

The Grower



Newsletter

ALLOTMENTS OPEN DAY SATURDAY 13TH AUGUST

SET UP FROM 9AM, COMMENCES 10.30AM. DONATIONS OF FRUIT, VEG, FLOWERS NEEDED FOR THE BLUE BOX SCHEME WHICH ARE "SOLD" TO THE PUBLIC. CONTACT VINCE CROMPTON DETAILING POSSIBLE DONATIONS. DELIVER YOUR DONATIONS FRIDAY EVENING 12TH AUGUST OR EARLY SATURDAY MORNING.

PLEASE SUPPORT THIS POPULAR EVENT, BRING YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. EVERYONE IS WELCOME. TEAS AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE.

COFFEE MORNINGS 2011 EVERY SATURDAY FOCAL POINT CAMERON ROAD

REMINDER: AGM FOR ALLOTMENT HOLDERS - TOWN HALL - THURSDAY 15th SEPT 2011, 7.30PM PLEASE PUT THIS IN YOUR DIARIES!

Contact us: Email: thegrowernewsletter@googlemail.com or at pengyworld@hotmail.co.uk

VINCE CROMPTON - WINNER - THE PEOPLE'S AWARD



The winners were presented with their awards and certificates from Councillor Derek Lacey, the new Town Mayor who referred to all Vince's achievements and commitment to the Allotments and the other groups that had nominated him. The winners shared the award of £150; Vince announced that he would be denoting his share of the Award to the St. Francis Hospice in Berkhamsted in memory of two of his neighbours who had been in their care. A typical act of kindness, I know all Allotment Holders would like to congratulate Vince for winning this award. *David Page, Allotment Holder and Temporary Editor*

It is with great pleasure that the opening article for my temporary stewardship of The Grower is to record that our Vice Chairman, Vince Crompton, has jointly won the 'People's Award' at the Annual Town Meeting held at Chesham Town Hall on 19th May 2011. There were an unprecedented twelve nominees for the award; Vince received four nominations and was joint winner with Shelia Smith, who was quite rightly recognised for all her tireless work and dedication to Chesham All Girls Band over many years.

Bon voyage to Kate and Steve!



I am sure that all the readers of The Grower would like to join the Allotments Group Committee in wishing Kate Hobbs and her husband Steve all the very best for their six month visit to Canada. Our

thanks go out to Kate who has been an excellent editor of The Grower for some years now, as well as being secretary of the Allotments Group committee, and a very active supporter of the coffee mornings and all the other events run by the Group. We will all miss her lively personality and unflinching support, and look forward to her return in the Autumn. Thankfully David Page has kindly offered to step in as the new Editor of The Grower, and as you can see, he has done a great job for his first edition! Thank you David.

Yvonne Webster, Allotment Holder and friend

Hosepipes

All allotment holders are reminded that the use of hosepipes to water crops is **strictly prohibited** as noted in your Tenancy Agreement. Hosepipes can, however, be used to fill up water tanks. We know a lot of new allotment holders may not have had the time to study their Tenancy Agreement, we therefore remind **everybody** that this simple rule has to be observed. Refer to Council Notice on All Allotment gates.

CHEESE AND WINE EVENING 23RD JULY 2011

Our ever popular Cheese and Wine Party will be held this year on Sat 23rd July. A perfect chance to meet other allotment holders, everyone's invited so why not bring your friends and family along. All we ask is for attendees to bring along a food contribution to share: quiches, **cheese**, biscuits, crisps, bread, **wine**, beer, a pudding or cake for afters. All ages are welcome. **Rain or shine, this event always goes ahead.** So join us at the Focal Point, Plot 38A, Cameron Rd. Start time 6.30pm, to give families with young children the opportunity to attend.

CHESHAM GREEN LIVING FAIR - Sat. 25th June 2011, 10am - 2pm.

Transition Town Chesham are holding a Fair as a celebration of one year of the Local Produce Market, a partnership of Chesham Town Council and Transition Town Chesham. The Local Produce Market on the day will be extended from Market Square, along the High St. to accommodate additional stalls. On the day parking in Water Meadow car Park will be FREE. The Fair will comprise several stalls dealing with issues such as food, education, energy, water and transport giving information and advice. There will also be a raffle with wonderful prizes, and street entertainment for all.

