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On site as elsewhere—
Please remember to be
extremely vigilant
about COVID-19 pre-
cautions

**HANDS FACE
SPACE**

Please call this number for
emergencies or enquiries

07547 198289



The Optimism of Spring

It is very difficult to believe that we have been under some sort of restrictions for a year now – a whole growing season! We may have had a cold couple of weeks but I have spotted more than a few of you at the plots, checking things over and preparing for the spring. This is a favourite time of year for me, when I see the daffodils coming through with a promise of what is to come and, having just had my COVID jab, I am even more optimistic this year!



After watching David Attenborough's, our Perfect Planet, I have made a personal pledge to myself to do what I can to reduce my carbon footprint this year. It seems a big task that I, sitting in my cosy little house, can't do much about. However, collectively perhaps we could make a bit of a difference. The big message is *Reduce, Re-use* and *Re-cycle*, so what do we at BEAS already do?

As allotmenters we actively contribute to reducing air miles by growing our own and eating seasonally, although I think COVID has done its bit for us there too! Many of us still need to be converted to peat free compost, but that makes more of a difference than I had previously understood, and we have responded to requests by stocking it in the shop (see separate article).

We provide wood chippings which make an effective mulch and there is now a crate by the Big Green Shed to collect plastic plant pots for everyone to use. I think it will be a long time before we see the end of plastic pots but in the meantime we can use them, re-use them and use them again so they are on their last legs before we send them to landfill. Rotting down all of our garden waste and digging it back into the earth is near the top of the list too.

Continued on P2/.....

Find us on social media :

beas.secretary@outlook.com

www.bournemoutheastallotmentsociety.co.uk

www.facebook.com/lingdaleplots

Twitter: @lingdaleplots

...../continued from P1

On the *Re-use* front, we continue to be grateful for your donations of anything from tools to wellington boots to netting – anything you have finished with that is potentially useful to someone else. If you see anything on offer in the seating area, please help yourself and put a donation in the post box by the main gate.

I don't intend to become meat free or holiday free, but I intend to be more mindful of how the meat I purchase is farmed and how I get to my holiday destination (although holidays may be some way off!)

Hopefully over the next few editions of the Newsletter you will find useful ideas on how you can contribute to reducing the carbon footprint. However, let us know what your top tips are and we will include them too.

Remember the saying 'How do you eat an elephant'? One teaspoonful at a time! - so every little helps. Enjoy the spring and happy planting.

Linda

Linda Taylor
Chair, BEAS

Community

With easing of restrictions we are hopeful that we can start to become a bit more social again. We are already looking at options for coffee mornings, open day, competitions and raffles. These will be open to all members and associate members. Please look out for updates on the noticeboards or in emails.

Please see page 8 for details of our first competition! Treasure Hunt

A small group is planning to meet to organise these events, if you would like to help towards organisation of our social events please contact Linda, the chair: chair@outlook.com

Committee News



Our waiting list has been growing and growing in recent months and we now have 131 people who have requested a plot. While we are pleased to be so popular, it does mean that recent additions to the waiting list may have a long wait.

However, we did let a few vacant plots over the winter and we have just welcomed Simon & James (Plot 92D) and Emily (89B) who signed up this week.

This is a good time of the year to get started and all that digging is very therapeutic (so they say!) If you spot any of the new tenants, please say hello. With the current lack of community facilities it is a bit harder for them to get to know people and they may find a 'Buddy' useful – always good to have someone to answer that daft question or to get tips on what to get going with in the first 3 months!

We continue to update the COVID notices as required. As you know we follow the guidelines from the National Allotment Society which can be found at [Covid 19 Emergency Measures – The National Allotment Society – National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd \(nsalg.org.uk\)](https://www.nsalg.org.uk)

The Committee continues to meet via Zoom so the business of running the Society has carried as normally as possible. It has been difficult to get together with members this past year so we will continue to keep you updated via email or through the noticeboards.

