



# WAHGA NEWSLETTER

## SPRING 2006

Editorial team: Jemma Whitehouse and David Hickman

Welcome to Spring on the Allotment! It's been a long, cold and (worst of all) dry winter but at last May is bursting out all over. As we all emerge from hibernation indoors and survey our plots we've produced this Spring Edition of your newsletter which we hope you'll find informative and entertaining but we need your comments and your contributions are also welcome: please email David with these on [fhickman@waitrose.com](mailto:fhickman@waitrose.com)

## NEWS AND USEFUL STUFF

### COMPOST ON THE COUNCIL

The Royal Borough is currently offering a good deal on compost bins and water butt kits. You can buy a bin and base for just £11 (RRP £62.90) which looks a fantastic saving. For more information see the latest "Around the Royal Borough" magazine The offer runs until 31 December.

### WELCOME TO THE NEWCOMERS

Numerous new allotmenters have taken on plots in Windsor in the last few months. According to Don Hartridge, Secretary of WAHGA take up is so good that we've reached 100% capacity on five of our sites. See Don's detailed report below. In our next edition we're hoping to meet up with some of the new ploholders.

### EVENTS & OUTINGS

- Sunday May 28th - Sunday Lunch in the Gardeners Hall
- Thursday 15th June 9.45am - Coach trip to Loseley Park House and Garden - Bookings via Karin Lohr (Tel 01753 840651) - cost £13
- Sunday June 25th - Sunday Lunch in the Gardeners Hall
- Thursday 6th July 10.30am - Coach trip to RHS Garden Wisley - Bookings via Karin Lohr - cost £7.50
- Sunday July 30th - Sunday Lunch in the Gardeners Hall
- **Saturday August 19th 2006  
2.15pm - Annual Show and Fete,  
Gardeners Hall**
- Sunday August 27th - Sunday Lunch in the Gardeners Hall

### BEWARE THE WERE RABBITS!

"Way aye man" as they say in Northumberland: news reaches us of a huge and hungry rabbit up there who's been terrorising the allotments in the village of Felton. It has feet as big as a dog and snaffles up leeks, parsnips, spring carrots and anything else in its path. It all sounds like a re-run of the Wallace and Gromit film! It's got so bad that the allotmenters have now hired 2 security guards to see off the demon bunny.

You have been warned !



## Guest in the spot light - John Wheelhouse

(a keen student of Allotments and what motivates us all) writes about:

### Why people have allotments

Over 250,000 people have allotments in the UK and 44% of them have taken up their plots in the last five years, 86% say they are “very likely” to keep them in the long term future and over half visit their plots more than twice a week on average. Also, 88% say that up to another 3 people lend them a hand. So what are up to 1 million people getting out of it all?

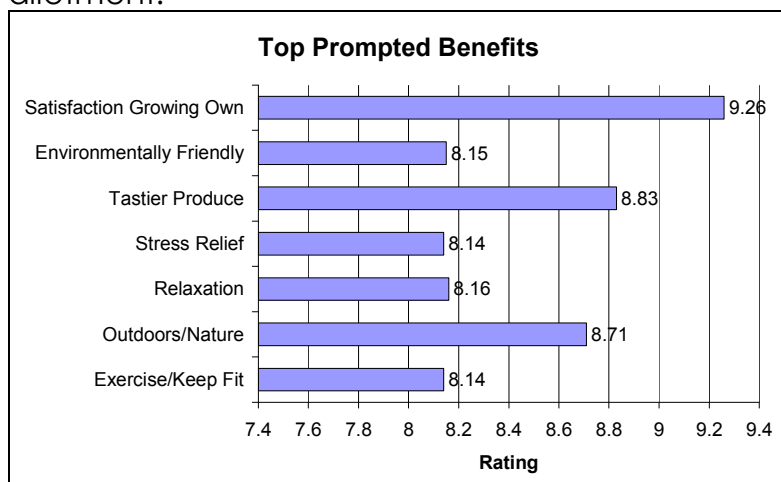
The evidence shows the benefits range from food production to exercise and keeping fit, to stress recovery, therapy for disabled or disadvantaged groups, to environmental impact from less transport and packaging. All of these are important and bring huge value to all sorts of people from all sorts of backgrounds.

My research tried to understand which were the most important motivations and benefits which made people take up allotments and get out there across the seasons.

