



WELLINGTON FIELDS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER

Wellington fields Allotments Newsletter – Spring Edition.

Don't forget, if you wish to contribute to future issues, please contact a member of the committee.

Committee Notices

Spring 2020

- **Seed/ Plant donations** – If you have any spare plants or seeds I am sure people would be grateful to know. Please put any spare seeds in the water tight container near the noticeboard and plants below. Thank you.
- **A big thank you** to all members for following the rules in relation to Covid 19. Information is found around the site and has been emailed out, placed on the website and links are found at the end of the Newsletter.
- We will commence the building of the composting storage area when the present emergency rules allow. All of the preparations have been made. Our thanks to Pete Appleton who has managed this process with the committee.
- Our composting talk and social was cancelled. We will look to rearrange one in the future.
<https://mickpoultney.co.uk/super-compost-by-the-compost-king/>

Rubbish, Plastic and Recycling (Please read the notices by the compost bins)

Tough Weeds

- Brambles and any other tough weeds, or stems such as Brussels Sprouts stalks should be put into the tractor bucket.

Woody Material

- If you are doing any spring pruning of fruit bushes and trees then please don't be put this into the compost bins either as it won't rot, but instead put it in the big metal tractor bucket.

Broken Posts/Canes

- If you are discarding any broken posts or canes then please put these along with any other bits of wood into the tractor bucket.

Tidying the Site

- From time to time we have a bit of a tidy up which usually involves Simon going around with a strimmer and some others cutting hedges back, especially around the gate and bottom tap, so thanks must go to them. If your plot needs strimming then please feel free to contact Simon who is in charge of the strimmer and he will help you.

Facebook Page and Wellington Fields 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

Recipe for Rhubarb fool with confit rhubarb & pistachios

- 400g forced rhubarb, cut into 3½-4cm pieces
- 80g caster sugar
- 3 cardamom pods
- 1 blood orange or pink grapefruit, zested and juiced (you'll need about 125ml juice)
- ½ lemon, juiced (you'll need about 35ml juice)
- 100g condensed milk
- 2cm piece ginger, peeled and finely grated
- 300g double cream
- 2 tbsp chopped pistachios



Method

1. Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Line a roasting tin and arrange the rhubarb in a single layer. Scatter over the sugar, cardamom, blood orange zest and juice, and the lemon juice. Cover and roast for 20 mins. Remove from the oven, uncover and leave to cool in its syrup.
2. Scoop out and discard the cardamom pods, then use a slotted spoon to transfer half the rhubarb into the bowl of a food processor. Add a couple of spoonful's of the syrup and blitz to a purée.
3. Combine the purée with the condensed milk and a pinch of salt. Stir in the ginger. Whip the cream to medium peaks in a bowl, and then carefully fold in the rhubarb mix.
4. Spoon the mousse into glasses and chill for a few hrs or overnight until set. Top with the remaining rhubarb, along with its syrup and scatter over the pistachios.

Allotment jobs for April

- Plant seed potatoes. Aim to get all your potatoes planted by the end of the month – plant out chitted second early potatoes in the first two weeks of the month and main crop potatoes in second two weeks.
- Sow seeds.
- Continue planting.
- Thin seedlings.
- Transplant seedlings.
- Check for pests.
- Carry on weeding.



10 Minute Jobs!

1. Frames

Put up the frame for beans and in the late part of April you can plant out, but cover with fleece if a late frost is predicted.

2. Sow Brassicas

Sow kales this month. These have a long growing season and need a great start.

Kale planted now will crop during the autumn winter and into the spring.

Sprouting Broccoli will be ready to harvest next year.

3. Harden Plants

It only takes a few minutes to put small pots outdoors for the day and then take them undercover during the evenings. Do this for a few days and then plants will suffer less shock when left out at night-time, and then when planted out on the plot or in the garden.

4. Weeding

Do 10 minutes of weeding every day to avoid that depressing sight of the weeds taking over. Weed with a hoe in dry weather or by hand whenever you want to. Little and often is a better technique than facing an overgrown plot or garden.



