

BRIDPORT and DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

Newsletter

Winter 2021

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E10 petrol and garden machinery



From the Secretary

Please let the Secretary know if you have changed your e-mail address so you can be sure to get up-to-date information.

Receiving the newsletter: We now send out the newsletter, meeting agendas and minutes by e-mail—if any member is unable to receive these by e-mail, please contact the Secretary, Lynne Atkinson, on 01308 250260 to receive a copy by post or hand delivery.

Standard unleaded petrol on garage forecourts now contains 10% ethanol, this petrol may not be compatible with many items of garden machinery such as strimmers and lawnmowers. The AA have advised gardeners to use super unleaded from September onwards. The government website advises checking the appliance manual or asking the manufacturer or dealer before using E10. Even if your appliance is compatible the new petrol may cause problems if the mower or strimmer is left unused over the winter months.

(And how long will it be before petrol mowing will be a thing of the past and it's batteries only? Ed.)

Next Meeting : WEDNESDAY 15th DECEMBER 2021
Christmas meeting & Buffet
7pm in committee room at Mountfield
(Subject to any Covid19 regulations in force at this time).



NOW IS THE TIME TO SOW BROAD BEANS.

I thought it might be a nice idea to share my tip in the Newsletter on how to get a very good crop of Broad Beans in the Spring.

I always plant mine at the end of October or early November. The best variety is Aquadulce Claudia as these are a very hardy and reliable variety. They can withstand hard frosts and even a covering of snow.

The plants will bend over when the frost is on them but as the sun warms them up they always stand back up.

A very wet winter may cause the odd one to rot but on the whole I have always managed a very good crop.

First I work out how many broad bean seeds I will need - usually 276 plus a few spare. I buy them loose from Groves Nursery carefully discarding any chipped or damaged seeds.

When I have prepared the patch for planting I use my dibber and make a hole about 4" deep and space the holes about 5" apart. I then make lines of 23 holes x 4 holes. Next I get a small bucket of old farmyard manure or compost from my compost bins. I drop a little into each hole. I then sprinkle a little earth into the hole to cover the manure.

Next I go along the lines dropping 3 broad bean seeds (yes 3 seeds) into each hole. An old professional gardener once told me planting this way the broad bean plants will hold each other up when the wind blows, keep each other warm when it gets cold and keep each other company.

Once all the holes have the seeds in them I gently push the broad bean seeds firmly down into each hole and cover with earth.

That's it! Then all you have to do is sit back and let nature do its work.

By planting now you will avoid the pesky Black Fly and the Red Rust. I have always found that any broad bean seeds planted in the Spring will always be ruined by Black Fly and Red Rust before harvesting and the broad beans never taste as good. Our Autumn planted ones are enjoyed and finished escaping those Spring pests.

I will pick out the tops when the plants are covered in flowers to stop any early black fly. The tops are also very nice to eat just lightly steam them. We also eat some of the early small pods with the young beans in them.

Soon the crop really comes into its own giving us loads of lovely delicious broad beans which we enjoy immensely.

So Good Luck! Fellow gardeners and I hope you have great success using my tip.

Kind regards, Arrol

NEWS FROM THE HUB : planning an orchard.

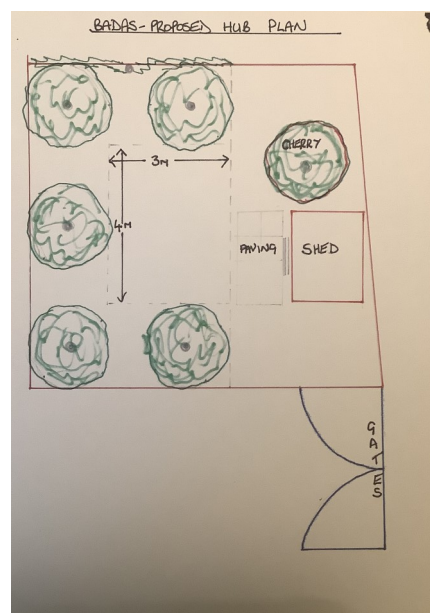
Lots of work has been done at the hub and the committee has passed a plan for planting. The previously cultivated area that was covered in Bristly Oxtongue has been covered in thick cardboard, to suppress the growth, and then in donated topsoil spread to level it up with the surrounding paths. The area will be grassed once the trees are in and will provide space for a gazebo for events if cover is needed. Some will be left uncut with wild flower seed added to provide for pollinating insects and other wildlife.

