

# Hempland Lane-Heworth Allotment Association



Autumn / Winter Newsletter 2020

## Hot from the Hut!

### Committee Members

Name		Plot
Julian Ayres	Committee Member (Hempland Haven Rep) Soon to be relocating his plot to the Haven	43b
Ellen Bradbury	Committee Member	9
David Brinklow	Site Secretary and Treasurer	14
Nigel Collinson	Secretary	66
Gayle Enion-Farrington	Chair and Publicity Officer	34, 35
Moira Grainger	Committee Member	93a
George Hughes	Committee Member	108
Amy Johnson	Committee Member	63b
Jean Pulleyn	Committee Member (Hempland Haven Rep)	81
Lisa Tindale	Committee Member	59b
Lisa Maunder-Wood	Committee Member	95
Lorraine Wood	Shop Manager	64
Dave Wood	Shop Manager	64
Mark Farrington	Website Administrator (not part of the committee)	35

### Co-op Community Fund

**We're delighted to confirm that Hempland Lane Allotments has raised a total of £4,372.87 thanks to Co-op members.**

We will receive their final payment from the Local Community Fund by 19 November 2020. We raised £1850.74 October to March and April to September 2020 we raised a further £2522.13. Just phenomenal and this will enable us to complete the Haven with a sheltered gazebo, that can now accommodate social distancing, to future proof them.



### Update from Gayle, Chairperson

What a challenging year I'm sure you are all experiencing, but I hope you are finding moments of peace and accomplishments on your plot. A huge thankyou to everyone who took part in the

**National Allotments Week 10 August till 16 August 2020, and our fun competition to find the 'Best plot', 'Best Newcomer plot' and Best scarecrow tribute to our Key workers' which took place on the 16th August 2020. Results and photos are on the website.**

Next years AGM will take place via Zoom on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021. Joining for 7pm with a 7.15pm start. Prior to the meeting will issue you all with a link and questions and topics that we feel should be discussed. We will ask for your input on these topics, prior to the meeting and give you an opportunity to ask questions of the committee, or present future ideas too. This will be carried out via emails, facebook and hand delivered information to those who do not have internet access. We accept that Zoom is not everyone's preferred method of communication but as a committee we felt it was better to have an AGM and get certain things agreed for 2021. If you have something that you are passionate about, that you wish to be discussed please email me on [Gayle.farrington@btinternet.com](mailto:Gayle.farrington@btinternet.com) to ensure that it is included, no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. We will then aim to have this included within the agenda and consultation documents sent out to all prior to the AGM.

## Update from Nigel

*RHUBARB, RHUBARB, RHUBARB* – provide your own custard, sorry Lorraine!

Well in years gone by you would never see any self respecting plot holder not having a Rhubarb patch on their plot. Is it the same nowadays?

If whilst having a stroll around our site at Hempland a fair percentage of plots does actually have a crown or crowns but possibly not a patch. If you are nowadays one of those lucky enough to have a half or even a full plot a couple of well established crowns could provide a lot of “sticks” of Rhubarb! But as with all productive plants on your plot if you don’t like it what’s the point in growing it (unless you are kindly donating it to our shop to sell to raise funds for our site maintenance).

As with most plant names Rhubarb emanates from the Latin “Rhabarbarum” in its particular case. More often than not referred to as a fruit Rhubarb is actually an herbaceous perennial vegetable.

I know many of you will be aware Yorkshire became famous (for its Rhubarb as well as cricket) because of an area affectionately known as “The Rhubarb Triangle” based around Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield. Special trains used to carry the Rhubarb from Yorkshire down to London during the forcing season. Loads of up to 200 tonnes per day were transported which then was approximately 90% of the worlds forced Rhubarb!!! This was when there were about 200 producers in the “triangle” in its pomp, sadly today there are only about a dozen left in production.

When you see the early season price of Rhubarb (5 sticks for anywhere between £2.99 & £4.99) in some stores investing in a crown or two makes economic sense. Crowns do require some time to establish a good sturdy root system so it is advisable not to pick any sticks in the first season and only a few in the second season, so you need to be patient.

