WELLINGTON FIELDS ALLOTMENTS – HIXON

Issue No: 20

WELLINGTON FIELDS ALLOTMENTS NEWSLETTER August/Sept

Forward from the Chairman

It seems crazy that as I write this welcome, we are in the throes of yet another period of unbearable heat and on the verge of a drought, yet I was watering my allotment at 9.00 pm earlier in the week in almost total darkness! Yes, we're now moving into late summer, the nights are closing in and it looks like we're going to have a bumper harvest. As we are now in the period where all our plots need a regular water, please be as responsible as you can when watering – in particular, please remember to switch off the tap at the trough when you have finished and if you do ever spot a leak, please let one of the committee know straight away. We are always receptive to other conservation ideas and projects too, so again, please approach any of the committee at any time, or even better, why not join us on the committee. We meet every 6 weeks or so in the Bank House and have an informal meeting over a couple of beers – it's amazing too what you learn about cultivating….Happy growing everyone!

Simon Ellin

Committee Notices / Key Dates

1. Date for your diary- Tree and plant sale at Hixon Memorial Hall September 10th, 10 am- 12.00 noon

2. Please ensure that you are getting the best from your plot by working them throughout the summer. It is important that they are kept tidy and free of weeds including couch grass that can soon take hold of your plot and others around. If you have any issues working the plot then please let the secretary know and we will endeavour to help. There will be another plot inspection this month.

Health and Safety tips taken from our policy

- It is recommended that, particularly at quiet times, plot-holders inform someone where they are, and their likely return time.

- Plot-holders should ensure that their plot and associated accesses are free from hazard: hazards may include sharp edges, exposed nails, improperly stored tools, and hazards hidden within undergrowth such as forgotten discarded tools.
- Please remember that we are legally responsible for the safety of anybody who may enter our plots.
- Thank you for all who are reverse parking, this makes a massive difference to the safety of people on the car park and when leaving the facility.

August Jobs for the allotment

August is the month that harvesting reaches its peak, as it hopefully does with the need for watering! It's time to pick the tomatoes, courgettes and the many types of beans when they are at their best. Delicious freshly picked sweetcorn will be ready for the BBQ. As the summer cabbages finish then sow Oriental's for the autumn and winter. Hoe and weed, water during the dry spells, collect seeds where possible.

September

This is the main time to harvest a range of crops from the plot and prepare the soil for winter. Fruit on the plot is in full swing. Plums, apples, and autumn raspberries are usually ready to pick. Cover light soils for the winter so they do not get leached. Manure the soil or sow green manure plants that can be dug in. Hoe and weed the plot tidying up for winter planting of cabbages, all year round cauliflowers, and onion over wintering sets and garlic.

Recipe for crops in season

Courgette Pasta with herbs, tomatoes and chili

Serves: 4 people

Ingredients

1 big courgette any colour and type or ½ kilo of small courgettes
1 medium onion
3-4 garlic cloves
2-3 medium tomatoes or a handful of small ones, or a tin of chopped tomatoes
Pinch of salt
Black pepper
A herb of your choice – dried oregano / thyme/ or marjoram
3 tablespoons of olive oil
150 grams of Fusilli Penne pasta – hollow ringlets (but you can use any pasta)
Grated Parmesan cheese

Method

Chop the onion. Peel and chop the garlic. Cut the courgette into small pieces .Warm the oil in a pan, add the chopped onion, fry until golden brown, and then add the garlic and courgette. Stir for 5 minutes, add the chopped tomatoes (you can use tomato paste as well), add the salt, pepper and herbs, cover the pan and let it simmer on a low heat for about 20 minutes.

Boil water in another small pan, add the pasta, and cook for about 10 minutes then drain and add a bit of olive oil. Serve the pasta on a plate, topped with the courgette sauce, and sprinkled with the cheese, and chopped green or red chilli.

Courgette, Pea and Parmesan Tart

Serves 4-6

Prep time; 15 mins
Cook time; 20 mins

Ingredients

- 1 pack of ready rolled pastry
- 200g soft white cheese (with or without herbs/garlic)
- juice of 1 lemon
- 4 tbsp grated parmesan (55g ish)
- 60g frozen peas, defrosted
- 2-3 courgettes, sliced into thin ribbons lengthways, on a mandolin if you have one or potato peeler if not
- 6 spring onions, roughly sliced (optional)
- Sliced tomato, for colour (optional)
- 1 tbsp olive oil

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200C, gas 6
2. Unroll pastry & score out a border 2cm(ish) around the rim with a sharp knife, less if doing individual ones and prick the centre all over with a fork.
3. Mark a lattice pattern on this with the knife, then brush with egg or milk & put in the fridge whilst you prepare the other ingredients.
4. Precook the base at 160 fan, for 15 minutes.
5. Mix the soft cheese, ½ the parmesan & lemon juice lightly in a bowl. Season with plenty of black pepper & spread over the pastry leaving the rim clear.
6. Press the peas into the cheese, pile on the courgette ribbons (I curl them first) they will shrink with cooking, and then scatter over the spring onions if using, and remaining parmesan. Drizzle with the oil & cook for 20 mins until the pastry is golden.

