BRIDPORT and DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

Newsletter Spring 2022

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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.

THE JOY OF WONKY VEG.

By Jo Burlington



I have an allotment at the lower Walditch site. Last year when I harvested my carrots I pulled up some marvellously wonky ones. I instantly fell in love and had to draw them.

Some people might see failed carrots, and wonder about stony ground or over-fertile soil, but I see bodies who have lived life and survived, with evidence of struggles and resilience.

I wanted to celebrate their vegetable bodies.

I can't wait to see what comes out of the ground next year.... If you grow anything as fantastic as these, do send me pictures... maybe I could draw it for you!

(contd. on back page).

Next Meeting : WEDNESDAY 23rd MARCH 2022
7pm in Committee Room at Mountfield
(Subject to any Covid19 regulations in force at this time).

Feature allotment of the month

Sandy & Geoff Adderley, Burton Bradstock.

We have had our allotment at Burton Bradstock, where we live, since 2003. Geoff and myself originally shared a plot, but this didn't work out and we now cultivate a one-third plot. The whole plot runs from the road to the river and our section is about 20 x 10 yards in size. The soil is an excellent loam.

Being winter, at the moment there are just leeks and wallflowers growing, and we will soon be buying seeds for planting this year's crops. We grow vegetables, flowers and herbs. The vegetables will include some potatoes, carrots, French beans, runner beans and peas - and certainly more flowers. We definitely grow using organic methods. Being winter we don't spend much time on the allotment, but at other times it is about two hours twice a week.

There's lots of benefits of holding an allotment: including exercise obviously, which is good for you, as is the calming mental effect that gardening has on you, and you feel all the better for it. It's also excellent to be eating fresh produce that you have grown yourself and you know is organic.

If asked to give a piece of advice to a new allotmenteer, I think the main one would be not to rotavate a plot if it's overgrown and needing a lot of work. It is better to cover say half of the plot with plastic for a year to get rid of the weeds and then cover the second half in the second year.

Not sure what our expectations were; obviously we expected to grow vegetables but there are other benefits as already said and it has been really nice to meet other people with similar interests.



HUB NEWS

TREE PLANTING AT THE HUB on 25th January 2022.

The first 3 fruit trees were planted at the BADAS Hub on the 18th December. Good fun and hot drinks were enjoyed by those involved and it was great to see our plan progressing.
We are still waiting for the other 3 trees to be delivered.





And then on 16th February the Howgate Wonder was planted



Saturday February 26th Seed swap, and other things . . .

The seed swap went well, the weather was a little chilly and windy, but thankfully stayed dry.
We had some seeds donated as well as some garden tools, tea coffee and biscuits were also available, we also had a ex-member re- join and hopefully next year's seed swap will be even a bigger success.
We will be bringing some seeds along to our March meeting (23 March 2022) for the members who didn't manage to get to the seed swap.



LEEK and BUTTER BEAN BAKE



2 Tins of butter beans (drained and rinsed)
3 Leeks (cleaned and thinly sliced)
2 Large cloves of garlic (chopped)
1 Knob of butter
1 Tbsp oil
140ml. Cream
1 Big handful of grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

Sweat the leeks and garlic in the oil and butter adding salt and pepper to taste
Stir in the butter beans and add the cream
Put into a shallow, buttered dish and sprinkle with Parmesan
Bake in a hot oven (230c/gas 8) for 10-15 minutes until golden

If using dried beans-soak 340g/12oz overnight, rinse, cover with water and bring to the boil. Turn down to a simmer and cook for about 1 1/2 hours until tender then drain.
Adapted from a Jamie Oliver recipe

RHUBARB and GINGER GALETTE



500g Rhubarb trimmed and sliced into 5cm lengths
120g Caster sugar
2 heaped tbsp Flour
25g Butter in small cubes
320g pre-rolled Puff Pastry sheet
Milk to glaze

METHOD:-
OVEN 180C FAN
1. Place ginger and rhubarb into a mixing bowl
2. Add sugar and flour, mix and leave for 15mins
3. Add butter
4. Unroll pastry onto baking sheet
5. Spread rhubarb mixture evenly leaving a 3cm border
6. Lift pastry border and fold it over the rhubarb
7. Brush edge with milk
8. Bake for 35–40mins and cool for 20mins before serving



SUSTAINIBILITY SPECIAL

In the months after COP 26 we have a special contribution to make. There are wonderful close ties between allotments and contributions to a sustainable lifestyle.
Mandy Rathbone is an Allotment Ambassador for Bridport Food Matters (see their website for details), Joe Hackett is in charge of local tree planting initiatives and Sarah Wilberforce leads projects encouraging local school children to love growing.

Me and My Allotment, the story from Mandy Rathbone

My interest and enthusiasm for food sustainability led me to sign up for the local group, Bridport Food Matters, and to become an Allotment Ambassador. It sounds very grand but it just means keeping a dialogue open with other like-minded people and maybe inviting people to my allotment from time to time to exchange views and ideas.

One thing with gardening and growing is that there's always something new to learn and try – no two gardening years are ever the same, and I guess that's what keeps us on our toes.

I have had my allotment at Skilling South for about 15 years. To begin with I just had a half plot which was more than enough as I was working full time and had 2 children still at home. One of my allotment neighbours just happened to be Bob Driscoll who at that time was BADAS Secretary. Very soon he persuaded me along to my first BADAS AGM and before I knew it I was Membership Secretary and Treasurer!

