

The Grower



Newsletter

COFFEE MORNINGS

Thank you to all of you who helped and supported the 2012 coffee mornings. Coffee and cakes will next be available during the annual potato sales at the hut on

23rd February, 2nd March and 9th March 2013.

Regular coffee mornings are scheduled to recommence on 13th April 2013.

Message from the new editor!

As the new editor of The Grower, I would firstly like to thank David Page for the brilliant job he has done as editor for the past 2 years, and also for all the help and support he has given me during the handover.

I am not quite sure how I have come to be on the allotments group committee and doing this job, but I think it may have something to do with the fact that although my allotment is at Asheridge Road, I have turned up regularly to the coffee mornings at Cameron Road. After my first visit, I couldn't resist the delicious home-made cakes and found they were worth the journey!! It hasn't, however, just been about the coffee. The allotment holders were very welcoming and willing to help a novice like me. I have picked up some invaluable hints and tips and also been reassured that mine aren't the only crops to fail in poor weather conditions! The seed swap gave me the opportunity to try growing some

vegetables that I hadn't considered and meant that my leftovers went to a good home too.



Produce from my first year.

As this newsletter is for all of the allotment holders, I would love to receive contributions from any of you even if it just an idea for an article that you would like to see. All suggestions will be gratefully received. I can be contacted on: beverlymackay@virginmedia.com

SCHOOL VISIT TO THE ALLOTMENTS

Elmtree School approached the Chesham Allotments Group for a visit to the allotments at Cameron Road. With the help of the Town Council Projects Manager and Michele Blackmore and supporting staff sorted out the necessary Risk Assessments and in late May this year Allotment Group members welcomed 61 children and members of their Gardening Club to the allotments. Rudimentary explanation was given to the children on what is grown and how vegetable plants are cultivated. Loraine Faulkner also assisted with explaining the preparation and growing of flowers in the Wild Flower beds. A good time was had by all.

Elmtree School continued with their gardening activities and as a result of their efforts by putting in the newly developed sensory garden by the enthusiastic children and staff, Elmtree School was awarded First Place in the Chesham Schools Gardening Competition. The Chesham Allotments Group is willing to entertain and to escort groups of children from other Chesham schools that benefit from a gardening activity and curriculum.

CALLING ALL KNITTERS!

With less opportunity to spend time on our plots, you may find the following pastime of interest:

**JOIN US FOR A
KNIT AND NATTER
10-12 MIDDAY**

**The Lounge, Hivings Free Church,
HP5 2DB**

Refreshments available (donations only)

Wool, needles and crochet hooks provided.

Beginners and Experts welcome.

**HELD THIRD FRIDAY EACH
MONTH**

Next Meeting

FRIDAY, 21ST DECEMBER 2012

A SELECTION FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AT THE AGM

I take this opportunity to thank the Allotments Group members for their valued team effort in supporting allotment holders with the preparation and presentation of the social events over the last 12 months. Two Fish and Chip suppers with Quiz at the Temperance Hall November 2011 and April 2012. The Cheese and Wine evening in July at the Focal Point and the Allotments Open Day in August were a particular success for all concerned. Over 120 people visited the event. The Allotments Group expresses their thanks for the donated produce from a number of allotment holders. Thanks also to the Town Mayor, Cllr Colette Littley, for opening the Open Day proceedings and also in attendance was the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Mark Shaw. Phil Folley also needs a special note of thanks for planning and coordinating the eager group of children following a Scavenger trail on the allotments.

The Coffee mornings have been very well supported by allotment holders and their families and friends, and especially the children. The season started in April and finishes next month, 13th October 2012. I remind all plot holders that the social gatherings are for all allotment holders and friends from Cameron Road and Asheridge Road, and the Allotments Group appreciate your continued support. A special thanks is noted for the plot holders who regularly make cakes and also help out on the Coffee morning rota for the Saturday coffee mornings. Chris Challis – Coffee morning coordinator – is still looking for additional support for the coffee morning rota and supply of culinary delights until the 13th October.

The Allotments Group also benefit from the very active and supporting community spirit with other horticultural groups in the Town, the Chesham Horticultural Society and the Chesham in Bloom Committee. It is worthy of note that Allotment Group members Yvonne, Jim, Vince and myself are currently members of the Chesham in Bloom Committee. I also express sincere thanks to Bob Ayres – Parks and Premises Manager and his team for the support given to the allotment sites, Cameron Road and Asheridge Road, over the last 12 months. The Allotments Group acknowledge the valued support of the Recreation and Arts Committee chaired by Councillor Alison Pirouet and also the Chesham Town Councillors seconded to the Allotments Group, Councillors Colette Littley and Patricia Cherrill. Special thanks to Bill Richards, Town Clerk, for his continued support and valued advice. Our thanks are also extended to Maria McGwynn and Sue Hearn at The Town Hall office for their support of the Allotments Group for printing and sending out The Grower newsletter, and administration of the allotment sites, and also Kathryn Graves supporting us with Risk Assessments.

Britain in Bloom – National Competition

Chesham entered into the 2012 National Competition. Part of the Royal Horticultural judge's tour of Chesham included the Cameron Road site. The judges were very complimentary as to the general appearance of the allotments and also commented on the community spirit engendered by the developed site of the Focal Point. They also expressed very favourable comments when they looked around the Focal Point garden – designed, landscaped and maintained by Loraine and Larry Faulkner. I am confident that allotment holders will continue to do their best to consolidate this standard.

