

BUTT FOR YOU!

Butts Piece Newsletter

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WET WET WET

“The only noise now was the rain, pattering softly with the magnificent indifference of nature for the tangled passions of humans.”



Well there hasn't been much opportunity for us allotmenters to get passionate about our plots for a couple of months due to the exceptionally inclement weather, but there is always the chance to plan what we would like to do when Spring finally arrives. Winter is usually the time of year to dig over the ground and add nutrients to the soil, however, with such extremely wet conditions it is said you would be doing more harm than good. If the mud sticks it is probably true. Better to wait until the earth dries before attempting it.

Garden centres are now selling seed potatoes and are stocking up on new packeted seeds in anticipation of the growing season so why not have a browse in the warm and dry and see what delights they have in store for us this year. It is always fun to try out some of the more exotic varieties and now is the best time to find them. The Internet is also a great way of sourcing something a little different – perhaps some Brandywine tomatoes, West Indian lemon grass or some Pineapple Guava? One recent suggestion for the current climate is to grow your own Paddy field:

“*Oryza sativa* is the premium rice of Japan, distinguished by its aroma, sweet flavour and sticky texture. Also, dried stalks are beautiful displayed in flower arrangements. Harvest time about 5 months and contrary to expectations it does not need to be waterlogged to grow well, just regular watering and heat! Worth a try for the novelty factor? Maturity: Approx. 160 days” <http://www.jungleseeds.co.uk>

So let's be indifferent to the rain and indulge our passion by planning for when the rain stops and we can get back to work. Maybe we should hold a competition for who can grow the oddest or most unusual edible plant. Happy hunting!

WATER TROUGH

As usual, we will be turning the water off to the troughs (a little later this year as the temperature has been milder) to avoid the problem of the pipes freezing during the expected cold snap. We will turn it back on once the danger has passed.

COMPOST TOILET



The committee are delighted to announce that East Hagbourne Parish Council has agreed to pay the shortfall between the funds granted by South Oxfordshire District Council Community Budget's Big Society Team and the final cost of the compost toilet for the allotments so that we can all spend a penny of our own when necessary. We are hoping to have the toilet installed in time for the coming season. Our sincere thanks go to both the SODC and EHPC for this much needed facility

DATE FOR THE DIARY – AGM 2014

This year's AGM will be held in the Village Hall (small hall) at 8pm on 26th March 2014. Please put the date in your diary and come along and have your say about how you would like the allotments to evolve and to vote in the new Committee. If you would like to get involved and stand for the Committee, let us know – all ploholders are eligible.



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RENEWALS will be sent out before this date and payment is due by 1st April 2014. Payment can be made at the AGM or direct to the Parish Council. **If you are not planning to renew this year** please let the Parish Clerk know in good time so that anyone taking over can do so at the beginning of the season. If you know of anyone in the Parish who would like an allotment please ask them to contact the Parish Clerk or one of the Committee members for details.

RECIPE CORNER

A REAL WINTER-WARMER

LANCASHIRE HOT POT

Ingredients

2 tbsp [olive oil](#)
1kg/2lb 2oz neck of [lamb](#), chopped into bite-sized pieces
4 lambs' [kidneys](#), cleaned, trimmed, cut into quarters
2 [onions](#), peeled, sliced
½ tsp [salt](#)
1 tbsp [plain flour](#)
250ml/9fl oz [lamb stock](#)
1 sprig fresh [thyme](#)
2 fresh bay leaves
1 tbsp [Worcestershire sauce](#)
50g/2oz [butter](#), cut into cubes, plus extra for greasing
2 x 250g/7oz black pudding rings, outer casing removed, thickly sliced
1kg/2lb 2oz potatoes, peeled and sliced
salt and freshly ground [black pepper](#)

Preparation method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4.
2. Heat the olive oil in a pan and fry the lamb pieces and kidneys for 1-2 minutes on both sides, or until golden-brown all over. Remove from the pan and set aside.
3. In the same pan, cook the onions and salt for 2-3 minutes, or until the onions have softened. Stir in the flour until the onions are well coated with the flour.
4. Add the stock to the pan along with the thyme, bay leaves and Worcestershire sauce. Stir and simmer for 8-10 minutes, or until thickened slightly.
5. Butter a lidded flame-proof casserole dish and place a layer of potatoes (about a third) over the bottom of the dish and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Spoon in half of the browned lamb and lambs' kidneys, then lay over half of the black pudding slices and pour over half of the thickened stock mixture. Repeat the layering process until all of the potatoes, lamb pieces and kidneys, black pudding and stock have been used, finishing with a layer of potatoes on top. Dot the potatoes with the butter, then cover with a lid.
6. Place the casserole into the oven to cook for 20 minutes, then remove the lid and cook for a further 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are golden-brown on top.
7. To serve, spoon into serving bowls

THE HAIRY BIKERS