The first few years of allotment growing were quite a roller coaster. The soil is quite unforgiving at times being a heavy clay, quite prone to flooding in places. It can go from so wet and claggy you could make bricks with it, to so dry and hard you can't get a tool through the surface! And that change can take place within a few days! The sweet spots when the plot is workable would inevitably not fall at weekends, at that time my main free time for gardening. But once I managed to get the crops in they mostly did very well.

Then 7 years ago I had the chance to take on the other half of the plot. I had a little more time, children having grown and gone, and thought it would be fun to have more space and be able to grow a larger variety of crops. It was hard work and took a few years to get it under control as the new half had been very neglected for some time. But I was able to plant more fruit bushes and to instigate a proper 4 year rotation for the main plots – potatoes, brassicas, peas & beans and root crops. I also fitted in leeks, sweetcorn, courgettes and squashes where there were gaps available.

During the time that I have had my allotment the issues of climate change and food sustainability have become much more mainstream and urgent.

I have noticed changes and trends in the climate conditions. Flooding is always a problem on plots near rivers, even if its just the water table rising, rather than the river overflowing. But it does seem to happen more often. But the other weather issue that I've noticed is the increase in gales, particularly summer gales. In winter its not too bad, most things growing on the allotment are quite low and can be staked or protected with netting. But in the summer a gale can wreak havoc with runner beans or sweetcorn and over the last couple of years summer gales have bashed my courgette and squash plants so much that they have not really recovered. In addition we seem to be getting much longer periods of drought, again not just in the high summer months. This year saw an early spring drought accompanying really low temperatures, which was very hostile to young plants.

It's a case of having to adapt as best one can to these changes. Though I have my four plot rotation, I have to adapt this a little when it comes to planting my garlic and overwintered broadbeans in November. There's no point putting them in a space which is very likely to flood. I am in the process of creating some slightly raised areas in some of my smaller beds to that these crops can rise above the average flood.

To help with soil stability and fertility I have also become a big fan of green manure which I sow particularly after early harvested crops such as potatoes. I plant buckwheat after my early & mid potatoes are out. All I do is bash out the soil to level it a bit and scatter on the seed – minimal work! The buckwheat is a great germinator and I soon have a plot full of tall plants which then flower and provide a delicious repast for hundreds of bees – bonus! When the first frosts come the plants just collapse and work their way back into the soil. This year I have also tried mustard after my later potatoes and this again has provided a thick leafy ground cover, preventing other less welcome weeds from establishing. The roots of these plants also help to break up my clay subsoil.

I am a great fan of trying to eat seasonal and local foods and obviously growing your own helps a lot with this. I try to be self sufficient in as many fruit and vegetables as possible. I can do this for leeks, sweetcorn, garlic, courgettes, purple sprouting broccoli, spinach, runner beans, French beans, soft fruit and herbs. This doesn't mean that I can grow these crops all the year round but that, for example, I only eat sweetcorn etc when I can harvest it from the allotment. When its gone, its gone and I wait a year before I taste it again. But it tastes all the sweeter for the wait! Its not necessary to buy courgettes or strawberries all the year round. They have their seasons and can be appreciated much more if eaten in season. That's why I'm such a big fan of our "Plot to Plate" feature on the website.

Bridport Tree Planting Scheme



Joe Hackett of the Bridport Tree Planting Scheme wrote in mid Feb. "I was in the allotments opposite St. Catherine's school off Pymore Rd. today. We gave six trees to the Living Tree allotment and they planted them close to the river. We also gave trees to St. Catherine's pre-school, over the road. So we are busy!" Magna Housing have plans to plant trees in the area as well. For more on Tree Planting initiatives go to the Coordinator on bridportallotmentsociety@gmail.com

Allotmenteers 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



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 come out iust as we all get stuck back into peak growing season. 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. One of the joys of computer news is that we can include more content but if you require a printed copy please let me know.

Contact me as Newsletter Editor on bridportallotmentsociety@gmail.com

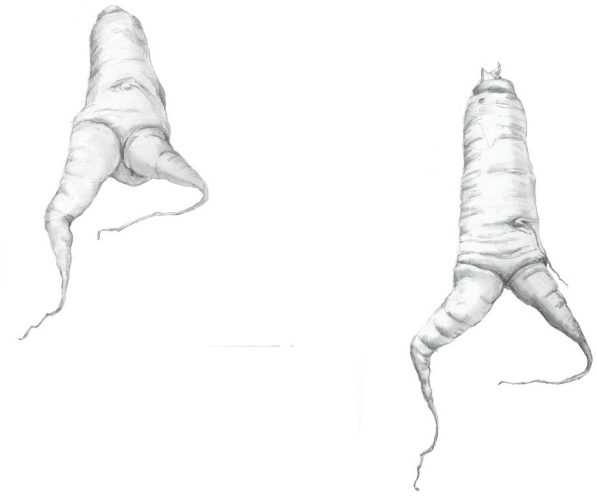
MEMBERSHIP

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 by email at bridportallotmentsociety@gmail.com

Wonky Veg. contd . . .



I have shared some of the drawings and here is a link to some greetings cards that I have had made up, using the drawings www.etsy.com/uk/shop/JoBurlingtonArt

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