New project starting in the autumn.

AGM surveys and discussions with plot holders suggested:

Storage facility, composting toilet, paths across the site improved, table for free veg/plants, Bee attracting plants, tree planting around the borders, wild area, regular woodchip and manure, and a social area with seating.

All aspects of the allotment improvement survey are being looked at and we intend to go ahead with the shed and the toilet, bordered by a social area and wild life planting. Site surveys, fundraising, planning, consultation and development are already underway. We will need some help when it comes to the time of laying the base and construction. Please could you inform Chris Hilton, if you can help… christopher.hilton2@btinternet.com Any further input and ideas can also be emailed to me or sent to the secretary.

A Featured Garden to visit

Kew Gardens Kitchen garden a brief view

I recently visited the gardens and gained many new ideas including

crop rotation, companion planting and the no dig method.

Kew's Kitchen Garden is where they grow edible plants to learn more about producing healthy and sustainable food.

They grow different varieties of common fruit and veg, from carrots and apples to pumpkins and chilli peppers.

They also grow heritage varieties and they experiment with more unusual crops. These may be important sources of food for the future, because some of our staple crops will have to change as the climate becomes more unpredictable.

For example, in 2018 they grew a species of tomato that is much more resilient to changes in climate than the regular tomato.

Really worth a visit – Look at the link below.

https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-in-the-gardens/edible-science-kitchen-garden

The no dig method try it!

- This is when a layer of organic matter is added to the top of the beds, which suppresses weeds, and protects beneficial bacteria and helps creatures that live just below the surface.
- No dig gardening is very simple. It's a method of cultivation that aims for minimal disturbance of the soil and can be adopted by anyone. Because it's such a healthy way of growing and the soil health stays so good from not being disturbed, you get a stronger growth of your plants.

For detailed information go to:

https://charlesdowding.co.uk/

https://www.countryliving.com/uk/homes-interiors/gardens/a37393447/no-dig-gardening-method/

https://www.theguardian.com/guardian-masterclasses/guardian-masterclass-blog/2019/nov/15/what-is-the-no-dig-method-charles-dowding-demystifies

https://www.nsalg.org.uk/resources-and-downloads/individuals-and-schools/

Committee Members

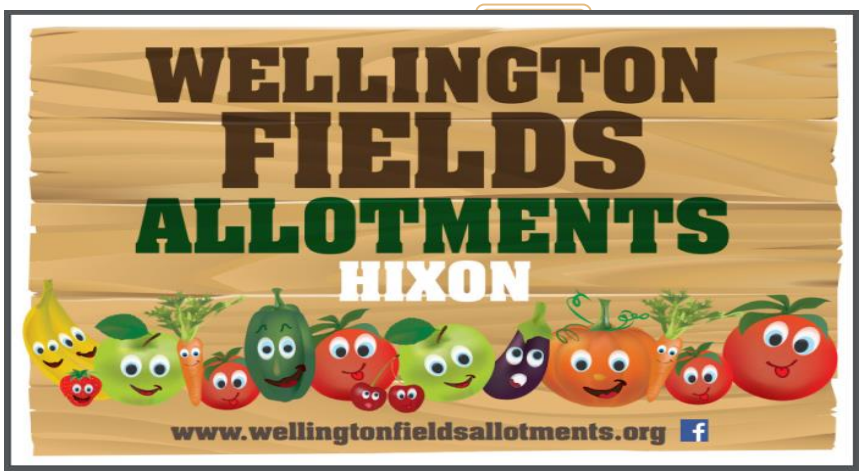
Chairperson - Simon Ellin.
Vice Chair- Chris Hilton
Treasurer - Karen Appleton.
Secretary - Jane Garner.

Committee Members: -
Mark Connell;
Alan Hartley;
Nick Brookes;
Suzanne O'Farrell.

Contact Details for Jane Garner, Secretary - fjanegarner@hotmail.com

Don't forget we have our own Facebook page and group that we would like to see more people using! You can post anything you want within reason about the allotments.

www.facebook.com/WellingtonFieldsHixon



.....Happy Gardening