All varieties of Rhubarb are greedy feeders so they will appreciate a good dollop of well rotted manure or compost when planted and then as a top dressing on an annual basis. In dry spells keeping your plants well watered will pay dividends and help to stop your crowns throwing up flower stalks. If any are produced try to remove them as soon as possible to keep your crown producing those lovely edible sticks.

There are many popular varieties available nowadays with one specialist nursery charging up to £75 per crown for much sought after varieties ... a serious investment indeed! More realistically £5 to £15 per crown is more the norm. “Victoria”, “Early Red” & “Glaskins Perpetual” are all good favourites. Or you could be more adventurous and opt for one of the Champagne varieties, the choice is yours.

Nigel Plot 66



### Feeding plants

All gardeners know that their plants require feeding during the growing season, but are often confused and put off by the huge choice on offer. Different plants will require different feeds at different times and the key is to understand their individual and changing requirements.

During the growing season plants absorb important nutrients and minerals from the soil, these need to be replaced if your growing space is to maintain a high level of productivity and yield. Most fertilisers and feeds will have an N:P:K rating which relates to the three primary elements needed for healthy plant growth. The higher the rating the more of that element exists within the fertiliser.

**Nitrogen (N)** - Supports the growth of the vegetative parts of plants, stems and leaves. It is vital for the production of chlorophyll, which allows plants to carry out photosynthesis. Leafy vegetables such as spinach, cabbage and lettuce have a high nitrogen requirement as does lawn grass. Lack of nitrogen causes poor, stunted growth with spindly stems and yellow or discoloured leaves. Nitrogen washes out of the soil so feeds need to be applied little and often, especially during the growing season.

**Phosphorus (P)** - Stimulates seed germination and root development, increases stem strength and improves flower formation. Root vegetables need plenty of Phosphorus to aid development. Lack of phosphorus causes poor, stunted growth. Plants produce little or no flowers, have weak root systems or a bright green or purplish cast.

**Potassium (K)** - Essential for flower and fruit production and improves drought, pest and disease resistance. Often referred to as the “quality element” because of its importance to many of the features associated with quality, such as size, shape, colour, and taste. Potatoes, fruit and tomatoes all need high levels of Potassium to crop well. Plants that are low in potassium are stunted in growth and provide lower yields.

So, depending on the plants you are growing and the stage of their life-cycle, you should pick fertilisers and feeds that are higher in certain elements than others. Regular feeding really is the key to garden success according to many. On the other hand if you are a “No Dig” follower feeding your soil with well rotted manure or good homemade compost annually will work equally as well. I am sure the discussion will continue for years to come.

### **Kings Seed Order 2020/21 – Review**

This is just to say a massive thank you for those plot holders & Associate Members who have ordered seeds, potatoes, fruit bushes & the like from the current Kings Members Catalogue.

By placing an order through this scheme not only do you get quality seeds at a great discounted price but you also support our association. We buy our shop seeds via this catalogue & thus benefit from the very competitive prices & the additional discounts thanks to your support. This year our order has totalled over £1500 which is fantastic but what is very surprising is that this total has been reached with only 26 plot holders & 2 Associate Members supporting us!

When you think we have over 170 plots we are only getting support from a small percentage of plot holders on our site? With the very keen prices in these difficult times it is one of the main benefits of becoming a member of our association at the amazing value of only £5 per person per annum.

#### **Just a quick review of some of the most popular seeds ordered:-**

Beetroot *Boltardy* has been up at the top ever since I took over running the seed scheme.

Sweet Corn *Earlibird*, *Earliking* & *Swift* have all proved popular.

Tomato *Cocktail Crush* with claimed good blight resistance has gone down well.

The *Winter Butternut Squash* is proving a reliable favourite.

What hasn't seemed popular are Cauliflowers, possible because of the difficulty in growing them & that seems to go for Celeriac & Celery as well.

Three potatoes are top of the spuds *Charlotte*, *Jazzy* & *Wilja*.

On the flower front good old Sweet Peas (various) are tops along with Marigolds, Dahlias, and Nasturtiums.

