



WEST WICKHAM ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

www.wwallotments.org.uk

Newsletter – September 2019

From our Chairman

A busy few months that saw both our BBQ and Open Day.



The BBQ saw over 80 attendees, a record I believe, and a good time was had by all.

The Open Day followed quite quickly and only a week before the event a freak few hours of high winds saw one of the marquees do its best to leave the site. Sadly it was damaged beyond economic repair but we were able to replace it with just 2 days to spare. The moral of this tale is don't trust the weather and take the marquees down after the BBQ!

After a very wet start the Open Day was a tremendous success helped, no doubt, by the extra publicity support from St Christopher's. We are delighted to confirm that we raised in excess of £1,050 for St Christopher's Hospice.

Huge thanks must go to all members of the Association who helped with the both BBQ and Open Day in so many ways. It goes without saying that without your help and support these events are simply not possible.

Many thanks
Barry



Notes from the Trading Shed

What an end to the summer this Bank Holiday has been. Hot, sunny and dry - great weather for ripening tomatoes and fruit. It's almost too hot to be writing this Newsletter !

Many thanks for supporting our plant growing sales initiative. We sold virtually everything we produced and put on sale. Thanks are due to Ron and Dave, our amazing maintenance team, and to Paul whose determination and skill gave us so many strong young plants.

I must also say a big thank you to plot holders who gave us plants so generously. All in all, a worthwhile venture that we hope to better next year. If you have any thoughts about what we could or should offer, please let us know.



Seasons come and go and our growing needs change continually too. We will shortly be offering seed potatoes to order for next year's planting and growing.

Our list of available potatoes is as follows:

EARLIES

Home guard: very early, good flavour, good scab resistance

Maris Bard: high yield, good for cooking

Pentland Javelin: eelworm and scab resistance, good boiler

SECOND EARLIES

British Queen: quickly becoming Britain's most popular 2nd early, good flavour

Kestrel: blue eyes, good disease resistance, roasts and fries well

Vivaldi: high yield, mature crop keeps well

SALADS

Charlotte: reliable, high yield, good flavour

Pink Fir: long knobbly pink tubers cooked whole, we have had several requests for this

Nicola: excellent flavour, reliable

MAIN CROP

Cara: our best seller, high yield, disease resistance

Maris Piper: good yield and flavour, good chipper

Setanta: good resistance to blight and common scab, good taste

Desiree: red skinned, vigorous high yielder, drought resistance

ALL OUR POTATO STOCK SUPPLY WILL BE CERTIFIED SCOTTISH SEED POTATOES

2019 has been a much better year for growing potatoes than 2018. We look forward to taking your orders.

We will shortly receive our usual Autumn Planting stalwarts including



GOLDEN GOURMET SHALLOTS
RED BARON ONION
STURON ONION

GARLIC "VIGOR" strong flavour, early to mature
BROAD BEAN SEED "AQUADULCE"
PHACELIA green manure
SELECTION OF SPRING FLOWERING BULBS

Phacelia was used successfully by some plot holders last year. It is an effective over-wintering green manure, cut down and dug into the soil in the Spring. If you leave a few plants to mature and flower it is a real bee and insect magnet.

The 2020 Fothergill Seed catalogues will be here soon. Our group discount relies on our order value and Fothergills offer a broad range of seeds. We do only offer a seed ordering service, not plants or equipment. (This is because of higher carriage charges and very little discount)



TOPICAL STOCK AVAILABLE

Farmyard manure
Ground cover
Autumn/winter grass feed
Autumn planting (as above)

Did you notice the email about bringing your own containers for filling with bird seed? This will help us reduce the number of plastic bags we use,
We are looking into plastic reduction generally and if you have any ideas about this, please share them with us.

Keith & Liz

Topical Tips from Paul

Raspberries.

Talking to many members it seems it was a great year for raspberries. Maybe the wet weather in June helped? By removing all the growth that this year's crop was borne on, you will set yourself up well for last year. It's also worth tying next year's stems to support now.

Green Manure. This can be sown now, overwintered and dug in in the spring to improve the soil texture and replace micronutrients. Phacelia grows very strongly and is easily incorporated into the soil. Our shop is phacelia in 100g packets for £1.50 - this is about a third of the cost of the seed sold in garden centres. I have found that 100g of seed covers about 25 sq. m of ground.

A couple of simple ideas

Sowing phacelia green manure should produce a canopy of foliage about 40 cm high which will smother out weed growth over the winter and into spring. Many people also make use of the weed control fabric we sell in our shop. I was given a useful tip the other day - to stop fraying just run a flame over the cut edges and this will cause them to merge together.

Can there be a tastier crop than home grown sweetcorn cooked straight off the plant? Well, mice and jackdaws would answer 'No!' If your cobs are being nibbled, cut the bottom off a two pint plastic milk bottle and place it over the cob. It will ripen well and be protected. The bottles can be used many times over until they break up and can be recycled. Otherwise you could just net the crops.