The highlight of the Cameron Road site are the Wild Flower beds that Loraine and Larry prepared and sowed with wild flower seeds with the help of allotment holders and children. The judges took their time in viewing the varied and colourful flowers that were in full bloom. Chesham was awarded a Silver Gilt Award in 2011 and we are hoping to maintain that position for 2012 judging results due later this month, and more positively may even achieve a Gold Award.

The Allotments Group also say a big thank you to the allotment holders who made a special effort to present their well cultivated plots in a tidy manner and to keep the communal paths well-trimmed.

Discount/Reward Card Scheme

A new project for 2012 was the Chesham Allotments Group idea of a Discount/Reward card scheme. This was introduced in March of this year and to date 90 allotment holders have signed for their cards so far. South Heath Garden Centre offer 10% discount on shop sales excluding compost. JPS Stationers offer 10% discount on their products. Also, if you are a member of the Gardening Club scheme at Chipperfield Garden Centre the allotment holders benefit from a points scheme on sales offers on seasonal products through the year. The Discount/Reward card is renewable from 31st March 2013 and the Allotments Group will endeavor to maintain the discount scheme with existing businesses for the next 12 months and hopefully seek new outlet discount schemes that will benefit allotment holders. For allotment holders here this evening who have not signed for their cards they are available after the Meeting. The 2013/2014 Discount/Reward cards will be available from February 2013.

Focal Point

In the spring of this year Allotment Group members repainted the New Hut and Marshall Hall put up the safety guard rail at the serving hatch area. The Allotments Group have taken delivery of 31 paving slabs as a gratuity and we hope to enlist the help of Neil Page and his team to lay the slabs adjoining the existing slabbed area to give allotment holders more room and comfort to enjoy the Saturday coffee mornings with their allotment colleagues, family and friends. Ongoing projects for further discussion are a safety guard rail alongside the communal path to the Focal Point and to level out the communal paths in the same area. If anybody can assist with technical, physical help with these projects could you please put your name forward. The tiered garden behind the New Hut is maintained by Loraine and Larry Faulkner and this landscaped colourful jewel is appreciated by allotment holders, children and notably by the Britain in Bloom judges.

I take this opportunity to remind the meeting that the Focal Point is available to the allotment holders, especially at the weekly coffee mornings. Allotment holders and their families and friends are invited to use the slabbed patio area, tables and chairs for picnics or a natural break from the endeavours of working your plots.

SPICY PRUNES

This is a quick and tasty recipe for Spicy Prunes which go very well with ham or goose!

- 1lb dried prunes
- 2 pints cold fresh tea
- 3/4 pint red wine vinegar
- 8 oz light or dark muscovado sugar
- 2 bay leaves
- 8 juniper berries
- 1 cinnamon stick
- zest of one lemon

1. Soak prunes overnight in the cold tea.
2. Transfer the prunes into a saucepan and add half the cold tea liquid.
3. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Drain the prunes gently and keep this liquid on one side to use later.
5. Put vinegar, lemon zest, sugar, herbs and spices in a saucepan and warm gently until the sugar is dissolved.
6. Bring to the boil and boil rapidly for five minutes.
7. Add 1/2 pint of the liquid reserved from cooking the prunes to the vinegar mixture in step 5 and bring back to the boil.
8. Meanwhile sterilise your airtight jars and pack the prunes inside.
9. When the liquid has cooled a little, pour over the prunes in the jars and put on the lids.

Can be eaten after 24 hours or longer. Keep in the fridge once jar is opened.

Thank you Sara

LEMONY LEEKS AND SPROUTS

This is how I always do my sprouts on Christmas Day. I think they are much tastier than plain boiled sprouts. I adapted the recipe from one I found in a magazine many years ago.

- 1lb/450g Brussels Sprouts
- 2 leeks—trimmed and sliced
- 2oz/50g butter
- Juice of a lemon
- Salt and pepper

1. Prepare sprouts
2. Cook in boiling salted water for five minutes then drain.
3. Heat butter in a large frying pan with the lemon juice.
4. Add the leeks and sprouts.
5. Fry gently until beginning to soften.
6. Season and serve.

You can garnish with lemon zest if you wish.

Your Allotment Group Representatives would like to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year

Lets hope for better weather in 2013!



Chesham Town Council

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YOUR ALLOTMENT GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

ALLEN TILBURY (CHAIRMAN) Plot 104 CR	MARSHALL HALL (VICE CHAIR) Plot 47A/47B	JOHN SHARP (TREASURER) Plots 33 and 37A CR	YVONNE WEBSTER (SECRETARY - MINUTES) Plot 63A CR
ANDREW SINCLAIR (SECRETARY - CORRESPONDENCE) Plot 45B CR	JIM ABBOTT Plot 31/32 CR	CHRIS CHALLIS Plots 65A/66A/67A CR	VINCE CROMPTON Plot 36 CR
BEVERLY MACKAY Plot 3B AR	CLAIRE MALAN Plot 235A CR	SARA SAUNDERS Plot 84B CR	COLETTE LITTLE (COUNCIL)
PATRICIA CHERRILL (COUNCIL)		CR = CAMERON RD	AR = ASHERIDGE ROAD