

Pershore Allotment Association
Newsletter
January 2009
Helping you grow

...And that's an Allotment fact!

In the Middle Ages, sugar cane had yet to be imported from the 'new world', and honey was rare and very expensive.

Instead, parsnips were often added to food to make it sweet! The sweetest parsnips are those which have endured several frosts, which break down their starch into sugar.

Annual General Meeting – 26th March



Each year Pershore Allotment Association holds an Annual General Meeting to elect candidates into the various roles within the Association and to formally present the accounts. It is also the time when memberships can be renewed, and new members welcomed.

This year there are a number of vacancies which must be filled in order for the Association to continue running. Details of all of these vacancies will be available from the notice board outside the Gardener's Arms shop, from our website (www.pershoreallotments.co.uk) or by contacting a member of the Association.

Everyone is welcome to join us at the AGM, which will take place at 8.00pm at Pershore Working Men's Club on Thursday 26th March. Don't be put off by the grand name. The meeting itself is a great social event and once the formalities have been finalised it is an excellent chance to introduce yourself to your near – and distant – neighbours, and to swap stories. Food will be laid on after the meeting has concluded and all are welcome.

2008 has been quite a year for many allotment holders, and 2009 looks set to be just as turbulent. We need your support, in order to be able to support you – so we look forward to meeting you all at the AGM.

In Focus – Winter Propagation

Now is the perfect time to prepare your plants for next year. As the weather becomes colder many plants will become dormant, enabling you to uproot, divide and propagate your collection.



Autumn raspberry canes – as these lose their leaves, this year's clumps can be dug up and carefully divided, making sure each cane remains attached to some of the root system. They can then be replanted with a good handful of fresh compost, and any left over will make wonderful (if early!) Christmas presents.

Rhubarb – every five to ten years, you can invigorate tired rhubarb plants by digging them up when all trace of leaves has died down, and dividing the root with a knife or saw. Make sure that each new root segment has at least one knobby bud – this is what will grow into next year's leaves. Feed with some compost or manure, and plant each root portion just under the soil's surface, about three to four feet apart.

Dates for your diary

26th March 2009

PAA's Annual General Meeting – Pershore Working Men's club. Come along, even if it's just for the free food!

April 2009

Spring Skittles Night – date to be confirmed, check out our website and March's newsletter for more details.

April-May 2009

Gardener's Arms Shop expected to re-open.

June 2009

Yellow Book Open Gardens – details are yet to be released on this event, but watch this space for more information!

Jobs for January/February

- ✓ Check on structures to make sure they have not been damaged by wind and frost.
- ✓ If you haven't yet ordered your seeds for the coming year, start digging through those catalogues!
- ✓ A number of vegetables can still be harvested throughout the winter, including kale, leeks and sprouts.
- ✓ Save your nut shells from Christmas, crush them, and keep them handy to deter slugs from your seedlings.
- ✓ Autumn raspberry canes can be cut back to half height and other soft fruit bushes pruned.

Are you looking to stay healthy in 2009?



Why not grow your own 5-a-day?

Pershore College are running a 6 week course
in Allotment Gardening for Beginners, starting:

**Sat 7th February
9.30am - 12.30pm**

The course covers theory and practical
knowledge related to developing and
maintaining an allotment or vegetable patch.

Topics covered include:

- Vegetable groups
- Growing Fruit
- Glasshouses and tunnels
- Organic production

NEW
organic courses
also starting
Feb 09!



for more information:



GREEN GOWN
Awards



t: **01386 551224**

or visit

www.warkscol.ac.uk

Pershore College, Avonbank, Pershore,
Worcester WR10 3JP

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Hearty Leek Soup

Ingredients:

- 6-8 Leeks, with as much dark green as possible
- 2.5 litres vegetable stock
- 2 onions or 4-6 shallots
- 2 cloves garlic
- 50g butter
- 8 sticks celery
- Seasoning

To serve:

- 50ml double cream
- 1 tbsp fresh chopped parsley



Preparation:

- Roughly chop the leeks, onions and celery.
- Peel the garlic cloves. You can keep these whole, or chop or crush them.

Method:

- Melt the butter, and sweat the vegetables without browning.
- Add the stock, bring to the boil for one hour and skim as necessary.
- Allow to cool, then liquidise.
- The soup can be frozen into portions now.

To serve:

- Reheat until piping hot, but not boiling.
- Season.
- Serve with a garnish of freshly chopped parsley and a swirl of cream.

Mulled Cider

Ingredients

- 1 – 2 litres of your favourite cider
- 2 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons of brown sugar
- 4 whole cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- About 1 inch of peeled root ginger
- 1 tsp grated nutmeg

Method:

- Heat the cider, lemon juice and brown sugar gently over a low heat until gently steaming.
- **Do not boil** or the alcohol will evaporate.
- Tie all of the remaining non-powdered ingredients together in a small piece of clean cloth and add to the pot.
- Allow to steep over a low heat for 15 minutes.
- Remove from the heat and serve, sprinkling the top with a pinch of grated nutmeg.



Winter Pear Tart

Ingredients:

- 500g cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- 2-3 tablespoons Caster sugar
- 2 egg whites, whisked as for meringue
- 250ml double cream, lightly whisked
- 1 pinch cinnamon (optional)



Method:

- Cook the apples over a gentle heat with a little water until soft.
- Add enough sugar to sweeten to your taste – the quantity will also depend on the type of apples you use.
- Allow to cool completely.
- Gently fold the cooled softened apples into the other ingredients.
- Spoon into dessert glasses and serve.