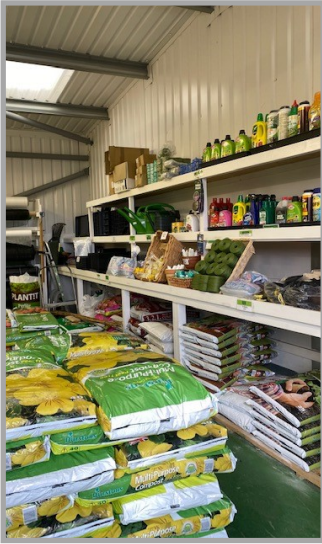
It is unfortunate that the Community facilities remain closed and the required cleaning regime for the toilets is a bit of an ask for our team of volunteers. However, we are hopeful, now that the Government's new 'road map' has been announced, that things will improve over coming months and we can eventually have a cup of tea together (takeaway of course!) in one or other of the seating areas.

David Taylor -Society Secretary

We were sad to hear that Julie Taylor of Plot 92D passed away last month after a long illness.

We wish to express our condolences to family and friends.

Shop News



The shop continues to provide a click and collect service.

We are hoping to be able to open the shop in at least a limited form as soon as possible. This may mean that only one person can enter at a time, or service will be from the main entrance only. Please look out for information on the notice board or emails.

With the beautiful sunshine finally showing her bright rays I have been thinking of the spring flowers which are just beginning to show their wonderful colours. (Just in case you weren't aware I love colour, my shed is the pink, green, and orange one).

Forward planning is important in the shop as in gardening generally, and soon it will be time to order the bulbs for planting

ready for next spring. So! are there any spring bulbs you would like to be able to buy from the shop? If so let me add it to the wish list and see what the most popular ones are, and we will see if we can get them for you.

Have a wonderful spring.

Anette—Shop Manager

There is cardboard available for members to use for no dig gardening in the heavy-duty storage seat, which is outside (near the seating area) please help yourself.

Donations always welcome.

Could you be persuaded by Peat Free?

Since the 1980's there have been arguments to find a peat free alternative to compost. There was concern about the loss of peatlands and the number of years it takes for the peat bogs to recover. Since then there has been more recognition of the carbon dioxide emissions released by damaging the peat bogs and the significance of peatland in the climate change debate.

This resulted in the UK Government setting targets (voluntary) for garden centres to only sell peat free by 2020 and that we should all be peat free by 2030. The first date has been well and truly missed. This has been blamed on the fact that the early alternatives offered were not seen as very effective so people were reluctant to change but happily that is now changing with good alternatives emerging into the market.

Recognising that even peat free has an effect on the environment, the Government created a task force of industry experts which resulted in the Responsible Sourcing of Growing Media Scheme.

This looks at the environmental and social impact of all growing media and scores them so that we can at least make an informed decision on what we buy.

Given the quantities of compost that are purchased each year it will be some time before there are enough suitable alternatives to meet the demand but significant developments are happening, and there is more choice than ever before.

If you haven't tried peat free compost, or have had a bad experience in the past, now could be a good time to try again and see what you think.

In response to a few requests, we have a stock of Peat Free Compost at £4.50 for approx 40Ltrs in the shop, alongside our normal Multi-Purpose Compost.

If you want to read more about peat free compost there is a longer article in the Allotment & Leisure Gardener Issue 1. The link to the magazine was circulated to all our members (on email) in February 2021.

The shop will re-open as soon as Covid –19 safety permits—please keep an eye on noticeboards

'ELF & SAFETY WHEN GARDENING

THE TOP SIX TYPES OF RISK

1. **TOOLS** - Dangers exist when using any type of equipment - even the most innocuous hand tool can cause serious injury – we all know the slapstick joke of treading on a garden rake.
2. **POISONOUS PLANTS, INSECTS & ANIMALS** – Some plants have sap or hairs that can cause skin blistering, burns, rashes or breathing difficulties, as do some caterpillars etc..

Foxes carry Weil's disease, internal and external parasites; fleas, ticks, parasitic worms etc. which are all transmittable to humans.



