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**Bournemouth Federation
Allotment Competition 2020**

Now is the time of year when we start getting organised for the allotment competition and application forms, rules and guidelines will be issued at the next Federation meeting on 4th March. As you will be aware, we have now won the Best Allotment trophy for four years running, thanks to the way we keep our plots and the two sites overall, so we shall be asking each tenant to do their bit again this year.



In addition, we'd love to have a bumper crop of individual entries this year. All size plots are eligible and if you have two half plots, you can enter both together or just one. Entering is a great incentive to get your plot up together and your crops beautifully labelled. Anyone can enter from the newest to the oldest tenant and there is no entry fee. Indeed, first, second and third prizewinners on each site are presented with a cup, a certificate and a voucher to use in the allotment shop. There is also a shield for the best newcomer, judged by our site team with no entry required. Results are usually published in the summer edition of the newsletter and the Awards Evening is in October.

This may be the last year when the competition will be supported by the council and we have yet to see if BCP Council will continue the tradition in 2021. So, how about having a go? You don't need to be an expert gardener to enter.

Vegetables are divided into three groups and there is a fourth group for fruit. You can grow any number from each group but to gain the best scores, five from each group are needed.

Entry forms etc. will be available in the Community Area or you can ask anyone on the committee for a form. First judging will be towards the end of May and second judging in early July, exact weeks to be announced.

Please call this number for emergencies or enquiries

07547 198289



Find us on social media :

beas.secretary@outlook.com

www.bournemoutheastallotmentsociety.co.uk

www.facebook.com/lingdaleplots

Twitter: @lingdaleplots

News from the last Federation Committee meeting held in October 2019

Three key pieces of news were as follows:

Firstly, the agreement for Poole and Christchurch sites to be invited to send representatives to the March meeting. The sites in both areas are considering self-management and it was thought that this would give them a taste of some of the issues encountered and a chance to ask questions of the Bournemouth sites who are long-established as self-managed sites.

Secondly, the battle with the legal department has been won and the new leases are again based on the Allotments Act 1908 (not the Agricultural Act as they were trying to insist) and the sites will be referred to as statutory sites. This is the main hurdle out of the way and we are now waiting for a BCP surveyor to visit the site to make an inventory and the final version of the lease to be received for checking.

Thirdly, our Parks Team are expecting to be amalgamated with Poole in the spring (so shortly) and a way will need to be found to even out the rents across the area as, currently Poole, being managed by the council, pay far more than us.

Finally, you might be interested to know that the BEAS waiting list is more than double that of Longbarrow, who have the second longest waiting list.

Shop News

Potatoes

We still have some seed potatoes awaiting collection, please remember to collect your order as soon as possible if you have not done so already. While some people don't bother, it is recommended that you lay them out to "chit" (start growing shoots) at home before planting in the spring. Used egg cartons, available to take from the shop, are ideal for this.

Seed potatoes are always at risk of frost damage in the shop during the really cold spells we often encounter at this time of year – hence the urgent need to collect them.

Don't forget that we also have in the shop a specialist fertilizer for potatoes, known as "Supervegitor". Many of us use this when planting seed potatoes to enhance the growth of the tubers.

This year we have split some bags of potatoes and you can buy 500gm bags of several varieties in order to fill a small space on your plot or try a small quantity of something new.

Seeds

We have received our seed order for the spring and these are also available.

If, when your seeds have germinated and you have planted out what you need, you still have some left, please donate any spares to the shop for us to sell, suitably labelled so that we know what they are ...share the love of growing.

HELP

We can always do with more help in the shop. At the moment the shop only opens because a small number of people devote a large amount of their time to man it. If you think that you could help, please contact Peter Durrant the Assistant Shop Manager, either by email to

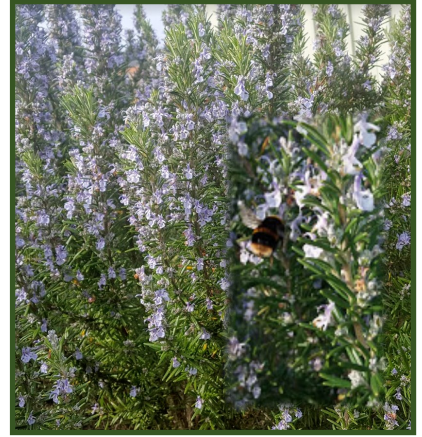
BEAS.asstshopmanager@outlook.com or Peter Clarke through the allotment mobile no. 07547198289.

