

West Byfleet Allotments Newsletter

Issue 4, September 2011

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Note from Chairman

We have now reached the end of another growing year and, as I look back, successful both in terms of the produce we have managed to individually grow and of how we have come together more as a community.

I am particularly pleased about the support we had for our Work Party this spring, the renewed use of the Trading Hut and, more recently the success of the Swop Shop initiative.

Looking forward, I hope we will be able to make more use of our new West Byfleet Allotments web-site as the primary source of information and a medium for sharing ideas.

Best and Worst Produce Survey

Thank you all of you who contributed to our Best and Worst Survey by identifying your two best and your two worst produce this year. The full results of the survey are at the end of this newsletter. Some of your comments are particularly illuminating and details given on varieties chosen may help us in your own seed selection next year.

It is clear that generally this was a good year with onions, beans, and the cucurbits all doing well. The top produce however was the potato which 15% of you chose.

For the worst produce it was clear that this was the year of the tomato with a whopping 32% of you selecting it as your worst crop. In each case the reason given was "blight".

We hope to repeat this survey in future years and it will be interesting to compare, year on year what is good and bad...

Swop Shop – Summer 2011

A scheme, much discussed was finally grabbed by Jane Weisz and put into practice this summer. Basically open to all plot holder the "Swop table" was set up outside the Trading hut at the usual opening times. Slowly the idea caught on as plot holders donated or exchanged their surplus produce. And.. yes it wasn't only oversized courgettes! The favourite was the delightful flowers from the Graham plot. Garlic beetroot, marrows, runners have all made an appearance on the table.

At the end of the day, any remaining items are collected and given to a charitable organisation. [This year the main beneficiary was the New Haw Community Centre who were delighted with our donations.]

So no waste and delighted recipients. RESULT – your efforts do not end up unloved on the compost heap!! ...and the added bonus of the shop being open for an extended period.

Your feedback on the Swap Shop, please. Should it continue next year?

Trading Hut – Sale of grow-bags & organic compost

The more observant of you will have seen the notice on the Trading Hut advertising an end of season sale of grow-bags and organic compost. If you want to take advantage and buy some do so quickly as stocks are going fast. You will need only to approach a Committee member to open the hut if want to buy any stocks during the winter months.

Recipes, Tips and the Allotment Calendar

Several people have suggested we start a recipes and veg. growing tips section on the web site, along with an allotments calendar – no, not the nude pose calendar with rakes and wellies, the "what you should be doing this month" calendar.

Many of you will no doubt know more than others - most of us have books on the subject, and yes there are thousands of web sites out there with all that sort of thing. But I bet that there's something you know or do or cook that you would love to share with others.

So send in your contributions to: info@wballotments.org.uk clearly marked as Recipe, Growing Tip or Calendar. In due course these will get sorted into categories and published on the web.

Slow Cooker Low Sugar Blackberry and Apple Jam

1 Kg (2Lb) cooking apples peeled cored & chopped
500g (1Lb) granulated sugar
grated rind of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons water or lemon juice
250g (8oz) blackberries

Put all the ingredients in a pre-heated slow cooker in the order listed - cook for 4-5 hours on high, stir occasionally.

Spoon the jam into clean jars, seal with a wax disc and allow to cool. Makes 4 jars.

Because of the low sugar this jam needs to be kept in the fridge and used in a couple of months.

Organic Seed Catalogue

This years catalogue is now available. For orders handled through the Allotments discounts of upto 30% are available.

Mid-November: Orders must be returned to Mike Booker no later than the AGM.

Late-December: Orders arrive and continue as items are available.

To reserve your copy email your Name, Address and Telephone number to:

seeds@mbwebs.co.uk (preferred) or call: 01932 340885

AGM Date for your diary

This year's AGM has been set for **Monday 14th November at 8:00pm** in the Catholic Church Hall, Madeira Road, West Byfleet.