3. **TETANUS** – The bacterium can enter the body through cuts & grazes. Thorny plants, soil, and animal manure can carry the bacterium.
4. **AIRBORNE & SOIL BORNE** - micro-organisms, i.e. spores, fungi and bacteria (e.g. Listeria and E-coli) are naturally found in and around decomposing materials, animal manures and soil etc. These can be inhaled when turning compost etc. Those with asthma or bronchitis are most at risk.
5. **WEIL'S DISEASE (& Salmonella)** - transmitted by rats and foxes, and contracted from water or wet vegetation or manure contaminated with their urine.
6. **LEGIONELLA** – Two types of bacteria, one water borne, the most common, but also a soil/animal compost borne one. Present in ALL water courses but able to multiply in standing water between 20°C - 45°C It's very infectious.

HOW TO MINIMISE THE RISKS



Keep tools clean, and know how to use them – only use tools for what they are designed for, keep them away from the immediate work area and store them away properly

Sadly, due to Covid, do not share equipment.

Wear gloves when handling soil, compost or chemicals (and any plant you are not sure of!)



Fold over the top of compost bags to keep contamination out

Do not open a bag of compost/chemicals with your head right over it

Wear a **dust** mask (NOT a Covid mask) when turning over the compost heap/wood chippings or spreading it over the plot



Damp down potting compost and dry compost heaps before use

Shred prunings in open, ventilated areas

Vermin proof your compost bins and avoid putting cooked food on the heap

Keep your tetanus jabs up to date.

Wash any fruit or vegetables well before eating (but not using water from the water butts!)



Always wash your hands in clean water (but again, not from the water butts!) after gardening, particularly before eating

Keep hand gel and an up-to-date first aid kit in your shed.

Urgent job for March

Clean out the water butts (& wear waterproof gloves when doing so) The water will be turned on again in April but only if they have all been cleaned.



DIG OR NO-DIG

Doesn't have to be one or the other!

No-Dig does not mean no work. Our rules state that for new plot holders, the whole plot must be cultivated in the first 3 months. This is generally regarded as good practice, and by commercial growers too. Perennial weeds are removed as far as possible, and the soil aerated, which assists oxygen and water getting to the roots. No-Dig relies on worms etc. doing this work. Does the plot have any before you start?

EVERY YEAR a 2-3 inch (50mm-75mm) layer of compost has to be put on the bed, usually in the autumn involving a large quantity to be imported into the site. At least 5 cubic metres of finished manure are needed for a full plot. Any animal manure or woodchips must be well rotted for at least a year, or it will actually take nutrients from the soil as it rots down. Big compost bins are therefore required.

As the beds remain in the same position, with permanent paths, most No-Diggers form raised beds, which may require some carpentry.

All this is a lot of work - whichever you choose requires a great deal of time and effort.

There do not appear to be many properly carried out trials into a direct comparison between the yields. Most 'data' appears to be a bit of hearsay, and slanted to whichever method the author favours. What I have found is that yields appear to be about 10% higher for the first 4-7 years (see below) for the majority of crops using No-Dig, but as much as 25% reduced yield for potatoes, other root crops and legumes.

However, what does appear to be consistent and no-one appears to know why, in 4-7 years No-Dig has very poor yields, and may not recover due to a reduction in fertility.

If you prefer No-Dig, using the raised bed system, with crop rotation every 4 years, and fully digging a bed each year for a crop of potatoes might be the answer!

Me? I favour green manure, to hold the nutrients over winter which adds fertility and water retention to the soil when it is dug in, in the spring. Still hard work! I plant everything in compost made from the plot and kitchen waste, but that is another story!!!