Sun Flowers are also ever popular from the 12 inch bedders to the 6ft plus giants.

**Nigel Plot 66 Hempland Allotment Association Membership Secretary**

#### **Hempland Lane Allotment Association**

You can now pay your 2021 membership fee. It is still only £5 per person. If you pay now your membership lasts until Feb 2022. Don't forget the excellent benefits from joining our associations:

Access to our shop and the excellent products that we stock such as pellet chicken manure, lime, canes & seeds.

Access to our supply of horse manure, chippings, pallets and preloved tools.

10% discount for Deans Garden Centre & Vertigrow

**National Association Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners benefits**

Kings Members discounted seed scheme, Personal liability insurance whilst on your plot, Access to quarterly magazine & E-Newsletters plus much more!

## The highs and Lows of lockdown

We have had a great success this year with our allotment.. growing things that we have not tried before.. The only advantage we had with the lockdown was the fact that we had more time to spend in the greenhouse and on the Allotment.

We were looking forward to some lovely leeks during the winter months as I make a lot of soup , and my favourite is leak and potato! But unfortunately our leeks didn't make it ... ( its seems a lot of other allotment holders have lost theirs as well. But on a positive note we have had an abundance of fruit. The rhubarb was great as usual and I have made lots of Rhubarb gin! And the Rasps were amazing. I was picking them every day and I have made lots of lovely jam!! We tried to grow some sweet corn for the first time... Mmmm. What I hadn't realised was that you should plant them singularly. They were very difficult to separate. Lessons to be learned for next year..😞 Moira Grainger Plot 93a

## Jobs recommended by The National Allotment Society

### December

The year is coming to an end and the shortest day is in this month, which heralds the slow advance towards next season. So take a bit of time to reflect on your successes and to consider what went wrong with some crops. Always remember, that there are no failures in gardening it is always down to the weather, furry things or if all else fails Acts of God. Allow yourself a little relaxing time around the New Year and be ready to hit the ground running.



### Harvesting

Keep picking the Brussels sprouts to ensure the sprouts don't blow open. Also harvest winter cabbage regularly although according to variety they can remain in the soil for months. The parsnips and leeks can be left in the ground to be lifted as needed. If a prolonged cold or wet spell is forecast you can lift leeks and parsnips to store them in containers of old compost or soil to be used at a later date. Cabbages and even sprouts can be lifted with their roots in a soil ball and stored in a shed or greenhouse. Don't forget to water the soil occasionally.

### Sowing and Planting

There isn't anything to sow in the garden this month except your onion seed which should be sown in trays or pots in a gentle heat towards the end of the year. Treat yourself for once and spend some dream time looking through the pages of the seed catalogues putting your order together and to posting it asap. King's Seeds make it so easy for you there are no excuses, and their catalogue is an Aladdin's cave of goodies.

### General

Check over all of your tools in the shed to make that they are safe and fit to use next season. Clean the metal and wipe it over with something like 3 in 1 oil. Clean and wipe down all wooden handles with linseed oil. It not only preserves the wood but makes the more comfortable on the hands. Check for pests and diseases on any produce in store especially for rat and mouse damage. Set the traps to catch them if you have to.

## January

### Overview

January is probably the coldest period of the winter and coming on top of the floods and heavy rains of just before Christmas it is well worth taking the time to look over the allotment and prioritise the jobs for the month. Top of the list has to be clean up the plot and dispose of all of the damaged and rotten crops. Don't worry too much about soil preparations for now just concentrate on clearing the way for a February blitz; weather permitting of course. Most of the overwintering vegetables will have suffered under the wet conditions make a list, visit the site shed or garden centres and get in what replacement seeds or bulbs you will need for your immediate needs.

### Harvesting

Brussels sprouts, cabbages, leeks and parsnips, if they haven't been damaged by flood water. Check on any vegetables in store and discard any that have gone mouldy or rotten.



