

Windsor Allotments & Home Gardens Association NEWSLETTER

Our new website is now up and running! Find us at
www.wahga.org.uk

HOT NEWS!

CHANGE OF DATE OF SHOW & FETE

Please note that we have changed our Annual Show & Fete from 27 August 2005 to 20 August 2005. After much discussion we decided to change the date as growing dates have become earlier in recent years and many growers have experienced earlier maturity results. The Show Schedule is now being prepared and will be available in early 2005.

DO YOU OR A FRIEND WANT AN ALLOTMENT?

Allotments are available at most sites within Windsor – please call in person to either of the Trading Sheds, adjacent to 185 Maidenhead Road or 213 St. Leonard's Road, during the trading hours (see below for times). Please allow for at least 30 minutes for us to fully discuss matters with you – so come early!

MONTHLY SUNDAY LUNCHES

These lunches have become popular and Jane Rigg will be extremely grateful for help on the day with serving and washing up etc. 2005 dates are being announced on the bar notice board and she will put you on a rota if you are interested - free lunch I hear!

The President

Our President has always been appointed from members of your committee, since the war we have only had three presidents, namely Jim Bastow and Tom and Dick Smith. Dick Smith has decided to resign at the January meeting and your committee has decided unanimously that Edward Bailey – known to all as “Ted”, should become President thereafter. Ted has for many years been in charge of the Maidenhead Road Trading depot and has worked industriously to refurbish the premises. Recently he refitted new doors at St. Leonard's Road and at Maidenhead Road Depots! Additionally, he and the Purchasing Officer, John Filmer, purchase our vegetable seeds in bulk and re-package them. They are now on sale at considerably lower than our usual prices. Ted, a member of the RHS, has a great depth of gardening and showing knowledge and is renowned for his dahlias. At the Annual General Ted will be proposed by your committee as our new President.

Outings and Visits

We are pleased to announce that Karin Lohr has agreed to organise our outings next year and brief details are set out below:

Wisley Visit

Tuesday 7th June 2005 – Our usual visit to Wisley. As we are affiliates to the Royal Horticultural Society, we are permitted to arrange the visit of a coach to the gardens once a year. The cost of the meeting is dependant of the amount charged for the coach, last year in the region of £6.00 each. Full details will be in the spring newsletter.

The gardens are always delightful to see and lunch tea is available in the restaurant. Plants are available for purchase and the shop is always a delight to the ladies! BOOK EARLY WITH KARIN LOHR ON 01753 840651 WITH A DEPOSIT OF £5.00 PER PERSON.

Outings & Visits Continued...

Highclere Castle Visit

Tuesday 5th July 2005 – a trip to Highclere Castle near Newbury. We last visited Highclere Castle many years ago, unfortunately fitting it into a morning visit. Some of us visited the house without the garden and two did not leave the restaurant. A future visit is well worthwhile.

Highclere is a great Victorian mansion designed by Sir Charles Barry, who designed the Houses of Parliament. Lord Carnarvon owns the house and it was the 5th Earl who found the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922. The 5th earl died in 1923 and Howard Carter the professional Egyptologist completed the tomb clearance. Some of the exhibitions have been relocated in the cellars and will be viewed by visitors at the end of the castle tour.

BOOK YOUR SEATS NOW WITH KARIN LOHR - TOGETHER WITH A £5.00 DEPOSIT FOR EACH PERSON

Royal Military School of Music Visit

Wednesday 20th July 2005 - A visit to the Royal Military School of music at Twickenham. Last year our seats were somewhat remote from the stage but this year we have regained our normal seats in Block B nearer the front! We will leave Gardeners Hall at 5:30pm, which will give us enough time to have tea or a drink before the start of the music. The evening is said to be, "*Appealing to young and old, enjoy an exhilarating night, ending with a firework extravaganza!*"

THIS VISIT ALWAYS GETS BOOKED QUICKLY, SO PLEASE BOOK EARLY WITH A £5.00 DEPOSIT TO DICK SMITH, 37 YORK ROAD, WINDSOR, SL4 3DA OR PHONE HIM ON 01753 - 863565

"Colour all the year round in the garden"

Royal Horticultural Society VisitorTalk at Gardeners Hall

Wednesday 16th March 2005 - The Royal Horticultural Society have agreed to part sponsor a visit from Kate Garton, a keen gardener and naturalist since childhood. Kate studied at Brackenhurst and Pershore Colleges of Horticulture, Harlow Carr Botanic Garden in Harrogate and at the University of York. She is a consultant to several large estate gardens and has published a number of books.