Even a few sessions a year would make all the difference and it is a really good way of getting to know your fellow allotmenters. We would hate to have to reduce our opening hours.

Thank you in anticipation.

Useful Herbs for your plot.

There are so many benefits to growing herbs on your allotment. Their fragrance attracts bees and pollinators. They are mostly easy to grow. Many are originally Mediterranean so they resist drought, yet some are also hardy so will provide freshness and taste to winter dishes. The same chemicals which make them tasty also have many health benefits. Many have the botanical name officinalis after them which means that they were kept in the traditional apothecary's office or storeroom and were therefore used officially as a medicinal plant...And they look good on your plot.



Here are a few favourites:

These are all perennial plants so you don't even have to sow them each year.



- **Rosemary**— easy to grow, attractive plant which bees love and which needs very little attention. Reputed to be for 'remembrance' and folklore claims it helps memory loss, but also digestion.
- **Sage** - easy to grow, needs very little attention, has flowers which insects love. There are variegated varieties which are very attractive. The botanical name is *Salvia* meaning 'to save' (like salvation) and it is claimed to have anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties. Used as a mouthwash for gums and of course for sage and onion stuffing.

- **Mint** - it likes plenty of water and is best planted in a large sunken pot to control the roots. Claimed to be good for digestion (after dinner mints?) but also found in many remedies for colds, headaches and oral health. It adds a freshness to many salads and dishes.
- **Comfrey** - not so much for the kitchen but very useful on the plot and for bees. It is often used as a compost activator, just add some leaves to the compost heap. Or you can put leaves in a bucket of water for a few weeks and then use the liquid as a natural fertilizer, especially for tomatoes. A common name is knitbone and the botanical name is *Symphytum* which comes from the latin 'to unite' (like symphony) as it is reputed to have healing properties for injuries and bruises. Make a poultice from the root or the leaves and use it on strains and bruises—we still recommend medical attention for broken bones.

Health and well-being on the allotment

The health benefits of working your allotment are undisputed. We all enjoy the birdsong and the connection with nature, the physical exercise and the chance to explore our creativity. An hour on the plot is a great way to clear your head, in fact, some doctors even prescribe gardening for low mood or depression. Of course the food that we grow has much more health giving benefits than industrially produced vegetables. Here are a few reminders to make sure that you continue to maintain good health and well being on your plot:

Make sure that you have an up to date Tetanus vaccination, although rare it can be very serious.

Care for your back—use good lifting techniques, bending at the hips and knees and not the back.

Protection when using tools—eye and ear protection and sturdy gloves and boots are essential especially when using tools such as strimmers. Expect flying debris even after clearing stones etc. from your paths.

Neat and tidy—Make sure your plot is clear of trip hazards, an upturned rake can do a lot of damage. Also broken bits of plastic or netting can be very harmful to wildlife.

Site news

SMALL SITE IMPROVEMENTS

SAY GOODBYE TO THOSE LONG WALKS WITH THE WHEELBARROW! Work has started (and may even be completed by the time you read this!) on creating a chippings bay and a seating area on the small site.

Chippings are already available on the larger site, but we have spotted the number of trips people were making with the wheelbarrow! The seating area will also be useful if you want to stop for a cuppa or exchange a few ideas with your fellow plotholders. So,



thanks, once again, to our volunteer Committee Members, Dave, John, Hilary and Peter for their hard work.

We don't want to discourage you from coming on to the main site though. The **BIG GREEN SHED** is always available for access to toilets, making use of the tea/coffee making facilities in the community area and of course for purchasing your seeds, potatoes, compost and anything else you may need in the shop.

We are also looking into making a second **GREEN BIN** available on the small site too. Much depends on whether the refuse collectors can gain access and remove the bin easily – we'll keep you posted. These bins cost us £143 each which is paid for by additional fund raising. As a reminder, it is important that these are used as they should be and not for anything that you can compost on your plot or for root balls. All earth should be removed from plant material that is being put in the bin. We know the bins fill up quickly but if everyone makes sure they only use them for green waste that is hard to compost (like sweetcorn stalks for example) more people

will be able to benefit. It has been much appreciated by those who do not have transport and find it difficult to remove green waste themselves.

We are able to make these improvements because of the fund raising we do throughout the year so **THANK YOU** to all of you who help and support us with that.



*You've all heard of the 'last post'....
Well, this is the first post of the
new chippings bay.*



WANTED

We would be grateful for volunteers to keep an eye on the new chippings and seating area on the small site. It needs to be kept tidy and the seating area weeded so that it remains a good facility for everyone.