Andrew Dawson

SPRING TIPS

- * **March/April are the most important months for sowing most vegetable seeds, either under cover or outdoors.**
- * **Indoors** sow Aubergines, Beetroot, Cabbages, Cauliflower, Chillies and Tomatoes, should be started early, followed later by Broad, French & Runner Beans, Courgettes, Cucumber & Melons, Kale and Sweetcorn.
- * **Sow direct** early March Carrots, Lettuce Parsnips and Spinach, following on with Beetroot, Broad Beans, Carrots, Kale, & Lettuce.
- * First followed by second early and then main crop Potatoes should be planted, but they should be earthed up or covered with straw if there is a danger of frost which might cut down the stems.
- * Cherry & Plum trees should be pruned when the flowers and leaves start to appear.
- * Keep the grass on the paths and edges short.
- * Keep on top of weeds! Hoe off annual weeds before they seed everywhere and dig out perennials, roots and all!
- * **Plot inspections are re-starting in March.** don't forget – if you have difficulty working your plot through illness or other reasons please let the Site Manager know at beas.sitemanager@outlook.com



RECIPES

Broad bean, Feta and Mint Fritters

Just as the new bean plants are starting to come up in the plot, I always seem to find a bag of broad beans at the bottom of my freezer that need using up!



INGREDIENTS

- 300g cooked and double podded broad beans (can replace some beans with peas if you like)
- 200g feta cheese, broken up
- Handful of fresh mint, finely chopped
- Zest of 2 lemons
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- 40g flour
- Milk as required (up to 60ml)
- Butter and/or olive oil for frying

INSTRUCTIONS

- ⇒ Mix all the ingredients in a bowl to make a thick batter – add milk as required to get a good consistency.
- ⇒ Fry dollops of the mixture in a butter & oil mixture.
- ⇒ This makes 8-10 fritters, serves 4 people.
- ⇒ A salad makes a good accompaniment.

Allotment compote

The idea is to use up all the fruit that's left in your freezer, making space for this year's crops. I use all the currants, gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries, plums, damsons, blackberries – I generally don't use large fruit like apples as they tend to dilute the intense flavour of the compote. If you are going to water bath the compote (see below) then only use fruit fairly high in acid – leave out apples, pears, figs, melons, etc.

We use our compote for adding cold to pancakes, porridge, greek yoghurt or cereal, we heat it up and have it with custard, ice cream or cream (or all three!) for an easy pud, or stir in some chopped apple and a sprinkle of granola on top and bake it as a crumble. You can whizz up a few spoonfuls with milk for a fruity milkshake, or chuck in a banana too and call it a smoothie, or turn it into ice-cream.

All in all, compote is just the most useful stuff!

Firstly separate the fruit that's mostly pips from everything else. Eg redcurrants! Simmer with a little bit of water until you can mash them, then force through a metal sieve. Put the juice and goo into a large pan, discard the skins.

Add the rest of the fruit to the pan. Add lemon juice – about 50ml per 500g of fruit. Gently heat the fruit until the juices run and it softens, mash it a bit as you go. If you're starting with frozen fruit take it slow so it doesn't burn. This isn't jam, so you only need to sweeten to taste – so get a spoon out and try it! Add the amount of sugar or honey wanted and stir till dissolved. Bring to the boil and simmer gently for 10 mins.

STORAGE

This compote can just sit in the fridge and will last a few days. You can also divide it into small pots or plastic bags and freeze it. But if you put it into jars and water bath it, it will last a year in your cupboard.

HOW TO WATER BATH

If you're new to water bathing, there's loads of advice online which is well worth reading (its also called 'canning') – but these are the basics:

You need a tall pan, like a stock pot. Check the pan is going to be tall enough – you need 3cm water above the jar lids, then another 3-5cm to allow the water to boil and bubble without overflowing. Use clean undamaged jars with metal lids that have a 'dimple', or use kilner jars. You don't need to sterilise them. You also need a way to get the very hot jars out of the pot of water – tongs are just about OK, a gadget called a jar lifter is better!

Make the compote as described, and pour into warmed jars to about 1-2cm of the top.

Wipe the jar rims clean to ensure a good seal and put the lids on finger tight.

Put a small towel or metal rack or similar inside the bottom of the pan to avoid the jars having direct contact with the bottom.