The Chesham Allotment Group Website

At the Recreation and Arts Committee Meeting held at the Council Offices on Monday 7th March it was unanimously agreed for the new Allotments Group Website to be officially linked with the Chesham Town Council Website. The Committee were very positive in their backing for the site and what we need now is contributions from you to help make this site grow (no pun intended). We are indebted to Rob Craig of Millipedia for all the hard work he has put in to get the Website up and running, and also to Yvonne Webster who has led the sub-committee appointed to this project. In the last issue of The Grower we asked for allotment holders to come up with a new logo for the Allotments Group but as there was no response it has been decided to retain the existing logo supplied by the Website designers. Please visit us at <http://www.cheshamallotments.millipedia.net>.

Allotment Group Induction / Welcome Pack

Another project taken on by Allotment Groups Committee has been the creation and implementation of the Induction/Welcome Pack. This document explains in detail the necessary disciplines of working an allotment to potential allotments holders on the Chesham Town Council Waiting List. It has been endorsed by the Town Council and copies will be sent out to the top twelve potential allotment holders at the top of the Chesham Town Council waiting list. This information brochure is also available at the Town Hall Offices and can be viewed on our website. Once again the Council have been very positive in their support of the document and special thanks go to Andrew Sinclair – a member of the Allotments Group who tirelessly volunteered his time and effort in putting this document together with the valued support from other Group members.

DOG FOULING ISSUE (AGAIN)



Complaints are still being received on a regular basis from allotment holders regarding dogs being allowed to roam freely on plots. The main culprits are dogs owned by other allotment holders.

Please be aware that as the allotments are Council property, we are subject to local bye laws. Therefore, the following is required to ensure the Council do not invoke legislation:

Always keep your dog on a lead and under control.
Tether your dog if you are not actually walking them.

Clear up any mess made by your dog. Do not allow your dog onto any plot other than your own.

These simple rules apply to all tenants taking dogs on to the allotments.

Unless dog owners take responsibility for their pets, we could be faced with the possibility that NO dogs will be allowed. We do not want this to happen. So, on behalf of the majority we appeal to the minority to remedy this situation.

Keeping Records

If you're like me you probably grow the same varieties of crop year in, year out. For Sweetcorn I usually grow Kelvedon Glory but a couple of years ago when my local stockist didn't have any seeds of that type I just picked the one that looked the nearest on the packet. I planted them in the usual way and was very pleasantly surprised with the results; they were even sweeter and a heavier cropper than my usual first choice. Don't ask me what they were though, that's the point of this topic. I had planted the complete contents of the packet, which was probably then recycled and to make things worse the writing on the little plastic push in row label had become faded and illegible so I had no record of what I had grown.

Learning from that, I now keep a written record of what I grow each year, putting a tick to highlight any varieties that did well or a cross to denote any that underperformed and I don't want again.

Children Welcome!

We love to see children out in the sunshine helping their parents planting, weeding, watering, etc. However, we do not like to see children running across allotments, playing hide and seek and ball games. Apart from damage to your neighbours crops there is a serious risk of injury from unlevel ground, glass cloches, tools and other obstacles.

THE ALLOTMENTS ARE NOT A PLAY AREA

Allotments Open Meeting

The Annual Open Meeting was held at the Town Hall on Thursday 14th April and to be truthful was it was pretty poorly attended. It is the perfect platform for allotment holders to have their say about items of concern and we hope to see more people at next years meeting. The minutes of the meeting, together with the Chairmans Opening Remarks can be viewed on our website under the documents section.



Chesham Town Council, Town Hall, Chesham, HP5 1DS
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Email: admin@chesham.gov.uk

LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

ALLOTMENTS GROUP

23rd July	Cheese and Wine Evening at the Focal Point (see article)
13th August	Annual Allotments Open day (see article)
15th September	Allotment Holders Annual General Meeting - Town Hall—7.30p.m.

CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

18th June	Coach Outing to the East of England show (near Peterborough)
2nd July	Early Summer Show at Trinity Baptist Church—open to all
3rd Sept	Late Summer Show at Trinity Baptist Church — members only

YOUR ALLOTMENT GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

ALLEN TILBURY (CHAIRMAN) Plot 104 CR	VINCE GROMPTON (VICE CHAIR) Plot 36 CR	ANDREW REYNOLDS (TREASURER) Plot 48 CR	YVONNE WEBSTER (SECRETARY - MINUTES) Plot 63A CR
JIM ABBOTT Plot 31/32 CR	CHRIS CHALLIS Plots 46A, 65A CR	MICK GOODMAN Plots 6B and 11A AR	DAVID PAGE Plot 29 CR
ROBIN PLUMRIDGE Plot 232 CR	SARA SAUNDERS Plot 84B CR	ANDREW SINCLAIR Plot 45B CR	COLETTE LITTLE (COUNCIL)
GILL WALKER (COUNCIL)	CR = CAMERON RD	AR = ASHERIDGE ROAD	KATE HOBBS Plot 62A/B CR (ON LEAVE)

Local Places of interest to visit

College Lake Nature Reserve

I think most of us who have allotments are interested in the environment and anywhere that is helping to preserve natural habitats that sustain the local wildlife. College Lake is one such place and is well worth a visit.

College Lake Nature Reserve is one of the flagship reserves of the Bucks, Berks and Oxon Wildlife Trust.

Once a chalk quarry, College Lake has been restored over 20 years into a mix of different habitats.

As you enter the reserve one of the first sights to greet you is the wide expanse of open water and marshland. The marshland is perhaps the most important of the reserve's homes for wildlife, as in the summer it supports a number of rare breeding waders. In the lake, common terns nest on specially created islands. In the winter, the inhabitants of the water change, and wintering wildfowl from Scandinavia and beyond, use the wetlands for feeding and roosting. Elsewhere on the reserve, chalk grassland is alive with colour during the spring and summer as a wide variety of flowers come into bloom. These support a range of insects, including a number of rarer butterfly species such as the small blue. Rough grassland provides a home for breeding skylarks, as well as shelter for small mammals, which in turn feed birds of prey such as kestrels and barn owls. Woodland, scrub and hedgerows are widespread across the reserve, and support a wide variety of wildlife.

An unusual feature of College Lake is the Cornfield Flowers project. Started in the 1980s, College Lake was one of the first places in the country to actively conserve these rare and beautiful flowers, and now produces a glorious show of colour every year during June and July.

As well as observing the birdlife from the numerous hides you can also take in a variety of walks. These vary in length and include the Time Trail, the Bird Trail and the Wild Trail. You may be lucky and see some of the rare livestock that graze on site. Find out more from the Visitor Centre. **The farmyard exhibition** featuring many locally used farm vehicles and tools has recently been re-opened after a major re-vamp and is really interesting.

Facilities on site:

Visitor Centre - College Lake has a

brand new visitor centre with a large hide overlooking the marsh area. In there you will find all the information you need, friendly staff and the cosy **Café**.

Café – The Café is now located inside the Visitor Centre where refreshments are available between 10a.m. and 4p.m. weekends and bank holidays; or between 12p.m. – 3p.m. daily Mon to Fri. **Parking**. On site (bear right as you enter the site), disabled parking near the courtyard.

Toilets (including disabled & baby changing facilities) available in the courtyard and visitors centre.

Picnic benches next to the Barn.

Bookshop – Amongst a wide selection of second hand books and magazines available are many on gardening, etc. All proceeds support the BBOWT.

Opening times:

Summer opening hours: everyday 9.30am- 4pm (last entry 4pm).

Winter opening hours: everyday 9.30am - 4pm (last entry 3pm).

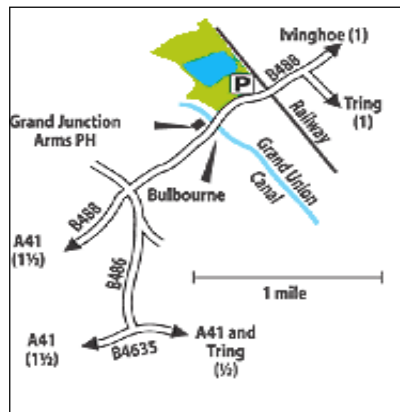
No dogs or cycling on the reserve please.

Getting there:

Directions: 2 miles north of Tring. Go north on the B488, ¼ mile north of canal bridge at Bulbourne turn left into entrance marked with green BBOWT signs.

By train: The nearest train station is at Tring, 2 miles away. If it's a nice day it's quite an enjoyable walk from there along the Grand Union Canal towpath.

Getting around: 65 hectares (160.5 acres). Gentle slopes, deep pit; 90% surfaced paths, some disabled access.



