops
- Pest and diseases present
- Tidiness of the plot.
- Whether the plot has a compost heap or not.
- Mulching materials used.

I hope these pointers help you.

I have also been asked to explain the inspection procedure that I carry out monthly. The aim of the inspection is to get an overall picture of the allotment sites, who is looking after their plot and who isn't. If you do not look after your plot you can expect contact from the Council. On my first inspection if the plot doesn't seem to have had any cultivation done on it a letter will be sent to the offender giving that person 4 weeks to sort the plot out. On my next visit 4 weeks later this plot will be checked and if still nothing has been done the offender will be sent a letter to sort the plot out in 3 weeks. If nothing is done in that 3 weeks a termination letter will be sent asking the plot holder to remove anything they want within 2 weeks. After that a new tenant is given the plot. Even if only a small amount is cultivated you can still expect a letter as we have a huge waiting list. Obviously if you are ill or have personal problems that is slightly different but we need a call from you to let us know this as we are not mind readers and a letter might cause you more problems at this difficult time.

GENERAL TASKS

Now is the time when you should be looking to dig over your plot to get it ready for the Spring planting. Obviously if it is wet it is better to leave it to dry slightly before attempting to dig it. It would be better to do some little and often than to leave it all to dig just before you want to plant. When you do have the opportunity to get and do some digging on the plot don't forget to add some compost or well rotted manure.

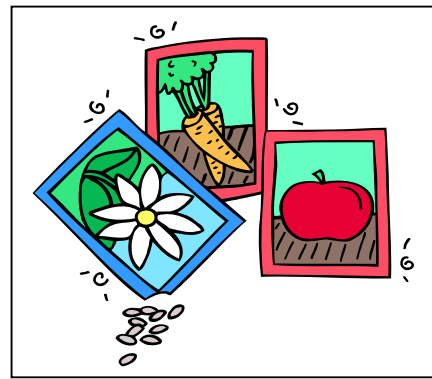
Compost that you made last year would be ideal and would empty your compost bin for a fresh start.

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 to exclude the light over the crown. You will then in a few weeks have some lovely pink sticks to cook.



At this time of year it is always good to browse through the various seed catalogues that you seem to get and decide on what you are going to grow on your plot. Once you have decided on the seeds you are going to grow you need to place the order with the seed company. This is obviously a busy time of year the seed companies so the sooner you get your order to them the better. They do sell out of the most popular types quite quickly. Alternatively you can get your seeds from any Garden Centre who normally stock a large range of seeds. Don't forget to order or buy your potatoes early as the variety you want may be sold out.



As a bit of fun why not try something different this year, try and grow something you haven't grown before.

If you are looking to get a bit earlier crop why not try collecting clear bottles such as water or fizzy drink bottles to act as cloches. Put them over individual plants and they will act as their own little greenhouse.

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.

I hope these notes help and I look forward to seeing many of you down on your allotments. One small point, I am now responsible for the running of the whole allotment service including administration.

Kevin Taitt

Outside Workforce Manager

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WINTER LECTURE 19TH 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 14th February