And we want to remain the
BEST ALLOTMENT SITE IN BOURNEMOUTH
in 2020 – for the fifth year running!

Anyone willing to help should contact
Linda Taylor on 07881901729 or
email Beas.chair@outlook.com

Site reminders

Water Tanks

Please clean out any water tanks that you use before the water is switched on again for the spring. The date that the water is switched on is weather dependent and the site manager may well delay it this year to give plotholders a chance to find a dry day to clean the tanks! Clean tanks help to prevent the spread of pests and diseases.

Bonfires

It is unlikely that you will have any thing dry enough to burn but bonfires are permitted until the end of May with the usual proviso to be aware of our neighbours. Please do not light a fire when the smoke will cause a nuisance, and do not leave it unattended.

Paths

Please make sure paths are not obstructed and along all boundaries, please remember to leave a 60cm (2 ft approx) strip clear of cultivation to permit access for maintenance of the boundary.

Vehicles on site

Because of the extremely wet weather that has been relentless, please avoid bringing vehicles on to the site. The paths are already damaged and vehicles make them even more rutted and difficult to mow.

Gate Padlocks

The padlocks on all the site gates have been serviced and tested. However because of the frequent use we know that difficulties may still arise. Please do not use WD40 as this just aggravates the problem. Please call the allotment mobile number 07547 198289 for help.

Have you spotted a snowdrop yet?

One of the first signs that spring might be on its way are snowdrops. Their fresh green leaves and pretty, bright white flowers are one of my favourites and cheer me up when the weather is still a bit cold and gloomy.

I see them as a bit of hope that the winter months are coming to an end, but it is said that if you bring them indoors they can make your milk sour and eggs spoil. If that's all the ill-fortune you get, then not too bad! Bees love snowdrops – they are a good source of nectar early in the year when other flowers are not blooming – so a good thing to grow on the allotment.

Snowdrops are easy to grow so why not have a go:

Galanthus Nivalis is the most common species because it self-seeds and will give an impressive display.

Buy pots of snowdrops when they have finished flowering but still have green leaves intact – this could be any time between January and March.

Plant the clumps in partial shade about 4 inches deep and 6 inches apart.

The foliage will die back and feed the bulbs for next year's display

As years go by you can lift and divide the clumps and you'll end up with a beautiful carpet of white every spring.

If you fancy a walk in the winter sun (and before the growing season takes you over!) then the best snowdrops locally (over 6 million of them!) can be found at Kingston Lacey. A bit late for this year? Then keep it in mind for the future and see what you can expect at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/kingston-lacey/features/snowdrops-at-kingston-lacey>



New Members' Corner

Growing calendar



One of the most important things about gardening (or life in general!) is planning and thinking ahead.

There are always plenty of jobs to do around the plots but some months are busier than others. In months that are not so busy with planting or harvesting there is pruning, soil enriching and preparation.

When planning what to grow, the main rule is to plant what you want to eat. As with all gardening jobs, little and often is the best advice. If you do successional sowings of your crops they will be ready at different times so that you don't have a glut of a crop. All experienced allotmenters are used to weeks of meals of courgettes disguised in as many ways as possible.

The VERY approximate guidelines in this growing calendar are of course dependent on weather conditions but give an idea of a plan that you may like to adapt to your own tastes.

January	Plant radishes, leeks
February	Plant broad beans, early peas Chit potatoes Sow indoors—tomatoes, cucumber, squash, pumpkin, aubergine, courgette
March	Plant - potatoes and more of the above crops (for successional sowing), and Roots—carrots, beetroot, onions, shallots, parsnips Brassicas- leeks, cabbage, calabrese, spinach, lettuce, celery, turnips, chard, Khol rabi, celeriac
April	Plant— more of the above and French beans, swedes, Brussel sprouts, endives, winter cabbage, chard, runner beans, marrows, courgettes, broccoli, cauliflower, sweetcorn
May	Plant—more of the above and chicory, kale, squash, pumpkins, cucumber, aubergine
June	Harvest soft fruit
July	Harvest
August	Plant—Early onions, shallots (some varieties can also be planted in Spring)
September	Harvest, store and preserve
October	Harvest, store and preserve
November	Plant broad beans Clear, weed, mulch, and compost
December	Clear, weed, mulch, and compost Plan

Do you need a shed or a water butt?

