

BRIDPORT and DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY

Newsletter

Spring 2018

Our next meeting

The next meeting of the Bridport and District Allotments Society will be held at Mountfield on Thursday 8th March, starting at 7 pm.

Our guest speaker will be Ian Bark, who will talk about how a small Community Orchard has been established on one of the six allotment plots provided by the National Trust at Burton Bradstock, which BADAS members visited in June last year.

All members are welcome to attend.

Summer Event and BBQ

This year the BADAS Summer Meeting will be an allotment walkabout on the Skilling allotments. This will be held, rain or shine, on the evening of **Thursday 14th June** starting at 7 pm.

This is always a popular and enjoyable evening – having a wander around other people's allotments – but this year the committee have decided to make it a bit more of a social event by organising some light refreshments (BBQ and drinks) on one of the South Skilling members' allotments. In addition to this a gardening expert from Groves Garden Centre will join us and be on hand for an informal question and answer session.

So after a pleasant wander round the allotments seeing who is doing what and how, there will be the chance to gather together with a glass and a bite and exchange ideas or just have a good moan about the latest allotment frustrations – drought/floods/plagues of slugs – who knows?!

Put the date in your diary – Thursday 14th June – and come and join us. If you have any queries about this event contact Lynne [redacted] or Mandy [redacted]

Mandy Rathbone



Nick Gray, from the Dorset Wildlife Trust, gave a presentation about pollination at the Society's December meeting.

March Jobs on the Allotment

In view of the freezing late February cold spell, we may be wise to note the advice of the National Allotment Society—don't be tempted to dig in partially thawed soil; it will chill the soil for months. Apply a general fertiliser, such as pelleted poultry pellets, over all the plot.

Complete any outstanding winter digging and knock down the large lumps of soil into smaller lumps using the back of a fork. Use a pronged cultivator to create fine soil crumbs before finally raking the soil down to create a fine tilth ready for seed sowing towards the end of the month. Hoe at every opportunity to destroy early weed seedlings.

Outside

Sow early beetroot, summer and autumn cabbage. Also, celery, lettuce, parsnips (if the soil is warm), peas and radishes. Sow herb seeds.

Plant - Early potatoes (if the soil is warm enough), onion sets. Transplant earlier raised broad beans, peas, lettuce.

Fruit - Feed all soft fruit. Complete any delayed winter pruning.

Greenhouse

Sow Brussels sprouts, cabbage, celery, celeriac, leeks, parsley, and tomatoes for growing outdoors. Sow herbs. Plant tomatoes, peppers and aubergines towards the end of the month. Protect from frost. Cover rhubarb to force early.

Next BADAS Meeting - Thursday 8th March 2018

The next meeting of the Bridport and District Allotments Society will be held on Thursday 8th March 2018, 7.00 pm, at Mountfield, Rax Lane (the town council offices). All members welcome..

Bridport Community Allotment

The allotmenters have been meeting monthly throughout the winter keeping things ticking over nicely. We have also been attending to our two shed roofs which both needed replacement roofing felt. We're now all waiting for Spring to get going!

The next meeting will be on Thursday 8th March (weather permitting) and I hope to commence the weekly sessions at the end of the month. Confirmation of the dates will be on the Community Orchard website and Facebook page.

Jenn Baker, Community Allotment Organiser

Annual Seed Swap

The last Saturday in January saw another successful Seed Swap event take place at the Ropemakers pub on West Street in Bridport. Dozens of excited gardeners gathered to exchange seeds, which this year had had a boost from Garden Organic's Heritage Seed Library. Thousands of vegetable seeds had been donated from them to get the event off to a flying start and heritage varieties like "Mrs. Patel's" Callaloo, "Rainbow Sweet Inca" sweetcorn and "Black Badger" peas were up for swaps.

Heritage varieties are open pollinated, which means that the seeds can be saved and sown next year - unlike modern varieties of F1 hybrids, which are bred by commercial seed companies, genetically engineered and sterile. Seed Guardians, who belong to the HSL, save old fashioned seed varieties so that we can maintain the diversity of our vegetable gene pool for future generations. They also are usually bred for flavour and can have some unusual characteristics like, for example, the "Ukrainian Comrades" dwarf French bean, which contains both black and yellow seeds within the same pod !!

Someone brought in some seed packets from the Far East which contained something called "Luffa". Julie Penfold and Lorraine Burkey wondered whether the black seeds might grow into a loofah (the thing you scrub yourself with in the bathtub) and, as they both have an allotment on the Skilling Allotment site, they threw down the gauntlet and challenged each other to a loofah battle to see who could grow the best one !!

Eileen Haste, who has been running the Seed Swap for several years now, kept children happy on the day with a workshop to teach them how to make their own seed packets and visitors were most generous with donations. Almost £100 was raised - half was put towards the Ropemakers' charity collection for Parkinson's Disease and the other half was sent to the Heritage Seed Library at Ryton Gardens in Coventry to support the work they do in protecting our seed heritage. Many thanks to all who attended and contributed to such a fun event on a wet January morning.

Lin Scrannage

Town Council waiting lists

There are currently 30 Bridport residents on the waiting list for town council allotments, with another 36 from neighbouring parishes.



Ted Davis, who died over Christmas aged 87, had an allotment on the Palmers site at Gundry Lane for more than twenty years, and was a long-standing member of the Bridport and District Allotments Society. Ted kept up his allotment until last year, only giving it up last autumn because of deteriorating health. He will be much missed by his allotment neighbours, and our condolences and best wishes go to Monica and their family. In the photograph above, taken during one of the Allotments Society's summer visits in 2011, Ted (centre) shares a joke with fellow ploholders Peter Gay and David Rapson.

Bridport and District Allotments Society

Membership of the Bridport & District Allotments Society costs £2 per annum, and gives entitlement to discounts e.g. on some items at Groves. Our Membership Secretary/Treasurer Mandy Rathbone will be pleased to receive your subscriptions [REDACTED]

Receiving the newsletter: We now send out the newsletter, meeting agenda and minutes by email — if any member is unable to receive these by email, please contact the Secretary, Lynne Atkinson. [REDACTED]

Newsletter contributions welcome: if you have any items you would like to see included in future issues of our Newsletter (which comes out quarterly) or if there are subjects you would like us to cover, please contact the Editor, Charles [REDACTED]

Contributions to the next edition (articles, news items and/or photographs) are welcome at any time, but by **10 May 2018** please. Many thanks for contributions this time - please keep them coming.

Website: visit our website at:

www.bridportallotmentsociety.co.uk