Preparing and Planting Ideas

Making a Bean or Pea Trench

- What you need is lots of shredded paper soaked in a home-made nettle and comfrey feed fertilizer. You can also use lots of newspapers, kitchen waste is also good for your trench, you can use a fertilizer of your own choice if you wish to, tomato feed is a good substitute.
- Dig out your trench about 10 inches deep and line the bottom of the trench with your pre-soaked shredded paper or newspapers and your kitchen waste.
- Back fill the soil into the trench and level it off. Put some boarding around your trench to keep the soil together and to keep it neat and tidy. Leave the trench for a good month so everything rots down, then plant or sow your beans or peas. When the roots hit the pre-soaked paper and the kitchen waste they will feed off this for the whole season and you will have a good crop of beans and peas.



Remember - don't put potato peelings or onion skins into your trench.

Growing Potatoes Six Steps

Potatoes are a relatively easy crop to grow, but here are 6 top tips to increase the chance of success.

1. Chit before planting to give the plants a head start when planting. To chit/sprout leave the seed potatoes in trays with their eyes up in a light cool, frost free room. **WHAT DOES CHITTING MEAN?** - Chitting is basically another word for sprouting. By exposing the seed potato to light and a small bit of warmth you are encouraging growth. The eyes of the potato will start sprouting - the sprouts should be small, knobbly, and green/purple in colour. If you end up with long, white coloured sprouts, it means there's not enough light.
2. Fertilize soil well to achieve a good yield and quality.
3. Potatoes need enough **Nitrogen** to produce good stalks and leaves, **Phosphorus** for good root growth and **Potash** for yield,



quality and flavour. Farm Yard Manure would normally be sufficient for any patch.

4. Avoid planting too deep or too early, cold soil slows down growth and makes plants more susceptible to diseases. Make shallow furrows (5cm deep in clay, 10cm in sand) with a ridging hoe at approximately 75cm distance. Plant potatoes in these furrows at approx. 30cm distance. Cover over furrows with the same hoe, and later earth up when the sprouts appear above soil. Repeat this several times as the plants grow, using the soil in between the ridges until the plants start to cover the rows. Earthing up gets rid of any weeds at the same time.

5. Grow **early** and **blight resistant** varieties, to avoid your crop being destroyed by blight. Early varieties grow faster, so when planted in time these will be harvested before the blight season. **Vitabella, Alouette, Bionica, Carolus and Sarpo Mira** are all blight resistant varieties.

6. In case there is a very dry period in May/June, it is advisable to **irrigate**, don't wait too long as this is a crucial time when the plants are setting the tubers, in continued dry conditions only a small number, like 5 or 6, will grow on to full size, the desired count is 10 to 14 tubers per plant.

7. Harvest as you need with early potatoes, they store best in the ground, unless there is a problem with slugs or crows, then harvest and store in a cool dark place. Main crop potatoes can get too big sometimes, especially **blight resistant varieties**, and so keep an eye on this. Cut back plants if the optimum size of the tubers has been reached. Do this in two stages to avoid damage to tubers, first remove the leaves, and a week or so later the stalks. Leave the potatoes in the ground for at least 2 weeks after this to harden their skin.

Current Committee Members

Chairperson - Simon Ellin.

Treasurer - Karen Appleton.

Secretary - Jane Garner.

Committee Members: -

Barry Williams;

Mark Connell;

Chris Hilton;

Alan Hartley;

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

Gardening Quiz Questions!

- Which flower's name comes from the Ancient Greek word for star?
- What common name was dianthus barbatus given to honour the Duke of Cumberland's victory at the Battle of Culloden? And, in contrast, what name do the Scots sometimes call the weed noxious ragwort also in memory of the infamous Duke? (Two answers required)
- Which plant, widespread in Britain, if touched causes a serious chemical reaction which makes skin hypersensitive to ultraviolet light?
- What is the common name for *salix babylonica*?
- Which flower is also the goddess of the rainbow in Greek Mythology?

Please Visit Our Website @ www.wellingtonfieldsallotments.org/ and our Facebook Page www.facebook.com/WellingtonFieldsHixon

Useful Links

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

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

<https://www.nsalg.org.uk/news/covid19-information/>

<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>



Scan