Put all the jars in the pan and fill it with water so that there is 3-5cm of water above the level of the lids. If the compote is cold when you put it in jars, then start with cold water. If the compote is warm/hot, then use warm tap water to fill the pan.

Lid on the pan, bring the pan to the boil – when it gets to a good bubbling boil, which takes ages ! - start the timer for 15 mins. Different foods have different amounts of time when water bathing so always check! It must be a good bubbling boil before you start the timer.



Get the jars out and put them on a towel to cool. A jar lifter is a useful gadget, though I use tongs and an oven glove! As the jars cool, the dimple should get sucked in with a satisfying 'pop' so you know you have a good seal. Check all the jars carefully when cooled, and if any haven't sealed, well, that's your break-fast sorted.

Louisa Lindsey-Clark

Growing soft fruit Tips for early spring

Plant There is still time to finish planting bare rooted fruit trees and bushes, especially raspberries and other cane fruit: blackberries, raspberries and hybrid berry plants. Plant out strawberry plants, check for any diseased plants and remove.

Prune Until the end of March, there is time to prune gooseberries and currants. With fruit bushes remove the 'three Ds' - dead, diseased and damaged growth – as well as branches which are crossing over. Aim to open out the centre to allow light and air in. With currants shorten the side shoots.

Mulch around fruit bushes with organic matter to retain moisture, suppress weeds and improve soil structure. Put straw around strawberries to keep the fruit off the ground. Fruit bushes will benefit from compost or leaf mould for nutrients or hay, straw or chippings to suppress weeds.

Love your Allotment, Love your Food

Don't forget, our cook book is still available, full of excellent recipes from our plots



AVAILABLE FROM THE SHOP NOW

£7 for members (RRP £8.95)

Contact beas.shopmanager@outlook.com



Treasure Hunt

Unlock a square on the Map for a £1

Your treasure is 2 plant pots

Water them and tend them and see what grows!

Each square bought will be allocated a number and entered in a draw for the

Treasure Trove

Closing date 30th April 2021

Available when you pick up your Click and Collect order or by emailing beas.shopmanager@outlook.com.

You can donate by

- BACS – sort code 30-92-02, account number 01395758 – put HUNT in the ref box
- Cheque - with HUNT and your name and Plot Number/Associate Member Number on the back
- Cash in an envelope (marked HUNT) with your name and Plot Number/Associate Member Number

We will do a random computerised number selection on the 5th May 2021 and announce the winner then.



Sweet Peas are a favourite

I love sweet peas. They look great in a jar on the windowsill and they are also a personal challenge – how long can I keep them flowering at the allotment? To do that I need to keep the jar on the windowsill full of the latest blooms so as not let any of them go to seed. That takes dedication and a sharp pair of clippers from the day they start to flower!

But right now I need to sow my seeds. Many of you might have already done so as sowing them in early autumn means you have larger plants ready for the spring. For those not quite so well organised (like me!) you can still sow them any time from January to April. Here are one or two tips:

- Put 2 seeds in a 9cm pot. Dampen the surface of the compost and then push each seed in with your finger to about an inch below the surface.
- Cover the pots with newspaper to keep moisture and warmth in and the light out.
- After 4-5 days check for germination regularly. Once the seedlings appear keep them cool (about 5 degrees) as this promotes root rather than stem growth at this stage. This could be in a cold greenhouse or cold frame but a window ledge in the potting shed will be fine.
- Pinch out the top two leaves once 3 or 4 pairs have grown, reducing the plant to 1" or 2" in height to help the plant grow out, not up.
- Plant out in late May, after the risk of frost.
- They need to grow up a tepee or a frame of some sort. Plant them 2-3" away from the support, 2 plants at the base of each upright. It's a good idea to use slug protection.
- As they grow, tie them into the frame. This will encourage them to grow more quickly and strongly.
- Once they start flowering keep picking and snip off any seed pods that grow

Over the summer, send in photographs of your Sweet Pea blooms and we will publish them on our website.

Happy Growing

Linda ♥

Beas.chair@outlook.com