OS Sheet: 165; [SP 934 140](#)

Fish & Chip Supper - 16th April

Another well attended Allotments Group Fish and Chip Quiz Supper was held at the Temperance Hall in Chesham Old Town on April 16th. Sixty eight eager Quizzing Fish and Chippers turned out for a night of food and fun and memory testing from Phil Folly's quiz questions. They also raised £106 to be spent on Allotment Group projects.

The fish (or in some cases fish cakes or even sausages) and chips arrived from a Chippy that favours the Allotment group's large order and tastes really good. A table of desserts awaits in the corner of the room. These desserts are supplied and usually cooked by the guests....Delicious! The drink is a dead certainty to be what you would like. This is because you bring it yourself! The Allotment Group do provide plenty of sauce - and salt, pepper and vinegar - not to mention plates, knives and forks and cups. It's a good deal and a great night out.

The Quiz is very professionally presented - a Progress Board up at the front and Jokers to play on the round your team fancy as their biggest banker of points...If it were only that predictable we would all get maximum points (odd that does not happen very often really). The quiz is lots of fun and it's amazing what that moth balled memory can dredge up under pressure of a short time till the next question. You may easily go home with one of the raffle prizes that are donated for the night.

If you have not experienced a Fish and Chip Night first hand, it comes highly recommended. Just ask other allotment holders who keep coming back for more. We look forward to seeing you next time on 12th November. *Robin Plumridge*

Recipe Corner.

CHOCOLATE COCONUT CRUNCH

Ingredients:

4oz. Margarine or Butter
4oz. Self Raising Flour
2 teaspoons cocoa (or chocolate)
2oz. Caster Sugar
3oz. Coconut (Unsweetened)
Cooking chocolate for top (about 6oz.)

Method:

Cream butter and sugar; add flour, coconut and cocoa. Mix well. Press into round 8" baking tin. Cook in a moderate pre-heated oven* for 20 – 25 minutes. (*180°, Gas mark 4).

When cooled in tin spread with melted cooking chocolate and mark into slices.

Turn out when cool. Keeps crisp in an airtight tin for two or three weeks.

Serving Suggestion:

Why not make two lots and impress your allotment friends at the Saturday Coffee Morning?

↓↓↓↓↓ Tips for July ↓↓↓↓↓

Beware of slugs and snails Tender plants are a tempting treat for slugs and snails. Keep these pests away by putting down barriers of grit, broken eggshells or used coffee grounds, or strike back at them with beer traps or slug pellets.

Tomatoes Prevention is better than cure! Tomato blight can destroy your whole crop so it's worth spraying the plants regularly at this time. A fungicidal sprays such as Dithane 945 is effective and approved for use on tomatoes.

Make more strawberries Propagate strawberries by pegging down runners into the soil. They'll form roots and be ready to separate from the parent plant by August.

Take cuttings of herbs It's easy to grow your own herbs from cuttings in summer when plants are actively growing. They will root easily, but take several cuttings to increase your chance of success.

Plant climbing and French beans If you didn't sow them earlier,

Allotment Diary

↓↓↓↓↓ Tips for August ↓↓↓↓↓

there's still time to sow climbing, dwarf and runner beans.

Keep tomatoes growing Water plants daily and increase feeding to ensure healthy fruit and prevent blossom end rot. Remove any yellow leaves at the base by snapping off the stems.

Keep on top of weeding Don't let weeds get out of hand - stop them building up and taking water and nutrients from your veg.

Harvest courgettes Keep your plants productive by harvesting a few times a week. As a general rule, courgettes are ready to be picked when they're about 10cm (4in) long.

Collect seeds Choose a dry, still day and select healthy plants whose seedheads appear to be opening. Place seeds into a paper bag and store in a cool place.

Harvest sweetcorn As soon as the silky tassels at the end of the cob turn brown they're ready to pick. To make sure the corn is ripe, pinch a kernel with your finger.

Secrets of Herbs—Rosemary

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) is a woody, perennial herb with fragrant evergreen needle-like leaves. It is native to the Mediterranean region and is a member of the mint family.

Rosemary likes to grow on soil that has a crumbly texture ideal for the root growth, with good drainage in an open sunny position. It is considered easy to grow for beginner gardeners, and is pest-resistant. It can be propagated from an existing plant by clipping a shoot 4-6 ins long, stripping a few leaves from the bottom, and planting it directly into soil. It is attractive and tolerates some degree of drought, often being used for landscaping in areas having a Mediterranean climate. It can be pruned into shapes and has been used for topiary. Flowering is very common in mature and healthy specimens and can vary in colour from white, pink, purple or blue. It can be ever blooming in warm winter climates, blooming in summer in the north.

