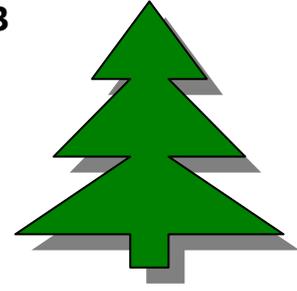


## WAHGA NEWSLETTER WINTER 2013



**Welcome. As another year draws to a close we look forward to next year and a new growing season. Hopefully we'll have a mild winter this time and we can all be back out "on the plot" soon, sowing, weeding and admiring our crops. Please contact me if you have suggestions or copy for future editions. Good gardening, Happy Christmas and all the best for 2014!**

*David Hickman, Editor*

### **WINTER OPENING TIMES - TRADING SHEDS**

During December and January the Maidenhead Road trading shed be will open during the following times: Thursdays: 9 to 11am; Sundays: 9am to 12 noon. Fairground opening times are unchanged. For Christmas and New Year the trading sheds will be closed on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>, reopening on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Help required – without volunteers the trading sheds would close!**

If you can spare some time to help in either of the trading sheds we would be very grateful. Currently at Maidenhead Road we have four volunteers who work every week either on both opening days or just one, only having time off occasionally. If we had more people to help (even for a day a month) it would spread the load and we could organise the cover on a rota basis. Fairground shed would also welcome more volunteers on its rota. It's a great chance to meet other allotment holders and home gardeners, have a chat and feel pride in giving something to the association. Contact Lesley Spence for more information: [membership@wahga.org.uk](mailto:membership@wahga.org.uk) 01753 831863.

### **PURCHASING NEWS**

The seed potato order forms are available in the trading sheds or from the web site. All varieties are £1.10 per kilo which you will find is considerably cheaper than the garden centres. In response to several requests we will have Foremost (early variety) again, delivery expected as usual in early February. We had limited supplies of the blight resistant variety Sarpo Mira this year. These seem to have been successful and we have nearly sold out of next year's supply. I planted a couple of rows and was pleased with the results, they make good mashed, roast baked or chipped potatoes. Difficult to say if they were blight resistant as unlike 2012 the blight was pretty late arriving this year.

Talking of blight resistance, my Fantasio and Lizzano tomatoes produced bumper crops this year, although the Fantasio did succumb to late blight. We will be stocking the seed again in 2014. Alert readers will remember I recommended Moonlight runner beans this year. Again practising what I preach, I grew some in a "wigwam" and found them to be very tender. Most of the seeds we stocked this year came from Dobies and we will be continuing that practice.

The UK peat harvest in 2012 was poor and suppliers had to import peat for potting composts from Canada and other foreign parts. Some of the compost quality was poor, although the Humax Original was up to standard. Thankfully we are told that this year's harvest was good and we anticipate better quality next year. Sinclair are introducing a new range of composts which we are going to try. We are always willing to try

new products if they can be bought in bulk so that we can offer them at a discount to you. If you have any good ideas, please let us know. In view of our ageing memories it's best if you email [sheds@wahga.org.uk](mailto:sheds@wahga.org.uk), or pop a note in the trading shed suggestion box. **John Spence**

#### **ALLOTMENT SECRETARY'S REPORT**

As the current growing season ends we can reflect on a good year. There has been little blight and most tenants had good harvests. Now is the time to prepare for next year. By all means cover your plots to suppress weeds when you are not ready to use the ground, but remember now is the time to be digging your plot. Don't wait for the warm weather of April or May as you will never catch up.

The bonfire restriction has again proved successful and I would urge allotment tenants to be restrained during the periods that bonfires are allowed. Not everyone enjoys bonfires and it is not pleasant to go home reeking of smoke.

On some sites we have problems with dumping. There should be no dumping on any site and no tenant should dispose of any material, weeds etc. anywhere other than on the plot for which he or she has paid the rent. When piles of rubbish appear it is usually the same volunteers who end up filling the expensive skip to get rid of it. Please help us by taking your own rubbish home and challenge anyone you see dumping rubbish on the site.

We have recently experienced a number of thefts from the Association's containers. These incidents were clearly planned as the perpetrators knew the layout of our sites. If you see people on your site that you do not recognize, please politely ask what they are doing. It may just prevent similar problems occurring in the future.

Finally, if you are intending to give up your plot for whatever reason, please advise us as soon as possible so that we may prepare the plot for a new tenant. We currently have a number of empty plots, weed covered, which we are unable to treat as our systemic weed killer is not effective during the winter months.

**Don Hartridge**

#### **EDWARD (TED) BAILEY AND ERIC GRANT**

Sadly, both Ted Bailey and Eric Grant have passed away recently. Ted was a much liked and respected President and past Chairman of the Association. A full tribute to him will appear in our next edition.

Frank Hovell writes: Eric Grant was a well respected Home Garden member of the Committee for some thirty years. Quite early after joining the Committee, Eric offered to be the Association's representative on the Slough Federation of Allotment Societies which gave us a lot of contact with events in Slough and south Buckinghamshire. Eric trained as a horticulturalist at Kew Gardens and went on to work in the Parks Department of Slough Council. Eric lived in Windsor with his family and took a great interest in the Association's activities, including judging at local annual shows (including WAHGA). Eric was generous with his time and he was only too pleased to offer advice on the cultivation of plants.

Sadly his health deteriorated in later years and he eventually moved to a care home in Maidenhead where he passed away and his funeral was at Slough Crematorium on 6th November 2013.

**WAHGA is Windsor Allotments and Home Gardens Association Ltd.**

**[Visit our website: www.wahga.org.uk](http://www.wahga.org.uk)**