The plan is for 6 new trees to be planted and all are now sponsored. Hopefully, they will be in by December.

The trees chosen are:- a cooking apple - Wellington (also known as Dumelows Seedling): eating apples — Sunset and Ashmeads Kernel: a plum — Victoria : a pear — Conference and a hazelnut—Webb's Prize.



Preparing the ground for the orchard and the planting plan.





My Plot : Robin Wilkinson

I have the original agreement with the council which is dated 1988 - which means I've had the allotment for 35 years! I did take on an additional adjacent allotment which nobody wanted as it was very overgrown, but after a few years I gave it up because I was too busy to work it properly and by then there were a lot of people wanting allotments.

I found that I couldn't really manage two allotments. When I went back down to just one, I realised that I was getting as much, if not more produce, from that single allotment because I was managing it so much better.

I gardened as a child, but from six years old grew up on a rather remote farm, and it wasn't until I moved back into Bridport that I saw that I could get an allotment close to where I lived even though I had a reasonable size garden.

My plot is in Skilling South and it's a standard size for that area. The soil is difficult because it's heavy clay and prone to flooding, which means that you can't work it early in the year - and it is hard work!

I grow all the usual things and find that I am self-sufficient with enough potatoes and onions to get me through the year. For a number of years I bought potatoes from Pennards' at the potato day, buying about 10 or 11 different varieties in small numbers; each year I would drop a couple of varieties that didn't do too well in order to try to others. Because of Covid we haven't had a potato day, so last year bought from Pennards on online without so many varieties, but still growing a range of first-early, second-early and main-crop.

I grow onions from both sets and seeds and find that from sets they last from harvest right through till late spring. I also save as much seed as I can, particularly now that I'm retired - which can be very important particularly in the case of things like the cucumber (conqueror) which I particularly like having spent many years searching for the one that I consider the best. The seed was originally from Chase Organic on behalf of the Henry Doubleday Research Association but then Dobie's took over, but without stocking that particular variety. I only had three seeds left and it has taken a couple of years to rebuild my seed stock. This shows how easy it is for a cultivar to disappear from sale.

Contd.

I pretty much do everything organically and joined the Henry Doubleday Research Association which is known now as 'Garden Organic'.

I use slug pellets because slugs and snails are a problem. One pot has lasted over five years since I use them as thinly as possible. I've spoken to the Forestry Commission who use just two pellets per square metre for each tree planted; most people use many times this, which in my opinion can actually attract slugs and snails and is thus counter-productive.

I also grow comfrey which I put with water in a plastic barrel equipped with a tap. I add dandelion and other perennial roots which break down. This gives a rather smelly black sludge which is absolutely great for tomatoes. You can make it dry and then it doesn't smell as bad, but using a good lid on the container stops the smell - and it does make a really wonderful free fertiliser.

I do follow TV Gardeners such as Monty Don and Alan Titchmarsh, but I particularly liked the late Geoff Hamilton who showed how to do things without spending too much money. Spending thousands doesn't really relate to normal people, particularly when you can do some things just as effectively but so much cheaper.

In the early days at my allotment I was very busy at work and frequently got up at five in the morning putting in an hour or two before going to work - but I don't do that now! I now try to do a couple of hours every other day although the amount does fluctuate - with harvest time requiring the most effort.

My allotment is my sanctuary! Before retirement I was also a union rep and local councillor, and found going to the allotment got me away from all those stresses.