When asked to mention the top 3 reasons which spontaneously came to mind for taking up a plot in the first place the number one reason was as you might expect “fresh/better veg”.

When people first take up an allotment “socialising” is a motivation but a relatively small one (9%). However, once people have had a go for a while the single biggest additional benefit by far is socialising and making friends. Chart 2 shows that 41% of mentions for additional benefits were for this reason. A number of sites (including Windsor, I understand!) include social facilities such as bars and community halls where people can exchange “prize vegetable stories”, organise meetings and so on.

The following chart shows peoples' views on what they most get out of having an allotment.



The sheer satisfaction of "Growing your Own" came out top. Just being outside/close to nature also came out higher and being environmentally friendly got a relatively high score too. Perhaps surprising were the particularly low scores for "something to do with the family" at 4.84 and for wildlife interest at 6.43, especially given some of the discussions I have had during my research process. Research indicated that more families were getting involved and that people were definitely interested in wildlife in these often urban allotment sites.

So, this is just a snippet of my results but I hope it gives you a flavour of why people take up allotments.

Have fun on your allotments whatever your reason!

## **John Wheelhouse**

PS Thanks to those members of WAHGA who sent responses to my survey.

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### **WHAT'S GOING ON ?**

#### **SOME OF THE STARS OF YOUR COMMITTEE BRING US UP TO DATE**

### **John Filmer, Chairman & Purchasing**

The sale of potatoes has been moderately successful. There are still a few left in both Fairground and Maidenhead Road trading sheds. We would very much like to sell out so come and see us.

The seeds are in stock and selling well. We now have a new additional supplier offering a greater variety. Please tell us if there are cultivars you would like to see in stock so that we may consider them. We are currently carrying out survey of the seeds hopefully to improve the supply next season.

Further work is in hand to improve the facilities at the trading sheds. This includes a supply of electricity at Clewer Fuel. It is to be hoped this facility will help to improve their trading position.

Again I ask if you have any spare time particularly on Sunday morning your help at the sheds will be much appreciated.

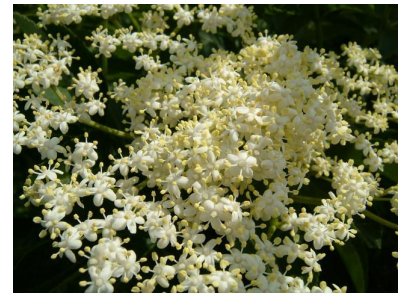
John

## **Don Hartridge, Allotment Secretary**

At last the weather has improved and the growing season is under way. The majority of allotment holders have made a good start and the appearance of most sites is very good. We now have 100% occupation on Bolton Road, Brook Street, Municipal, Spital and Vansittart Road. Regular enquiries for allotments have resulted in vacant plots on the remaining sites diminishing. This is very encouraging, but it does place additional responsibilities on tenants to ensure that their plots are properly tended and kept in good order. On some sites we now have waiting lists and therefore if tenants are unable to devote the necessary time, it would be appreciated if they will consider giving up their plots to those waiting. Obviously if you have a problem of a temporary nature we will try to assist, if it is possible to do so.

Now is the time to organise your plots for the best allotment competition which will be judged in June, and your crops for entry in our annual show in August. Show schedules are available in the trading sheds and expert advice from Ted Bailey is available on our web site to help you grow prize winning crops. Do not worry if you have not shown before as there are plenty of novice classes. Take the plunge and enjoy the fun.

**Don**



### **JEMMA'S RECIPES**

**Elderberry Flower Fritters – These are lovely to eat and easy to make!**

**A great conversation piece if nothing else!**

#### **Ingredients:**

1 egg, separated

50g flour

100ml Milk

5 heads Elderflowers, *the elderflowers should ideally be picked in the morning after the sun has warmed them. Shake the flowers carefully to remove small insects, but don't wash them.*

#### **Method**

1. Whisk the egg yolk, flour and milk together until smooth and set aside for 20 minutes.
2. Whisk the egg white to soft peaks and gently fold into the batter, keeping the mixture as light as possible.
3. Heat the oil in a deep fat fryer to 180C.
4. Using a pair of kitchen scissors, snip the elderflowers into individual florets, leaving on as much stem as possible.
5. Dip the florets into the batter and drop into the hot oil. Cook for 1–2 minutes, until golden brown. Remove and drain on kitchen paper. This is really nice served with yoghurt (Greek if possible), or cream and honey