

WELLINGTON FIELDS ALLOTMENTS – HIXON

Issue # no 15



WELLINGTON FIELDS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER Autumn 2020

**Forward from the Chairman**

Can you believe we are heading into Autumn already? It's been the craziest year on record and if you're anything like me, you'll struggle to remember when spring ended and summer started or even what month we're in. However, we have had a bit of sunshine and allied to plenty of rain, it seems to have been a pretty good growing season overall and I've actually managed to successfully cultivate quite a few things other than courgettes (lots of them) this year. It's also been a good year for weeds and grass and judging by the number of times I've strimmed the site, they have the courgette mentality too...

One of the positive sides of Covid perhaps has been the greater time we've had on our hands this year and I've loved seeing how busy the site has been. Despite our social distancing, there's been a real community spirit up there and it makes all our hard work worthwhile. Talking of hard work, you will have noticed a concrete wall appear at the bottom of the site. This is the start of the construction of our compost, manure and woodchip storage area and it will be completed by the time you come to dig your plots over in early spring. It is very important that we all replace the soil on the site that we lose when weeding and through erosion – we estimate that collectively we've lost several tonnes since the site opened. Hopefully we can make this easier for you by providing you with easy access to free and good quality compost. My sincere thanks to all those who have been involved in the planning and construction of the composting area. In particular I would like to thank particularly Pete Appleton who has designed and engineered the construction.

Committee Notices

1. Please keep on top of your tree pruning ensuring that they are a maximum of 6 ft. high
2. There is a new pile of compost ready for people to use. It is recommended that you check it for weeds and grass shoots by sieving it.

Health and Safety

1. Thank you for reverse parking this seems to be working well.
2. Please use the new ramp in the composting area when you are emptying your barrow.

3. Thank you for maintaining social distancing and following the Covid guidance. Please familiarise yourself with the guidance that we have provided.

Facebook Page and Wellington Fields Community Group



Wellington Fields Allotments Community Group

Don't forget we have our own Facebook page and group that we would like to see more people using! You can post anything you want within reason about the allotments.

www.facebook.com/WellingtonFieldsHixon

Recipes for crops in season (More recipes are on our website)

Courgette and Carrot Chocolate Cake



If you only make one cake this year, make it this one, it's delicious and not as weird as it may sound.

Ingredients

225g/8oz plain flour
 40g/1.5oz cocoa powder
 300g/10.5oz sugar
 200g/7oz grated courgette
 175g/6oz grated carrot
 125g/4.5oz chocolate chips
 1 tsp baking powder
 1 tsp baking soda
 1 tsp ground cinnamon
 ½ tsp ground allspice
 ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
 ¼ tsp salt
 3 eggs
 175ml/6fl oz. vegetable oil
 icing sugar to finish



Method

1. Sieve the flour & cocoa powder; add the sugar, courgette, carrot, chocolate chips, baking powder, baking soda, spices and salt.
2. In a separate bowl beat the eggs with the oil then add this to the rest of the ingredients mixing everything together thoroughly.
3. Grease a rectangular baking tray (approx. 23 x 32cm / 9 x 12 in) & spread the mixture evenly. Bake at 160C (325F/gas3) for 40 mins, or until a knife comes out clean.
4. Allow to cool before cutting into 24 pieces & dusting with icing sugar Store for a few days in an airtight tin or freeze immediately.

Enjoy!!!

Courgette Pea and Parmesan Tart

Serves 4-6

Prep time; 15 mins

Cook time; 20 mins



Ingredients

- 1 pack of ready rolled puff pastry
- 200g soft white cheese (with or without herbs/garlic)
- juice of 1 lemon
- 4 tbsp grated parmesan (55g ish)
- 60g frozen peas, defrosted
- 2-3 courgettes, sliced into thin ribbons lengthways, on a mandolin if you have one or potato peeler if not
- 6 spring onions, roughly sliced (optional)
- Sliced tomato, for colour (optional)
- 1 tbsp olive oil

Method

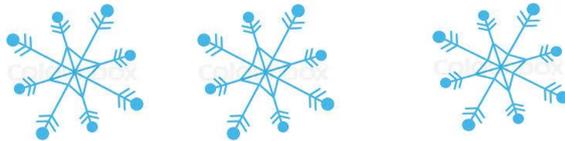
1. Preheat oven to 200C, gas 6
2. Unroll pastry & score out a border 2cm(ish) around the rim with a sharp knife, less if doing individual ones and prick the centre all over with a fork.
3. Mark a lattice pattern on this with the knife, then brush with egg or milk & put in the fridge whilst you prepare the other ingredients.
4. Precook the base at 160 fan, for 15 minutes.
5. Mix the soft cheese, ½ the parmesan & lemon juice lightly in a bowl. Season with plenty of black pepper & spread over the pastry leaving the rim clear.
6. Press the peas into the cheese, pile on the courgette ribbons (I curl them first) they will shrink with cooking, and then scatter over the spring onions if using, and remaining parmesan. Drizzle with the oil & cook for 20 mins until the pastry is golden.