If so there are some second hand items available - please ask in the shop

Annual BEAS Calendar

Useful dates for your diary

- Saturday 18th July – Open Morning
- National allotment week 10th—16th August
- Saturday 28th November – AGM
- Saturday 5th December – Christmas Event



Love your Allotment, Love your Food

Let's Carry On Cooking

The eagle eyed amongst you may have noticed the book review of our Cook Book in the winter edition of the Allotment and Leisure Magazine – how pleased were we! For those of you who have not had a chance to get your copy yet we have included one of the recipes to whet your appetite.



A favourite for those who love the first tender rhubarb stalks that you should be able to pick soon.

RHUBARB AND ORANGE CAKE from Brian Miller Plot 61D

Brian told us this is officially a cake, but he eats it as a pudding with a bit of cream.

INGREDIENTS

400g/14oz rhubarb thickly sliced – I use fresh thin fruit from the allotment
 280g/10oz golden caster sugar
 225g/8oz softened unsalted butter
 1 orange, finely grated zest and juice
 225g/8oz self-raising flour
 1tsp baking powder
 100g/3oz ground almonds and a small handful of flaked almonds
 3 medium eggs

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven at gas mark 4/180C.
 Tip the rhubarb into a bowl and sprinkle over 50g of the sugar. Stir so the rhubarb is covered then set aside for 30 minutes to draw out some of the juices.
 Tip remaining sugar, butter, orange zest and juice into a large bowl and beat well until blended.
 Add the flour, ground almonds, baking powder and eggs, then beat again until smooth. Fold in the rhubarb and any juices.
 Spoon into a 23cm/9" loose bottomed round cake tin, lined with baking parchment and sprinkle with the flaked almonds.
 Bake in the centre of the oven for 1hr – 1hr 15mins until risen.
 Leave in the tin for 15 minutes before removing and cooling completely on a wire rack.
 Dust with a little icing sugar before serving with cream



So don't forget, if you are looking for a gift for friends or family our cook book is a good option – and lets them know the pleasures of having an allotment.

**AVAILABLE FROM THE SHOP NOW
 £7 for members (RRP £8.95)**



No dig method



In Spring if you have started the no dig method you will have covered the soil with cardboard, paper and compost and by now your bed should be covered in friable mulched soil. You can start to sow seeds indoors but do not start to plant out too early. It is better to wait until the ground is warmer as plants will germinate better and soon catch up.

Weeds

Keep an eye on your no dig beds and keep pulling out any weeds that appear. With persistence, even weeds like bindweed or horsetail can be manageable. It should be easy to pull weeds out as the surface compost is not compacted.

Access

It is important to avoid walking on your no dig beds to prevent soil compaction. Keep your beds to a width so that you can reach the centre without stepping on them. If you do need to walk on the bed for access it is better to use a plank to minimise compacting the soil.

Why does the no dig method work?

Weeds seeds that are under the soil are brought to the surface when you dig. This gives them light and they are more likely to germinate.. By covering the soil with mulch, the weeds will be suppressed so that only the seedlings and plants that you sow will grow in the top layer of the soil. This will also be rich soil as the mulch will form a rich compost by the time you are ready to sow. Of course seeds from weeds can be blown in but they should be very easy to pull out.

Undisturbed soil is also beneficial for wildlife. Frogs can find places to hide and from there they will set to work catching slugs on your plot. A small wildlife “pond” somewhere on your plot can also encourage wildlife, even an upturned lid will do. Earthworms also benefit as they are not dug up to the surface where birds can get them.

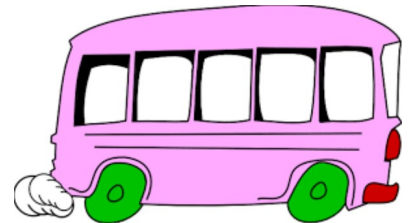
Consider joining the Committee

We have been pleased to welcome Annette Hawsworth onto the committee. She has agreed to be the Assistant Secretary and has started learning what the secretarial role is all about. We would love to hear from any member who might consider joining the committee. No specific skills are needed because we can use any experience or skills. We have had early warning that we shall be losing at least two members at the end of this year and the society won't run itself! Please think about whether you could help in this way.

Trips and visits

Over the past couple of years we have made use of our RHS membership to organise a discounted group visit to RHS Wisley Gardens. As we have now visited these gardens in different seasons (Spring and Autumn) we are considering a trip to a flower show this year instead. The entry would be discounted but is still higher than our previous trips and of course there would be the cost of the coach.

We would be interested to hear from members if they are interested as this will



help us to get an idea of numbers to decide whether it would be viable. Please contact us through any of the usual methods (see contact details on the front page of this newsletter)