

WAHGA NEWSLETTER SPRING 2009

Editor: David Hickman



Welcome to our Spring Newsletter: as we get out planting and sowing on our allotments and in our gardens it's time for an update on what's going on in your Association.

OUR NEXT SHOW & FETE SATURDAY 22 AUGUST 2009

This is the biggest event in the WAHGA calendar, so reserve the above date in your diary now. As always some fun children's activities and stalls will be run. We need more exhibitors in the produce Show- don't be shy especially you newer members! The Show schedule will be available soon at Trading Sheds.

SUPPER DANCES

Lesley (01753 831863) and Doreen (01753 861714) have organised more of these popular evenings at the Gardeners Hall.

The next ones are on 16 May and 10 October 2009. Each of these "kicks off" at 7.30pm.

OUTINGS



Outings are organised by Karin Lohr (01753 840651). Our annual pilgrimage to Wisley is on Wednesday 15 July. The coach leaves from the Gardeners Hall and the cost is £8 per person.

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS....

Our very own President, Ted Bailey will be giving a talk on "Growing and Showing" at 7pm on **Friday 17th April** in the Gardeners Hall. Learn all sorts of useful things about growing successful crops this season and how to prepare and show them in August.

Come along on the 17th. Admission is free and the bar will be open!



WAHGA Mamas Sunday Lunches

Every last Sunday in the month Jayne Rigg and her team put on a superb Sunday lunch at the Hall. Pop into the bar and sign up on the list on the notice board.

**SEE THE BACK PAGE FOR MORE
NEWS AND NOTICES!**

THE NEW KIDS ON THE PLOT



The Stars of the Fairground Site spoke with the Editor

Jim Hillis and Norman Stock were the winners of the much coveted “Best Newcomer” award last year. Jim and Norman have been friends for years but neither of them had much previous experience of vegetable growing.

One day Jim suggested to Norman that they should have a crack at allotment gardening. Norman was very enthusiastic so they went ahead and managed to secure a plot at the Fairground site in early 2008. Since then their progress has been spectacular!

When asked about the Fairground site Jim is very happy to have his plot there. “It’s a great location, on the edge of the Great Park with good amenities. In addition, we have the trading shed here which opens on Thursday afternoons and Sunday mornings; that’s very handy,” he said.

Norman talked about last year’s produce: their first full year. “The onions were brilliant, the spuds - Home Guard and Desiree - did well and so did the sweet corn and the strawberries” he recalled. Jim, noting that “it’d be boring if everything went well” points out that their asparagus didn’t perform, the fruit trees failed due to early frost damage and “the tomatoes were good until the dreaded potato blight killed them off”. We can all sympathise with the blight damage in particular.

So how did our two novices manage to do so well in their first year? Well, even allowing for their green fingers they are the first to give a big vote of thanks to their allotment neighbours Dewi Davies and Eric Black, both highly experienced vegetable growers who have given them bags of advice and practical help.

So what are the boys’ plans for the new growing season? Accompanied by some cheery woofs from Jim’s dogs, Sid and Enzo, Norman kicked off. He wants to grow Aubergines and will probably do them in the Polytunnel as they like the warmth. Jim meanwhile would like to grow some Cauliflowers: he took a fancy to the Editor’s crop of Caulis last year!

We wish Jim and Norman and all of you a happy and sunny growing season.

Trading Sheds Report by John Filmer, Purchasing Officer



The busy season is upon us again and hopefully most of your requirements are now available in the trading sheds.

The potato supplies have proved mainly successful and most people have the cultivars they wanted. The weather made the delivery late mostly because of the adverse weather in Scotland. However the quality of the seeds has been satisfactory. Some of you have yet to collect your spuds, please do so as the space is needed .

The seeds are selling very well and I hope we have obtained most of your requirements. I hope the standard pricing is to your liking. Please let us know if there are serious omissions.

Recent events both with the rise in oil pricing and the effect of the current economic situation has led to a number of price increases from our suppliers. Whilst we have endeavoured to maintain our price levels some increases have been unavoidable. We are still highly competitive compared with the local garden centres.

Wishing you all a happy gardening year
John

Don Hartridge: Allotment Secretary's report

The early spring weather has resulted in considerable activity on all of our sites and in the trading sheds. This is very pleasing to see and augurs well for the continuing progress of the Association. As more plots are under cultivation sites will inevitably improve. To help this process, you can assist your site supervisor and increase your enjoyment by observing the rules most of which are contained in your tenancy terms and conditions. Some important items are:-

1. Lock gates on leaving the site (Municipal please note).
2. Do not park on roadways obstructing others (Maidenhead Road please note).
3. If a bonfire is necessary, only burn dry material for a short duration when it will not affect neighbouring properties.
4. Do not use carpet to cover your plots. Our equipment has been damaged and work hindered by carpet which has been left for long periods and become buried. Black plastic is available in the trading sheds which is more effective and easier to use.
5. Ensure that your plot is kept in good order so that it does not give other allotment holders problems with weeds or rubbish.

There is a considerable demand for plots which has resulted in waiting lists. If for whatever reason you find that you will not be able to maintain your plot in the future, it would be most helpful if you are able to advise us as soon as possible. We shall then be able to commence any recovery work that is necessary prior to letting the plot.

Finally, may I urge you to submit entries to this year's annual show in August. If you need help come and hear the words of wisdom from your President on 17th April.

I wish you a successful season in 2009.

Don

Recipe Corner: Elderflower Cordial by Carol

Ingredients:

20 Elderflower Heads, 2oz citric acid (from chemist) 2lbs sugar, 2pts boiling water, 1 lemon sliced.

Method:

Dissolve sugar in the water. Mix in all other ingredients, cover with clean cloth and leave for 3/5 days stirring daily (the longer you leave it the more it tastes of lemon so I usually leave it for 3 days).

Strain through strainer and bottle. I use half litre plastic milk cartons as they freeze well.

HELPERS NEEDED AT THE SHOW AND FETE

We are always looking for more volunteers to help with by the Produce Show and the Fete. If you'd like to help with the Show please call our new Show Secretary Pamela Bailey on 07976 575406.

Also Fran Hartridge needs people to help her with serving Teas and food on the day. Please contact Fran if you are able to help out: her number is 01753 855754



Can you be a Good Neighbour and help out with some light gardening?

Windsor Lions Club is looking for some willing gardeners to help some of our local elderly folk with their gardens. Just an hour or two every week would make all the difference to many of the elderly folk in the area. They are happy to make a contribution towards your expenses. If you can help out in any way, or want to find out more. Please contact Diane Purchase on 01784 460659. E mail dianepurchase@aol.com or Geoff Beck on 01344 886906