Flood Defence Proposals

In November 2008, all allotment holders were written to by Pershore Town Council inviting them to attend an open meeting to discuss the flood defence proposals outlined by the Environment Agency. Like many of you, we left with little more knowledge about the proposals than when we entered.

Some of our members were made aware of a further open meeting on 12th December, being conducted by the Environment Agency with the aim of hearing people's views on the proposed siting of the flood defences and the concerns they had.

Shirley Jones, PAA Chair, had this to say of the meeting: "We spoke to Rob Nillar, who is the Chief Relations Officer [of the Environment Agency] and he was very interested in what we had to say but could give no answers to our questions. I have since put all our questions, queries and concerns in writing to him and hope to hear back fairly soon."

The main issues the PAA has raised with Rob Nillar are:

- What compensation would be available to plot holders;
- Timescale for works and extent of possible disruption;
- Access to site during works;
- Positioning of the wall and whether we would get the opportunity to discuss this;

As you can see from these questions, unanswered at time of going to press, things are still very vague at present with not even the location of the wall and reinforcing bund being confirmed. This leaves many allotment holders concerned about whether to re-site fruit bushes and trees on the off-chance that they may be affected, and unsure of what to plant for the coming seasons.

The Environment Agency have issued assurances that there will be further opportunity for discussion to take place before things are decided.

What you can do

Let us know your thoughts and concerns regarding the flood defence proposals. We will be compiling a list of all concerns for presenting to the next meeting with the Environment Agency.

Can you offer a 'safe house' for plants that can only be safely moved during dormancy? Please contact us so we can offer a 'match-maker' service for those who would like to temporarily re-house their plants until the EA's plans have been confirmed.

The Plan

The plan below shows two of the proposed sites for the flood defences (reproduced by kind permission of Gilly Pay). A larger version will shortly be available on our website.



The Seedlings Club



*Knock! Knock!
Who's there?
Snow!
Snow who?
S'no joke, it's freezing out here!*

Do your feathered friends a favour

In the Spring and Summer, birds like robins and blue tits help to keep down the numbers of pests such as caterpillars, which can make a meal of your veg. But how do our feathered friends get through the winter?

Of course, Mother Nature generally provides what they will need but when the weather gets very cold and wet, and the berries and seeds are running out, it is good to give her a helping hand.

There are many types of bird feeder available in the market and the local shops and greengrocers, and you can fill these with peanuts, wild bird seed mixes and other treats. Remember to put these off the ground, away from the reach of cats, rats and pigeons to keep the birds, and the food, safe.

Dried mealworms are particularly attractive to robins. Tits and sparrows love the smaller seeds. You can buy mixtures of these ready made into 'fat balls', or buy them loose to put onto your own bird table.

When the birds get used to where to find your food, they will keep coming back all year round.

Puzzle Corner

The words below are hidden in the word search. Can you find them all? They can be in any direction, but always in a straight line.

P	D	R	I	F	T	D	J	T	E	N	I
C	B	Y	B	Y	P	R	V	E	X	L	Q
S	X	B	U	H	Y	O	G	O	O	S	E
M	A	N	L	E	O	P	A	R	D	E	C
P	I	Y	L	O	V	L	V	E	S	T	L
B	A	L	L	E	W	M	I	T	P	I	M
D	D	R	A	O	B	E	O	N	L	H	K
E	R	L	L	H	L	Y	R	Y	E	W	G
P	B	E	L	S	I	M	O	B	I	L	E
P	X	G	E	O	N	J	T	M	L	V	P
A	M	N	B	T	D	F	L	A	K	E	P
C	K	A	O	M	W	F	A	L	L	H	O

Angel	Board	Goose	Mobile
Ball	Capped	Leopard	Pea
Bell	Drop	Lily	Shoe
Blind	Fall	Line	White
Blower	Flake	Man	

What do these words all have in common?

.....

The Science of Garlic

There are many schools of thought on when is the best time to plant garlic – some say as soon as possible in the autumn, others say wait until the spring.

The traditional time to plant garlic was on Midwinter's Day – 21st December, with the harvesting taking place on Midsummer's Day. This is likely to be more for practical reasons, however, as these days were designated public holidays in medieval times.

Garlic loves frosts, and the colder the weather in its first few months of growing, the more cloves you will get as the frost encourages the garlic clove you plant to split in later life.

We have had some amazingly cold weather this year, so if you already have your garlic in the ground you can be sure of getting plenty of cloves in each bulb when you harvest them.

Committee Members

Shirley Jones	Ged Witts
Maurice Hiden	Peter Joyce
Meg Hearne	

To contact any committee member, please email [persoreallotments@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pershoreallotments@hotmail.co.uk) or leave a message in the post box on the Shop.

Next issue due out: March 2009

In the next issue:

Events: Our Annual General Meeting is the biggest, most important event in the Association's calendar. Don't forget to join us on 26th March.

In Focus: Successional sowing – how to avoid gluts and prolong your harvests.

The Seedlings Club: Get your potatoes ready for planting with our easy, step-by-step guide to chitting.

The Write Stuff: Fancy seeing your name in print? Write 150-200 words about your favourite allotment-related topic and email it to us, or drop it into the Gardener's Arms shop.

For Sale/Wanted: Let us know if you would like to sell, exchange or give away an item, or if you are looking for something that another allotmenteer might be able to help you with.