THE TALK WILL START AT 7:30PM.

This talk will be of interest to both allotment holder and home gardeners and we will be pleased to see all of you there

The cost to RHS members (Including us) will be £3.00 and non-members will be £4.00.

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM DICK SMITH, MRS. TRISH WELLER OR ANY OTHER MEMBER OF YOUR COMMITTEE.

UPDATE - CHANGE IN THE STATUS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Following on from the EGM in September, which gave members' approval for the progressing of the legal status change to being a Limited Company, your Committee has forwarded the next stage of application to the National Association of Leisure Gardens Ltd., who are advising us. A further update will be given at the AGM on 13 January and in the Spring Newsletter.

Logo Competition

COME ON BUDDING ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS!

The association is currently updating its administration systems and promotional material. In line with these improvements, we would like a logo to accompany these.

We invite the members to come up with a design for a logo.

The prize is a set of gardening tools.

The closing date is Friday 7th January 2005.



Please send you entries to TRISH WELLER AT 9 DYSON CLOSE, WINDSOR, SL4 3LZ

Or e-mail her at dysonwellers@aol.com

Or drop your ideas to the bar at Gardeners Hall marked for Trish's attention.

The winning design, we hope, will be announced at the Annual General Meeting on Thursday 13th January 2005.

Good Luck to all!!

Message from your allotment secretary

My departure for pastures new has been somewhat delayed until next year, so I shall be happy to continue my support and work for the association for the time being. The committee is in the process of setting up an IT database so my clerical work will be assimilated into the system.

The good work continues on the Bolton Road and Spital sites and they are now 95% let. Work should start soon on clearing some vacant plots on the Clewer Park site and also the proposed re-vamping of the west end of the Maidenhead Road site.



Annual Allotment Competition

This year's winner was *Jim Bartlett* from the Spital site, in second place was *John Hughes* from Bolton Road and in third place *Bob Grindley* also from Spital. The standard continues to improve and the other plots that were considered were:

Bolton Road – *Mark Busby, Joe Da Cunha, Don Hartridge, Maurice Jones and Tom Mawer.*

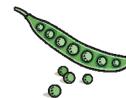
Brook Street – *Dr. Briscoe*

The Glebe – *Henry Bartlett & Harold Mitchell.*

Maidenhead Road – *Barry Pateman.*

Municipal – *Bob Gibbs.*

Spital – *Neil Lancaster.*



Your plot, as well as being neat and tidy, should contain some fruit bushes and flowers though vegetables should pre-dominate.

Bonfires



Please consider surrounding houses when lighting a bonfire. If you cannot compost green waste, then take it to the excellent recycling depot at Maidenhead and let the council deal with it. A bonfire should mostly contain dry material and in practice would burn through in 20-30 minutes. It should not be banked up with green material in the vain hope it will burn through the night, as our rules state that fires should not be left unattended.

Jeff Ayres

A personal view on how to grow big onions - by Ted Bailey

As soon as the last onion is lifted and the onion beds are cleared and dead leaves and debris cleared, the soil is turned over to a depth of 12 – 15 inches by double digging.

When the beds are completely turned over, I sterilise all my trench soil with Armillatox at the recommended rate of one part Armillatox to 100 parts water mixture 1-100. I also add Armillatox to my sprayer and clean down all my poly tunnel covers and paths etc. The reason being Armillatox cleans the cover and brings it up like new and kills all the fungi spores.

The beds are then left until December when a soil sample is taken and sent to be analysed. If manure is needed I prefer to use Groworganic for putting humus back in the soil. It's N.P.K is approx 5.8% NITROGEN, 3.5% PHOSPHATE, 3% POTASH and 6.8%pH.

I have found I get better results when using Irish moss peat (course structure) rather than using manure. The pH is adjusted to 6.5 using ground limestone. All nutrients from the soil analysed, is applied late January to early February and forked into the top 6 inches of soil.

Seed sowing

The night before onion seed is sown, the seed is soaked in a saucer using ordinary Maxicrop diluted as necessary to a 1:1000 dilution. Seed trays are filled and soaked with Maxicrop. Next day being the 4th December, I sown my seed using Shamrock seed and modular compost. Onion seed is sown approximately 1 inch apart and then covered with 1/8th inches of peat and sand mixture (50/50). I then cover the seed with a plastic top and place in a propagator set at 65F.

I prick out at the crook stage just before the second leaf appears and pot into 3inch square pots using the Shamrock seed and modular compost (high nutrient).