Crops to sow now

It's far from too late to sow lettuce, salad leaves and rocket. Try sowing them indoors, transplant to seed trays and then plant outside when about 10 cm high. These will grow well into the winter months if you provide some cloche cover. Lettuce varieties to consider: Winter Density and Arctic King. Cauliflower 'All The Year Round' can be treated in the same way. Cut and come again salad leaves can be grown in a trough in an unheated greenhouse up to December, then inside in conservatory or on a window ledge. You might also consider try a similar approach with perpetual spinach.

Composting

As we gather out crops, we generate a fair amount of green waste which is ideal for composting and this provides a very economical way of improving the soil condition. There are certain plants that are probably best not composted - generally anything that looks diseased (e.g. rusty leek foliage, mildewed courgette leaves) or has an insect infestation (e.g. whitefly) - these are best burnt or taken to dump. Likewise, potato and tomato foliage as this may have been infected by blight. Most people don't add perennial weeds to the compost but it's possible to do so if they have not set seeds and they are thoroughly dried out before being added. It's worth occasionally adding compost accelerator (sold in the shop) and the composting materials need to be kept moist. Here's some info: <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=444>

Whitefly

Keep an eye open for whitefly infestations, particularly on Brussels sprouts, kale, cabbages and cauliflower heads. You can keep these under control to a large extent by regularly spraying with mild soap and oil spray or just rubbing the insects off with your hands as you spray with water.

Otherwise there are various insecticides that can provide protection for up to three weeks. Some info: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiShj_iBadw

Why not experiment?

This year I experimented with watering potato plants through plastic bottles buried in the mounds as opposed to just watering in the trenches between rows. I have just dug up a few rows of potatoes and there was no noticeable difference. Win some, lose some, but give your ideas a go!

Happy plotting!

Paul



From the Secretary's desk

Further news from our Open Day:

The Guess the Weight of the Cake and Giant Marrow! Competition

The Cake weighed 1.14kg, and was won by a Visitor. The Marrow weighed 4.47kg and was won by a Plot holder

Thanks to all who took part.

Sandie Wood sent in this picture of the caterpillar found on netting on her plot yesterday, 21st July. It turns out to be a Gypsy Moth caterpillar.



Regards

Viv

Box Caterpillar!!!

Do you have any box plants in your gardens and have you heard about the box tree moth which lays hundreds of eggs? We found we had the dreaded caterpillars which can strip a box plant in a few days. One day we didn't have them and the next, while we turned our backs, they hatched - hundreds of them - we have damage patches where they have been munching our box hedges and box balls.

We picked them off by hand, by the dozen and sent off for a biological insecticide, which had good reviews and is recommended by the EBTS. We have been busy spraying the plants - just when we thought we could relax and enjoy the garden

If you know anyone that has box plants please warn them about the pesky critters, the stuff we are using and we have found really does work is **Topbuxus XenTari**, we found it on Amazon.



The European Boxwood & Topiary Society - www.ebts.org has lots of interesting information.



Pupa transforming to moth

Viv & Stan Roach

Interesting item send it by **Brian McLaren** regarding an advert for Zam Buk ointment that was targeted at allotmenters during the 1914/18 war.


<http://footstepstothepast.co.uk/dont-run-risk-allotment-cuts-bruises-use-zam-buk>

I am afraid the print is rather feint, a bit like me after compiling the Newsletter! I feel that the pipe smoking would be the more likely action to 'lead to severe consequences'!! - Ed.

DON'T RUN ANY RISKS WITH

ALLOTMENT CUTS & BRUISES

**ALWAYS CARRY
ZAM-BUK, THE ANTISEPTIC HEALER.**



WORK on the allotment produces a big crop of Cuts, Scratches, and Blistered Hands, with the risk of dirt and dangerous disease germs infecting the broken skin and setting up **blood-poisoning**. This applies especially to the tens of thousands of people who have been unaccustomed to the use of garden tools.

The best way to get over this trouble is to always carry a box of Zam-Buk. This unique healing balm is of herbal origin, and has Soothing and Antiseptic qualities of rare power not present in ordinary first-aid dressings.

Not only is it a good plan to rub the hands over with Zam-Buk before starting work, but by immediately dressing wounds with Zam-Buk dangerous complications are prevented, and the sore places healed quickly and painlessly.

The fact that injuries, at first no more serious than a slight scratch, may lead to amputation of a limb, and even death, shows how necessary it is to always have handy a box of Zam-Buk.

POISONED FINGER.—Mrs. Parrant, writing from 22, Dennerley Road, Walsworth Common, London, S.W., says:—"Some time ago my husband contracted a poisoned finger. We tried a number of well-known remedies, but his hand grew no better, and so he stayed from his work and was treated by the "Panel" Doctor. Still there was no improvement, so, having heard of Zam-Buk we decided to give it a trial. Zam-Buk soon made the finger look better, and within a few days my husband was completely cured."

Zam-Buk has a world-wide reputation as the Standard Household remedy for Burns, Scalds, Injuries, Piles, Poisoned Sores, Pimples, Itching Sores, Swollen Feet, Bruises, Sprains, Stings, Bites, etc. It is sold in large quantities to Soldiers, Sailors, and the W.A.C.'s through the Army and Navy Canteen Committees.

Zam-Buk