Rosemary enhances the flavour of many types of meat, including lamb, pork, chicken and rabbit. Place a few sprigs of fresh rosemary or sprinkle dried rosemary on top of the meat before roasting. Lamb can be flavoured by inserting chopped rosemary into small holes pierced into its skin. It also makes a delicious ingredient in stuffing,

simply strip some leaves from the stem and finely chop them and add them to your favourite stuffing mix. A few sprigs of rosemary placed in the roasting dish with a medley of vegetables (such as carrot, swede, parsnip and beetroot) will really boost their flavours. It also works particularly well with garlic and tomatoes and is traditionally used in Italian dishes to flavour pasta sauces, meats, fish and pizzas. Finely chop the leaves and add to pasta dishes and tomato sauces. It also goes well with most potato dishes, including roasted and mashed potatoes; try adding some rosemary and garlic to baked beans and serving with a jacket potato. It also gives a superb flavour when finely chopped and added to "bubble and squeak" (potatoes and cabbage).

Rosemary is extremely high in iron, calcium and Vitamin B6. Historically it has a reputation for improving memory. Results of a study suggest that carnosic acid, found in rosemary, lowers the risk of strokes and neurodegenerative diseases like such as Alzheimers. Although usage in culinary dishes is generally safe it is important to use sparingly as some side effects, including allergic skin reactions have been reported when used in excess.

Security / Padlocks - some clarification



You may shut the gates on entering the allotment area, but please ensure the padlock is secured on the gate to prevent loss. This allows for emergency access if needed. However, when LEAVING the plot, you MUST close the gates and padlock them shut, regardless of whether anyone else is left on the plot. Also be aware of who is on the plots when you are there. We have had some general public follow genuine plot holders on to the plots and police have had to be called.

Food For Thought ...

A fellow allotment holder commented recently upon the number of dandelions springing up and it got me thinking. As well as having medicinal properties dandelions are one of the earliest Spring greens available and have been grown in vegetable gardens since medieval times to help fill the 'hungry gap', and more recently the dried and roasted root used as a coffee substitute. Modern seed varieties can be purchased to produce large succulent leaves and plants flourish in fertile soil and semi shade when grown in rows 9 inches apart! Used as salad leaves, or cooked like spinach, they are full of vitamins, and are best harvested no longer than 4 inches for maximum flavour and tenderness. Wild dandelion leaves can be tenderized by blanching, ie covering the plant for 10 days before harvesting, though care should be taken when gathering, and road side pickings best avoided. So, in future, rather than regarding dandelions as, albeit a cheerful annoyance, and a sign that the soil is warming up on my plot, I will now afford these tenacious plants a little more respect, and as I can't beat them – eat them!

Sara Saunders, Allotment Holder Cameron Road

Perfect for Gardening Enthusiasts - A Charity Shop with a Difference!

Last September Workaid opened a 'charity shop with a difference' at the Old Boot Factory in Townsend Road, Chesham. The registered charity refurbishes donated tools and equipment and sends them to vocational training projects, mainly in East Africa and in the UK, enabling disadvantaged people to learn a skilled trade and earn a living.

Shop Manager, Shirley Ryder explains: *"The Workaid Shop isn't a typical charity shop...we aim to position ourselves as specialists in our field; able to supply gardening equipment, trade tools, specialist craft equipment, haberdashery and much more."*

The shop hosts an extensive range of gardening and horticultural equipment, wools and yarns, specialist books, haberdashery, tools and equipment as well as some fully refurbished items perfect for gardeners and craft enthusiasts alike. On my visit to the shop I was very lucky to find a book about the Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall that I had visited two years ago

Shirley continues: *"If something is not useful for Africa it can often be used for fundraising. We will be looking for donations of good quality haberdashery, craft items, sewing machines, horticultural and trade tools, books and manuals which we can sell to raise funds to ship the tools overseas to the projects which we support"*

The Workaid Shop is open Thursday and Friday 10am-4pm and Saturday mornings 10am-1pm. The team are looking for volunteers to help with manning the shop and preparing tools and equipment for sale. If you, or anyone you know might be interested, please call Workaid on 01494 775220 or email shop@workaid.org

They are also grateful to receive any donations of suitable tools or equipment, so if you have an old fork or spade cluttering up the shed please remember them.

