

# NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION

## WINTER NEWSLETTER 2009

### EDITORS BECKY AND MARGARET

#### Chairman's report

Welcome to our winter newsletter. I hope you have had a Happy Christmas and are ready for a good gardening New Year. During 2008 we have been able to maintain the membership numbers to around the 600 mark, and this year hope to do another leaflet drop to again maintain the numbers. We have still some work to be done on the exterior of the hut, with the guttering to be completed, together with repairs to the rear doors. Sales at the hut last year were slightly down on 2007 so we still need lots of you to come and support us at the hut, because our prices are very competitive. Show entries in 2008 were also down, as was the number of exhibitors, so I would ask you to plan your gardening calendar to include at least one entry for our show on 12<sup>th</sup> September. Good gardening in 2009.

I should also like to thank all the Committee and Volunteers who have worked hard to make the Association so successful in 2008.

Tony Addison - Chairman

2009 Subscriptions – Remember, remember for all current members

Subs for 2009 are due from 1<sup>st</sup> January. Please come to the Hut to renew or send a cheque payable to Newton-le-Willows Gardeners' Association to Sandra Ferry, Membership Secretary, 26, Gorse Brow, Billinge, WIGAN WN5 7NX

**“God made rainy days so that gardeners could get the housework done.”**

#### What to do with an unused corner of your garden

If you happen to have a scruffy, overgrown corner to your garden, perhaps full of nettles and brambles, which you have been meaning to do away with, you may be pleased to know that it's a good idea to leave it exactly as it is. This unpromising area will be providing a home or a source of food to a wealth of butterflies and insects as well as birds and animals like hedgehogs, but if you continue to find the daily sight of this dishevelled area a terrible affront to your aesthetic sensibilities, still think twice before getting rid of it because there are alternatives. You can create a natural screen with some hedging or sow some colourful meadow flowers around it to smarten it up and draw the eye away from what lies behind.

**This year our trips are a little more interesting than last, so I'm hoping that many more people will come and enjoy them with us. We are going to :-**

THE MALVERN SHOW Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May. Cost will be £25.00

CHATSWORTH HOUSE on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June. Cost will be £17.50 or £16.00 for 0/60's

TRENTHAM ESTATE on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July. Cost will be £14.50 or £14.00 for 0/60's

This year's AGM will be on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January and there will be nibbles and a glass of wine for everyone who turns up, so please come and enjoy the evening with us.

## New hut opening times

The hut will be open every **Saturday and Sunday** starting on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January right through until Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> November.

We will be open this year on **Wednesday** evenings from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 17<sup>th</sup> June

## Certain price increase

Suppliers are warning of definite price rises due to the rising cost of production and delivery. Please be aware that this could affect us in the New Year. Be sure to ask at the till for further information and updates, or go to the web-site. [www.nlwgardeners.com](http://www.nlwgardeners.com)

## HUT HELPERS

Is there anyone out there that would like to have a try on the till at the hut just to help out in case of emergencies?

## Next years talks :-

26<sup>th</sup> February - Peter Holden - Grow It, Pick It, Cook it, Eat It, Version 2 Potatoes

26<sup>th</sup> March - David Hampsey – Better Vegetable Growing

30<sup>th</sup> April - Graeme Iddon – Cottage Garden Plants

28<sup>th</sup> May - Bob Sumner – Geraniums: Growing & Showing

25<sup>th</sup> June - Mary Dearden – Lavender Growing

29<sup>th</sup> October - Valerie Chown – Decoration Ideas for Christmas

## HELP WITH CATERPILLARS ON YOUR CABBAGES

Caterpillars can devastate a crop of cabbage. You can help to protect younger plants by adding about half a tablespoon of salt to your watering can. The plants absorb the salt, making them unpleasant for caterpillars, which bloat and die if they consume it, but the cabbages will have got rid of the salt by the time they reach maturity.

## THE SHOW

This year saw the show opened by Councillor Wally Ashcroft, who was very impressed at the standard of the show. Although the numbers of exhibitors were slightly down on last year, due partly to the awful weather and because the National Dahlia show at Shepton Mallet was on the same day as our show, we still managed to have a very good day.

Next year's non-flower, fruit and vegetable categories are as follows:-

Cookery:- Parkin, Maids of Honour

Photography:- Farming, Birds, A Chimney

Art:- A view from the kitchen window

Floral Art:- Down the garden path

Petite:- Treasure trove

Children's photography:- An animal

Children's Cookery:- Decorated krispie cakes

We hope that you will come along and help to make the day as successful as last year

## HELP WITH GREENFLY

An effective organic way of killing off greenfly on your roses is to boil up some rhubarb leaves, which contain high quantities of poisonous oxalic acid, and then spray the roses with the liquid, once it has cooled.