All lights are put on 24 hours a day for the first 6 weeks growth. The lights are cut down to 12 hours a day for the next 2-3 weeks before being cut off completely which, last year took me to the middle of February. Once the plants are in 3-inch pots and are filled with roots, they are potted up into 5-inch square pots using Shamrock coarse potting compost. To each 80-litre bag I add:

- 1 shovel full of coarse Perlite
- 1 shovel full of coarse grit
- 4 ounces of enmag of Vitax 0.4

All mixed in a pail and thoroughly through the peat. The peat is spread out on a large board and two 5ml spoons of Armillatox is added to two gallons of water and soaked through the compost. Leave for 3 days before potting into 5-inch square pots (this is the final potting). At every watering I use half strength Maxicrop which stimulates root growth and gives you a healthy plant.

Before planting, lay a trickle drip porous pipe 12 inches apart up the beds. I then make holes by sinking 5-inch square pots in the bed every 22-24 inches, a quarter inch below the soil surface. Once the beds have all the 5-inch pots in place I cover with black and white polythene white side up. I next feel for empty pots and cut across to corner tucking the flaps inside. Remove empty pots one at a time and bring the onion plants from the growing chamber which are in the same size pots and transfer to the bed, waging each onion plant with one pint of water and keep the beds moist during the growing season. This means watering once a week or once a fortnight depending on the drainage of your soil and the weather. If you find watering problem, you won't be on your own. Possibly a wet dry thermometer might be an advantage, but do feel under the polythene to make sure there is an even moisture content there. Over watering does more damage than good and can lead to botrytis later on and split the onions.

Pest Control

The biggest problem is normally Thrips or red spider mite. I have tried many different types of control. The best is probably Malathion which should be used before any sight of white silvery streaks running up and down the leaf appear especially in the centre leaf of new growth using the finest nozzle spray available and the correct dose of Malathion last thing at night. If under lights put them off for 24 hours. Spray onions bulbs with Benlate of Rovrol fungicide to keep the Botrytis at bay in damp weather. Keep as much ventilation as possible at all times.

Summary

A good strong root is needed to grow heavy onions. Your soil structure must be open, consisting of coarse grit to give good root run and drainage.

My own beds are raised and made of concrete blocks 3 feet high and 3 feet wide, which makes them easy to work. The top 10 inches are filled with broken bricks and topped with pea gravel, which give me perfect drainage.

Whatever potting compost you use, it is important that it is fresh, if you are unlucky enough to buy compost, which is past its sell by date, then you blame yourself when of course it is not really your fault. If in doubt with your compost, make your own with Chempak. Sometimes in the growing season you may wish to feed your plants, Chempak has all the required soluble feeds you will need for all seasons.

The Trading Sheds

OPENING TIMES:

Maidenhead Road – Thursday mornings 8:00am to 11:00am

Sunday mornings 8:00am to 12noon

St. Leonard's Road – Thursday afternoons 2:30pm to 3:30pm

Saturday afternoons (Feb to end of May) 2:30pm to 3:30pm

Sunday mornings 10:15am to 12:15pm

St. Andrews Avenue – Sunday mornings 11:00am to 12noon

Our dedicated purchasing team, John Filmer and Ted Bailey have worked extensively to secure the items on sale at competitive prices. Recently, the new regulations regarding harmful chemicals in certain horticultural products and decisions by manufacturers to discontinue favourite brands have made the purchasing by John and Ted much difficult.

We have been very pleased with the supply condition of seed potatoes, vegetable seeds and potting composts. John and Ted (with others) have spent time over the past two years becoming a packing unit bringing quality vegetable seeds at extremely inexpensive prices. You are recommended to call in one of trading sheds before going to your nearest garden centre as we are sure we can be quite competitive.

Membership fees for 2004 - 2005

We regret that due to increased costs the membership fee for 2004/2005 will be **£4.00** per person.

The advantage card discount is no longer available with your membership.

You have the option of renewing you membership, if you have not already done so at one of the trading sheds during the above times or by post to Barbara Hovell, 35 Ruddlesway, Windsor, SL4 5SF

To: Barbara Hovell, 35 Ruddlesway, Windsor, SL4 5SF

Please renew my 2004/2005 membership of the association.

I enclose my cheque for £4.00. Together with a stamped addressed envelope.

PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHEQUE PAYABLE TO W.A.H.G.A.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:

MEMBERS NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

..... **POSTCODE:**.....

MY E-MAIL ADDRESS IS:.....

This e-mail address will not be disclosed to third parties but will be used for communicating with you.

Please note that this and future newsletters will be available to download from our website www.wahga.org.uk