## Sowing and planting

Patience is the watchword. The days are still too short and cold even think of sowing seeds either outdoors or in the open. A few sowings of onions, lettuce, peas, broad beans, radish and early carrots can be made under protection towards the end of the month. The January sun can push temperatures quite high so give a little air to the transplanted lettuce plants on warm days closing down early in the afternoon.

## General

Protect overwintering vegetables under cloches or fleece. don't forget to ventilate and allow plenty of fresh air to get in on sunny days. Under the protection winter sunshine temperatures can get as high as on a hot summer's day. Pack some straw or fleece around celery to protect it from any damaging frosts but remove it on sunny days to let the plants breathe.



Draw the soil up around the stalks of cabbages and winter cauliflowers to just under the first set of leaves. Check over Brussels sprouts and sprouting broccoli and support them with a strong stake to prevent them from being blown over in high winds.

Take advantage of days when the soil is frozen hard to barrow and stack manure and compost close to where it will be dug in later on. Don't walk on the soil as it begins to thaw it will be wet and sticky.

If you have any plants or seedlings ticking over in a cold greenhouse cover them with several layers of newspaper on frosty nights but remove it on warm days.

Dig up rhubarb roots and divide them leaving the sections on the surface of the soil for a few days to let them be frosted prior to forcing. Cover any crowns in the soil that have been set aside for forcing with an upturned bucket or flower pot and cover the drainage holes to shut out the light. With luck you will be harvesting pale pink sticks by late February.

Check on any fruit and vegetables in store and remove any that are diseased or soft.

Towards the end of the month when the weather and soil conditions allow plant out soft fruit bushes. Spray all fruit trees and bushes with a garlic winter wash on a fine day; do not spray in frosty conditions. It won't hurt to hold the job over to next month.

Seed potatoes will be available from the end of the month. Order your seed potatoes and collect seed trays or wooden tomato trays ready to chit them in. On days when you can't work on the plot clean the shed, greenhouse, tools and linseed oil any wooden handles. Check that the watering can and buckets don't leak and that the wheelbarrow doesn't have a flat wheel.

## February

### Overview

We get a glimpse of the early signs of the arrival of Spring this month. The soil begins to warm up around the middle of February and we can see for the first time this year the buds beginning to swell on fruit trees and bushes.

Overwintering vegetables begin to look less sorry for themselves and they start to produce new growth. These are the signals that it is now safe to think about sowing a row of early peas and broad beans using a hardy cultivar. It is too late to sow the broad bean 'Aquadulce' it is only really suitable for growing overwinter.

### Sowing and Planting

After the middle of the month it is safe to think about sowing the seeds of early vegetables. Prepare a seed bed and sow 'White Lisbon' Spring onion, early short horn carrots, early types of lettuce, try a cut and come again it saves on time waiting for a heart to form. It may be too early to make a start in the colder areas of the country but try sowing of parsnip seed if you really want large roots but use a canker resistant cultivar.



February is the best month to plant out garlic and shallots. Prepare the ground as you would a seed bed and plant using a trowel don't push the bulbs into the soil. Plant the garlic cloves about 2ins/5cms deep and leave the tips of the shallot bulbs just at the soil surface. The birds will pull one or two out leaving them lying on the ground. Replant them as soon as possible the birds will quickly lose interest.

## General

Top dress all of the fruit trees and soft fruit bushes with a general fertiliser at the recommended application rate. At the same time top dress the rest of the plot with a general fertiliser as land becomes available.

Check over any fruit trees and bushes for damage and disease problems and take appropriate action.

Prune late/autumn fruiting raspberries down as low as possible and mulch around them. Tip back summer fruiting back to around 6ft/1.9mts to encourage the development of fruiting side growths

Complete any outstanding winter pruning of soft fruit bushes cutting out down to soil level the older dark stemmed shoots of blackcurrants.

Cover the soil with cloches or sheets of plastic to warm it up in readiness for the next batch of sowing and planting. Don't overdo it little and often is the plan over the coming weeks.

Check over the chitting potatoes and begin to rub off any eyes that are unwanted leaving three or four well-spaced shoots. Keep some fleece or newspapers nearby to cover them up on starry, frosty nights you don't want to run the risk of losing them at this late date.