## **THE RECIPE** (from our resident cook)

### **Braised chicken with mushroom and lemon sauce.** (Serves 4)

1 tablespoon sunflower oil	4 skinned, boned chicken breasts, about 4½ oz/125g each
Salt and pepper	juice of 2 lemons
5 ½ oz/150g mushrooms, quartered	4 fl oz chicken stock
1 tablespoon chopped herbs	6 spring onions

#### METHOD

- Heat the oil in a flameproof casserole large enough to hold the chicken breasts in a single layer. Add the chicken and brown them all over.
  - Season the chicken with salt and pepper, add the lemon juice, mushrooms and stock. Cover and bring to the boil, then lower the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally for 20 minutes, or until the chicken juices run clear when the breasts are pierced with a knife.
  - Add a little more stock or water if the liquid is evaporating too quickly; there should be some liquid left when the chicken is cooked.
  - Remove the chicken breasts from the casserole and keep them warm. Boil the remaining cooking liquid until it thickens slightly. Stir in the chopped herbs and spring onions and adjust the seasoning. Serve the chicken, spoon the mushroom sauce over it and garnish with a few more herbs.
  - **Serving suggestions: new potatoes and runner beans or fresh garden peas**
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## **SOME DEFINITIONS OF OLD AGE**

1. Everything hurts – and if it doesn't hurt, it doesn't work.
2. The gleam in men's eyes is from the sun hitting their bifocals.
3. You get winded playing cards.
4. Your children begin to look middle aged.
5. You know all the answers, but nobody asks you the questions.
6. You need glasses to find your glasses.
7. You sit in a rocking chair, but you can't get it going.
8. Your knees buckle, but your belt won't.

### **GOOD FRIDAY (10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL)**

Why not come and join us on Good Friday, we had a really good time last year. There will be coffee or tea and some homemade cakes. The demonstration this year will include a new type of hanging basket and ideas of what to put in them. Let's hope the weather is a little warmer this year and we don't need our thermals on. Hope to see you there.

The potato packs will be available again this year, just in case anyone who was successful last year would like to try them again.

# **KIDS CORNER**

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO WIN A LARGE EASTER EGG ?

The competition this year involves you making a hairy egghead, you will need a grown up to help. I'm sure you can easily find one though. HAIRY EGGHEADS. When you cook some eggs, try to crack them open so that only the very top of the shell comes off leaving it as close to its original size as possible. Wash the shells and let them dry before painting a face on each or drawing one with a felt tip pen. When this is done, fill the shells with some compost and sprinkle on some grass seed, which you cover with a little more compost before firming down and pouring a small amount of water over the surface. Put the eggheads back into the carton and make sure the soil remains a little damp – not wet – while you wait for the grass to grow. Soon enough, you should have some ridiculous-looking eggheads with hair growing straight up as if they have had an electric shock, or seen something highly alarming, like their dad mowing the lawn in a bikini. Once the grass has reached a good height, you can give your character any hair style you want, (like a “Mohican” for instance) – by cutting the grass to shape with a small pair of scissors.

Come along on April 10<sup>th</sup> (Good Friday) or leave it at the hut the weekend before and we will have a panel of judges to vote which is the best one. Make sure you leave your name and telephone number so that we can contact you.

This is my Potato story :- From Jack Heath (The winner of last years' children's painting competition)

On Good Friday 2008 I attended a potato growing demonstration at the Hut and Fred explained to me that I needed to buy a black tub, some potatoes, compost and a little fertiliser. As soon as I got home I started the first stage of the potato planting. I made holes in the tub, filled it a third full of compost with a sprinkling of fertiliser to help them grow and then put the potatoes in and covered them. Over the next few weeks whenever I saw leaves coming through the compost I covered them with some more compost, fertiliser and gave them some water. I did this until the tub was full to the top. My plants grew quite big so I supported them with canes. In no time they were ready for harvesting.  
WOW! What a crop!

All my family said they tasted really creamy, so I think I will be growing them again. I will try carrots also next year.

### **Seedlings**

When starting your garden seedlings indoors, plant the seeds in the halves of eggshells, which are a good natural fertiliser. Crack the shells around the roots of the young plants when you transplant them outdoors. If you want to revive an ailing houseplant, take some empty eggshells (an excellent source of calcium), dry them out in the oven and crush them into a powder. Add the powder to a small jug of water and leave it for a day or so before pouring into the plant pots.

Finally we would just like to say a big thank you to one and all for the support that you have given us throughout this year and we hope that you will continue to do so. We need your support to keep going so please come along and say hello whenever you feel like it. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped in the hut all through the year, turning out in all weathers. It is greatly appreciated.

Don't forget to look at the web-site the address is [www.nlwgardeners.com](http://www.nlwgardeners.com)