When I became self-employed - with even more stress which tends to follow you home, I found that the pressure seemed to drop from my shoulders when I entered my allotment! A further benefit from growing your own food is, of course, that you have a good supply of fresh produce which is chemical free.

Often allotments are handed over to new tenants when dilapidated and overgrown. My advice is to tackle only a small area in your first season to get you started. Get some black polythene sheet to cover the other areas to kill the weeds, and do a small bit at a time. I think the council should endeavour to ensure that newcomers get an allotment which is in good condition, otherwise a lot of your time when starting is spent re-establishing a sense of order on an overgrown plot.

I did this myself but used carpet rather than black plastic; but if you use carpet be careful because some cheaper carpets will have a lot of artificial fibres - and I saw that the carpet rotted away, which was fine, but it left a lot of stringy plastic fibres which have taken years to get rid of!

I expected to be able to grow my own vegetables on my own plot and in my own way. In the end I found it involved more work than I expected!

interviewed by Lynne Atkinson

Correspondence and Opinion Slot (new regular slot)

Jane Wittlin writes : I'm not sure if this is something to mention in the newsletter but I'm wondering if anything be done to help prevent our allotments at Skilling being flooded by river overflow? It seems likely this will happen more often now. Many thanks.

Please send queries, opinions and letters to the Newsletter Editor who will be happy to share views and pass on any replies . . . See address at end of newsletter.

Pumpkin Pie

Forgive the imperial measurements! I have had this recipe for a long time!
This recipe is different to the traditional American Pumpkin Pie with cream and spices but makes the pumpkin incredibly light and fruity.

8 ounces shortcrust pastry

8 ounces mashed cooked pumpkin (1 pound raw pumpkin, cubed, cook for 15 mins, drain well)

4 ounces soft brown sugar

1 tablespoon honey

Grated rind and juice of lemon

Grated rind and juice of orange

2 eggs (well beaten)

Heat the oven to 190 C

Line a large pie dish with pastry

Stir sugar, honey, fruit juices and rinds into the cooked, drained pumpkin

Add the beaten eggs, mix well and pour mix into pastry case.

Bake for 45 to 55 minutes.

Best eaten luke-warm or cold.

Recipe and images courtesy of Mandy Rathbone



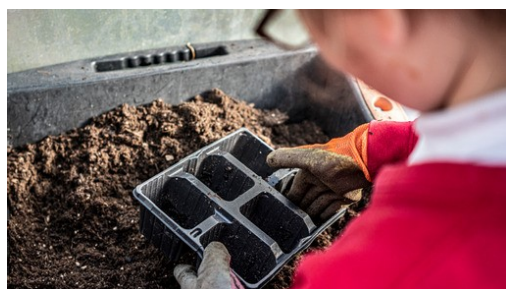
Allotmenters of the future?

Here are some pictures of children from St. Mary's planting broad beans for growing in the Polytunnel at St. Mary's school. The gardener teacher is Tia Perrella. These are children in the gardening club who are defined as 'inactive'.

Best Wishes
from Sarah Wililberforce



*Photos by
Robert
Golden*



MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Allotment Society is now £5 a year

Membership of the Bridport & District Allotments Society gives entitlement to discounts e.g. on some items at Groves. Our Membership Secretary/Treasurer Mandy Rathbone will be pleased to receive your subscriptions.

For information please contact Mandy at:
bridportallotmentsociety@gmail.com.

THE WEBSITE

Visit our website at
www.bridportallotmentsociety.co.uk

The website is full of useful information : allotment plans, copies of back newsletters, recipes, links, monthly tips, photos and diary.

It may take a little time to load but that's because it is so full of information!

THE NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will survey the winter and look forward to spring. It is due out in three months time. A notification will be sent out for you to contribute, but if the muse strikes you in the meantime, do not hold back . . . I am happy to store material, photos etc.

Contact me as Newsletter Editor at
bridportallotmentsociety@gmail.com