Allotment jobs for autumn (Mrs Hartley's tips with AJ Hartley)

<http://www.wellingtonfieldsallotments.org/hixonpages>

- **Runner and French Beans** will be coming to an end soon, so as the flowers stop forming it will be time to remove them. Keep picking them to encourage new flowers for as long as you can.
- However, if you leave some of the bigger pods on the plants to mature and ripen they will swell and develop proper seeds inside that you will be able to save for use next year. When you do finally remove the old plants a lot of people like to cut off the top growth and leave the roots of the dead plants in the soil to rot away over winter. The reason for this is that the roots are "Nitrogen Fixing," and people believe this will add even more nitrogen to the soil.
- **Early/Summer Raspberry canes.** The canes to keep will be the young ones that are a different, fresher colour to the old ones that have turned brown, fruited and are of no future use. Tie in the canes that you are keeping to support and protect them against any winter storms.
- **Plant out winter cabbages** and ensure that they are covered to protect them from birds and other pests
- **Plant out Autumn Onion sets (October)** – Choose a bed and enrich the soil. Select a robust autumn planting set. Plant out carefully, usually 14cm apart. Ensure that the set is just below the surface. Cover with fine mesh to protect. Continue to feed them at the start, then leave them until January. At this stage you can begin feeding again.
- **Garlic (October)** can go in now. If you don't plant your garlic until after the winter it may not form individual cloves as it needs an intense cold spell to develop properly. Do remember to plant both onions and garlic in a different place to previous years so as to help prevent problems like Rust, Eel Worm, Allium Leaf Miner and Rot from developing.

How to Freeze Courgettes



A prolific crop, courgettes will give you more fruits than you can handle. And since you can't just eat this summer squash every day, there would surely be a need to freeze the surplus.

Unfortunately, courgettes do not freeze very well like other vegetables because of its high water content. Blanching won't help either because the act of heating and freezing breaks down the cells which make the fruit limp, mushy and flavourless.

There's still a way to freeze this delicious fruit though. After cutting the stem, grate the courgette using a grater or a food processor. Transfer them in a strainer and sprinkle with salt. A teaspoon of salt per pound of courgette will do. Mix it well.

Let the courgettes sit for 30 minutes before pressing them to get rid of the excess water. Put the drained courgette on a piece of waxed paper, pressing them down into a square. Weigh the grated courgettes into quantities suitable for the recipes you are likely to put them in. Wrap the courgettes and put them in the freezer. Once frozen, you can then transfer them in freezer bags. Frozen this way, it should last as long as three months.

You can use the courgette in dishes first such as ratatouille or make them into a soup, fritters or cake, these can then be frozen if required.

Courgette and Leek Soup Recipe

- 1 table spoon of olive oil
- 2 onions finely chopped
- 4 leeks
- 4lbs of courgettes
- 1 litre of vegetable stock
- Rosemary, salt and pepper.



Method

Heat the oil in a large pan.

Add leeks and onions- Cook for 10 minutes.

Add chopped courgettes stir for 5 mins.

Add the stock and rosemary.

Bring to the boil, season, reduce heat and simmer.

Cool slightly, liquidise until smooth.



10 Minute Jobs!

- Keep weeding for at least 10 minutes.
- Harvest your squashes and courgettes that may have turned to marrows!
- Lift and store root crops- Beetroot, Carrots. Its best to lift them before their flavour and sweetness disappears.
- Ensure that tall plants and frames are supported.

Quiz Questions Answers Summer Issue

1. Most species of eucalyptus are native to which country? Australia
2. True or false. Ericaceous plants like acid soil? True
3. Who designed the Blue Peter Garden in 1974? Percy Thrower
4. The Avenue of the Baobabs is a group of famous trees in which African country? Madagascar
5. Which garden in the Cotswolds is notable for its miles of sculptured hedges? Hidcote
6. True or false. Tulips were once so valuable in Holland that their bulbs were worth more than gold?
True
7. Which king created the Hanging Gardens of Babylon? Nebuchadnezzar II

Autumn Quiz Questions

1. What name do the British normally call snap peas and snow peas?
2. True or False. Giant pumpkins can exceed 1 ton in weight?
3. *Allium Sepa* is the Latin name for which common vegetable?
4. By what name do Americans know the courgette?
5. In a famous announcement, which vegetable did former president George H. W. Bush once famously state that he hated, but his wife loved?
6. 'Pentland Javelin' and 'Desire' are all varieties of which vegetable?
7. Which vegetable derives its name from the Latin word for milk?
8. According to Mark Twain, which vegetable was 'nothing but a cabbage with a college education'?

Useful Links

<https://www.allaboutallotments.co.uk/general-interest>

<https://www.allotment-garden.org/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others#stopping-public-gatherings>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Useful Books to Read

- The Veg Grower's Almanac – Month by Month Planning – Martyn Cox – Gardeners' World
- Close to the Veg by Michael Rand
- Growing Space by Lesley Acton
- Of Cabbages and Kings by Caroline Foley
- One Man and His Dig by Valentine Low
- The Allotment Handbook by Sophie Andrews

If you wish to make any contributions to the newsletter or if you want any topics covered then please contact me. christopher.hilton2@btinternet.com

Committee Members

Chairperson - Simon Ellin.
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Secretary - Jane Garner.

Committee Members: -
Barry Williams;
Mark Connell;
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Nick Brookes;
Suzanne O'Farrell.

Don't Forget!

If you fancy taking on another Plot to grow a few more vegetables please see Jane Garner. There is only a short waiting list.

Contact Details for Jane Garner, Secretary -
fjanegarner@hotmail.com