Keep checking frequently on the condition of any produce in store it will begin to wake up after its winter dormancy and start to regrow.

On a warm summer's evening, when the sky is clear and the sun is sinking down low, we get a free picture show on the wall of the shed in our back garden. By some chance, the willow tree and the metal lantern and basket that hang from it all line up with the setting sun to project a beautiful and stark shadow onto the wooden wall behind.

The delicate silhouette of the metalwork and foliage is perfectly rendered in a strong black ink. The thick trunk of the old willow rises up crookedly to fill the centre of the image and all is set off by the plants and shrubs lying in the ground at the foot of the wall.



The first time we saw the shadow, it was as if someone had sneaked in and painted a Banksy, but after the initial surprise the whole effect becomes more subtle than any work of man. The image lingers on the wooden shed wall for an hour and no-one has ever seen it disappear - one moment it's there and the next it's gone.

To take pleasure in fleeting beauty is something familiar to all those who tend gardens and allotments. One word for this is 'serendipity' - the occurrence of happy events by chance, for those with the eye to look for them.

### Lisa Tindale Plot 59b

**Top Tip -** When planting your garlic cloves either in spring or autumn for overwintering, bury them about an inch deep so they establish a good root system. Make a hole in the soil or compost if you are planting in pots and pop the clove in, don't force the cloves in as you may damage the basal plate of the clove and cause it to rot.

**NOTE -** 73% of British gardeners and plotters admit to experiencing their fare share of disasters. **Does this mean that the other 27% are telling porkies?** I think I can safely comment on behalf of all our committee members and say we would 100% admit to our gardening or allotmenting disasters!

**DID YOU KNOW?** - During WWII "The Dig for Victory" campaign saw 55% of households in the UK growing some fruit or vegetables. Does anybody know what that percentage has been so far during the Coronavirus pandemic?

**COULD IT BE POSSIBLE?** - It has been suggested that a diet high in fruit & vegetables could help to reduce Type 2 Diabetes by up to 50% ... food for thought.

# Brussels Sprout and Cheddar Soup – Serves 4

Ready in 35 mins

Cooking Time 20 mins

## Ingredients

2 tsp olive oil, plus extra for drizzling  
2 medium onions, chopped  
300g cooked Brussels sprouts  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
650ml vegetable stock  
4 tbsp single cream  
100g mature cheddar, grated, plus extra to serve



## Method

Heat the oil in a medium pan and fry the onions over a medium heat until soft, 8-10 minutes. Meanwhile, roughly chop half the sprouts and cut the rest into halves or quarters, depending on size.

Add the garlic to the pan and stir-fry for 1 minute, then add the chopped sprouts and stock, cover with a lid and bring to the boil. Take the pan off the heat and leave to cool slightly.

Purée the soup. Stir the cream, remaining sprouts, cheese and some seasoning into the pan and simmer for 2-3 minutes or until the cheese has melted. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil and a scattering of extra cheese.

**Kitchen secret:** if you love sprouts so much you don't have any leftovers, simply cook raw sprouts in boiling salted water for 8-10 minutes, or until tender.

Top Tip from Amy - I made this recently and couldn't believe how good it was! It used raw sprouts and think it doesn't really need the cream or quite as much cheese, but it tasted so good.

Recipe from Sainsburys  
**Amy Johnson Plot 63b**

## Future dates for your Diary

**Please be advised that further to COVID19 guidelines, our AGM will be via zoom on .....  
And all formal events for 2020 and 2021 are on hold. In the meantime work on the Haven will take place when practically possible so we are able to ready to go, when we can.  
Currently your committee meets via digital means and are still here to support you during these unprecedented times.**

**Sadly due to Lockdown 2 the Community Payback Team could not return. If you can do anything surrounding your plot and the pathways to keep them tidy, the Committee would be very grateful.**

**Thankyou in advance and please stay safe**

**If you would like to write something for the next newsletter, please email it to [gayle.farrington@btinternet.com](mailto:gayle.farrington@btinternet.com), by mid Feb 2021.**