West Byfleet Allotments 2011 Best and Worst Crops – survey results

BEST

%	Best Produce	Variety	Comment
2%	Asparagus		
2%	Raspberries		we just can't keep up with them.
2%	Beetroot		anything that is a root veg worked
2%	Blackcurrants		I picked 5.3kg in one go and made Jam, Cordial, Blackcurrant Vodka (wonderful) and froze some
2%	cabbage	greyhound	
		Early nantes	loved warm spring
			Grown in old tyres – no sign of carrot fly
7%	Carrot	F1 Resistafly	
2%	Cauliflower		
		Defender	
			rarely disappoint
7%	courgettes		very productive
4%	French Bean	Climbing dwarf	
2%	garlic		
2%	Goseberries	Dessert	huge sweet berries, and I remembered to net the bushes this year so got a large crop.
2%	Leeks	Musselburgh	(finished harvesting in March this year), these were from plants bought in.
		Webb's Wonderful	always reliable, tasty and cheap
4%	Lettuce	Little Gem & All year	
		Red Baron	Survived and grew happily
		Sturon & Red Baron	
		Sturon	although some neck rot
			first time I've grown these. They were planted in the Autumn, good crop, although some of the larger ones don't
		Troy	appear to be storing very well!
11%	Onion	Sutton	
2%	Parsnips		usually they fork but this year look just like Waitrose sell!
2%	plum	Victoria	
		Charlotte (early)	
		Anya & Orla	Good flavour and scab free
			Survived and grew happily
		Arran pilot & Desiree	fed with seaweed)
		early	
		Charlotte (early)	2nd early to avoid eel slug. Last until March if de-sprouted
15%	Potatoes		anything that is a root veg worked
2%	Pumpkin	Crown Prince	loved wet weather
2%	rhubarb		
		spanish	
		Kelvedon Marvel	
			great success
9%	runner Beans	Enorma	.Good crop, picked young
2%	shallots	banana variety	good size, and good quantity
		Butternut	not harvested yet, but we have many
		Buttercup & Sweet	Good flavour and v prolific
7%	Squash	Butternut	
2%	Sweet Corn		
2%	swiss chard		
2%	Tomato	Latah	big crop

WORST

%	Worst Produce	Variety	Comment
2%	beans	sprite	I sowed a complete packet of dwarf bean 'sprite' in June and not one germinated!
5%	Broand Beans		all got black fly
2%	broccoli	Purple sprouting	Black fly attack
2%	brussel sprouts		hopeless, but then I never do well with broccoli
2%			only one out of twelve came up
5%	carrots	Early Nantes	carrot root fly damage
2%	Cauliflowers	Autumn King 2	very small & got carrot fly
2%	Courgettes		no real head
2%	Florence Fennel	Sirio by Suttons	I was too late planting them out so not necessarily the weather's fault
2%	lettuce	Uregelba	quite a few didn't swell up & bolted
2%	None!!!		(old packet of seed from 2 years)
2%	Onions		Once had white rot and can't get rid of it - ever.
5%	peas	Twingle	initially eaten by pigeons and following sowings acquired mildew.
			problem with sandy soil
5%	Potatoes	Lady Christl	frost and drought cut yields
2%	pumpkin	Maris Piper	Scab and more importantly - slug damage
2%	Radish	short top forcing	very small
2%	shallots		tops nibbled, mouse or mole ???
			Overwintering – frosts wiped them out
5%	spinach		didn't even grow
5%	squash	butternut	not dev eloped
2%	Swedes		started slowly and yield will be down on 2010
			weather conditions have utterly ruined the entire crop.
%	Worst Produce	Variety	Comment
5%	Sweet Corn		
2%	Swiss Chard	Bright lights	generally good but bolted this year
		Gardeners delight	Blight killed it dead
		Gardeners delight & Sungold	Killed by blight
		Gardeners delight	Blight killed it dead
			blight is a problem every year
		various	all hit overnight by the dreaded blight.
		mixed varieties	blight got them almost as soon as I planted them out
		Tigarella, Big Boy, Vanessa and	All Blighted
		ailsa craig	blight
		any	blight
			Lost all. Failed to spray with Bordeaux or Dithane 945. before going away
			Real disaster this year with blight on all varieties
32%	Tomato		caught by blight