



BUTT FOR YOU!

Butts Piece Newsletter

Published by the
Allotment Committee

Volume Number 3

Issue Number 2

July 2013

PLANNING AND PLOTTING



The first plot inspections have now taken place and generally the allotments are looking very good, with most of the paths now being regularly attended and the majority of plots cultivated and well-tended.

To facilitate the task, the Committee has devised a points grading system looking at the general condition, cultivation, weed control and surrounding area of each plot. One or two plots were found to be in need of some attention and those plot-holders were contacted informally by the Committee to establish their position and any problems.

At the last Committee meeting, it was discussed how best to fairly approach the whole idea of inspections and suggested that each monthly inspection should be carried out by one Committee Member in company with one volunteer plot-holder. Please contact a committee member if you are happy to volunteer for this – plot inspections usually take about 1 hour and can be arranged at a mutually agreeable time.

Also discussed was the problem some people have in keeping the paths around their plots clear of weeds. Those people with petrol mowers and/or strimmers will probably be happy to mow paths for those without the means to do so, provided the paths are level and stone free to avoid damage to the mowers. If you are having difficulty with this, please ensure your path is in a suitable condition and contact one of the Committee members and we will endeavor to make arrangements. Perhaps it can also be arranged for beneficiaries to water crops or help out with similar chores in return.

With the higher demand for water in the hot weather can we remind everyone that “west is best” when filling your watering cans – this allows the maximum amount of water to be maintained in the troughs and the eastern trough should only be used when the western one is empty.

TIPS FOR STORING CROPS



With a little luck and by following these simple techniques, you'll be able to store several types of vegetables and fruit to eat out of season. The following has tips and techniques for choosing the right produce for successful storage. Invite the school caterers and cooking clubs to help with these activities.

Look through your produce, handling carefully to avoid bruising.

Identify and put aside produce suitable for storing. Store only the following

a Not physically damaged (e.g. by tools) or with any sign of pest or disease attack (eg soft patches, entry holes from insects).

b Healthy looking and a good size; nothing weak, odd coloured, or in poor condition.

Check produce regularly, preferably weekly. Remove anything showing signs of rot to stop it spreading. Reconsider storage conditions if lots of your produce is not storing well.

Onion, shallot, garlic

Ideal time - Onions, shallots: after leaves have died down, usually August/September. Garlic when four to six outer leaves have turned yellow (July/August).

Preparation - Lift carefully and dry in the sun until skins are papery and 'rustle' when handled (usually about three weeks).

Location - Airy and light place (darkness encourages sprouting). Store in shallow trays or slatted shelves. Can also plait into 'ropes' and hang up.

Temperature 2-4°C

Pumpkin, winter squash, marrow

Ideal time - Before the first frost in autumn.

Preparation

Use larger mature fruit. Cut with a 10cm long stalk (this dries and protects the stem from rotting). Leave in the sun for 10 days to harden the skin before storing.

Location - Dry, airy place on slatted shelves or hanging in nets.

Temperature - 0-15°C

Potato (main crop)

Ideal time - Dry, cool weather in September/October

Preparation

Leave tubers to dry for two hours after digging up before storing. Place gently in thick paper bags. Do not use plastic sacks as they cause condensation and rot.

Location

Dark place to prevent potatoes sprouting and turning green.

Temperature - 5-10°C (the starch turns to sugar below 5°C)

These techniques are for long term storage of suitable vegetables and fruits. Other produce will stay fresh for a few days in a refrigerator, e.g. tomatoes, salads and soft fruit; others are best left growing or in the ground, e.g. Brussels sprouts, leeks and hardy green cabbages. Beetroot can be cooked, sliced and frozen and simply thawed when ready to use. Onions can also be chopped and frozen for soups, stews etc.

JULY PESTS



July is the start of potato blight season, and if the weather is wet and humid in July then your crop is likely to be at risk. You can use fungicides containing copper to help protect your crop from the blight; these should be sprayed from June onwards if a wet July is predicted. (Crop rotation the following year is advisable). An infected plant will have a watery rot on its leaves, causing them to collapse – the infected matter should be binned or burned and not placed into your compost, as this will not kill the disease and it will reoccur the following year. Please be aware and watch your spuds.

The main pests this month are aphids, cabbage white butterfly caterpillars and pea moth. Spray to control the aphids and pea moth with an insecticidal soap brought from the garden centre. You can use the biological control of a pathogenic nematode, *Steinernema carpocapsae*, (trade name Nemasys Caterpillar Killer) to kill the caterpillars.



GARDEN THOUGHTS

REMEMBER

Knee = device for finding rocks in your garden.
Green Fingers = something everyone else has plenty of.
Perennial = this year, possibly! next year, unlikely!
Seed catalogue = work of fiction with fantasy photos.
Spade = highly efficient back-pain generator.

BUT

You can bury a lot of troubles, digging in the dirt

SO

Don't hurry, don't worry.
You're only here for a short visit.
So be sure to stop and smell the flowers

RECIPE CORNER



Gammon steaks, broad beans and mustard seeds (Nigel Slater)

SERVES 2

broad beans 100g, shelled weight

butter 75g

gammon steaks 2 x 125g batted out larger

brown mustard seeds 1 tsp

Boil the beans in lightly salted water, for 8-10 minutes till tender, then drain. Pop the beans from their skins, then return them to the pan. Using a fork, crush the beans to a rough paste.

Melt the butter in a shallow, non-stick pan, let it sizzle, then add the gammon steaks. Cook the gammon for 3 or 4 minutes each side, spooning over the butter as you go. Remove the meat to a warm plate then add the mustard seeds to the butter, let them cook briefly – they may start to pop – then add the crushed broad beans and a grinding of black pepper. When all is sizzling, briefly return the gammon to the pan then serve with the broad beans

There are currently 2 vacant plots available if anybody knows someone looking for an allotment at the moment.

YOUR CURRENT COMMITTEE:-

Derek Button (Plot 25) Email - d41148@aol.co.uk – PARISH LIAISON

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