

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER, SPRING 2018

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Looking back, 2017 was an iffy year weatherwise in the garden or allotment, but for our Association it was a great year, with an increase in membership and a most welcome increase in the number of younger members, including those of you who have taken allotments on the Rob Lane site. To help newcomers to grow-your-own we have started to produce information sheets on growing things like brassicas (cabbages, caulis, sprouts etc) and tomatoes, and obtained 'dead cheap' copies of David Hessayan's vegetable expert book that we have given out to those new to the hobby. We think also that many members value advice and tips that we share in the Hut. Any gardening problems? We are there to help.

Previously our Newsletters have been emailed, as an attachment, to members. At least the next few Newsletters will be printed and posted to you. One reason for this is that we are trying to make the Newsletter of more use to all members. In this one there is a full guide to all the fertilisers that we sell in the Hut, with tips as to which fertiliser is best for growing what plants. Keep this and use it to choose the fertilisers you use.

As usual we will be selling a variety of bedding/container/hanging basket plants in the polytunnel in late spring (after the last frosts). This year we are also producing more of our own vegetable plants, which will include clubroot resistant cabbages and sprouts, a leek that is rust resistant, and Red Baron onions (that tend to go to seed when grown from sets). If you have any excess vegetable seedlings, especially those of interesting varieties, we would be grateful if you would let us have to sell to other members. For instance, amongst tomatoes, there will be some Black Russian plants; this is a funny looking tomato with a great flavour!

A PLEA FOR HELP Everyone of us involved in the organisation and running of our Association is a volunteer who receives neither payment nor expenses. We could do with some more help. There is room for another *younger* committee member or two, as several of us are getting on in years and can't do the jobs that we do for ever. And we need some (again, *younger*) members to help out in the Hut simply because some of we Oldies are getting very weak in the limb.

MAKING PURCHASES AT THE HUT We provide products, with no real profit, to members who are amateur gardeners. In future we will not sell anything in bulk, and our till operators and hut helpers will refuse to supply more than what we consider to be what an amateur would require. Membership cards must be shown when making a purchase.

Malcolm Greenhalgh

N-L-W G A ACTIVITIES 2018

TALKS & DEMONSTRATIONS + AGM

These are held at Newton Sports & Cricket Club, Crow Lane East (always on Thursday) at 7.30pm.

18th January AGM

22nd February Matthew Smith of Brighter Blooms – **Weeds.**

29th March Richard Smedley – **Edible landscaping.**

26th April Sue Jeffries – **Gardening for wildlife.**

31st May Malcolm Greenhalgh- **From wilderness to home and garden.**

25th October Marguerite Hughes – **Roses.**

SHOWS

28th May (Bank Holiday Monday)

Willow Park Rural Craft Fair

4th August (Saturday)

Newton Town Show, Mesnes Park

8th September (Saturday)

Flower, Flower & Vegetable Show, Penkford School,
Wharf Road, Newton-Le-Willows

TRIPS [Money with booking, please, and note that we need to confirm booking of venue and coach at least 4 weeks before the date.]

May 15th (Tuesday) – Bodnant Gardens...Book by 8 April: This is a wonderful National Trust garden in the Conwy Valley and is at its best in May. Coach £15 p.p.; entry £12. NT members pay only the coach fare.

September 15th (Saturday) - Autumn Harrogate Show...Book by 12 August: This is, beyond doubt, the best autumn fruit, vegetable and flower show in the UK, if not the Universe. Coach and entry £30 p.p.

HUT OPENINGS:

Saturdays 6th January – 27th October 10.30am – 12.00 noon

Sundays 7th January – 28th October 10.30am - 12.00 noon

Wednesdays 4th April – 20th June 7.00 – 8.00pm

Good Friday 30th March 10.30am – 12.00 (A coffee, cake and gardening demonstration morning)

SOIL pH TESTS: Members may have this test done (bring dry soil taken 4" below the surface) in the Hut, with advice on the need for liming. Cost: 50p per test.

A REVOLUTIONARY TIP FOR THOSE WHO LIKE A NICE, EASILY-MAINTAINED LAWN: Every Friday evening mix a large gin and tonic (1 gin:3 tonic) with a splash of lime juice, and spray your lawn with the mix. It will then come up half cut.

NLWGA SHOW 2017

We had 472 entries from 64 exhibitors, including 20 new exhibitors, top exhibits being onions, beetroot, tomatoes, runner beans, apples, photography and jams. We also had a welcome increase in the number taking part in the children's categories. The inaugural year of the Bert Jackson Memorial Cup attracted lots of new growers and was won by Kieron Brockley who incidentally had taken ownership of Bert's allotment plot following his sad passing....very fitting

The main prize winners were:

The Bert Jackson Memorial Cup	Kieron Brockley
Gordon Brooks Trophy	Ian Fairclough
NVS medal	Ian Fairclough
Banksian Medal	Ian Fairclough
Photographic Challenge Cup	Dave Hemmingway
NDS Silver Medal	Chris Nightingale
NDS Bronze Medal	Ray Weeks
Sue Lever Trophy	Ray Weeks
Jeacock Trophy	John Ashcroft
BGS Silver Medal	Carole Moakes
Rotary Club Silver Salver	Carole Moakes
Garden Shield	Ian Fairclough
Garden News Top Vase	Mary Dearden

BUT....

In 2017 we had a special category for spray chrysanthemums and no one was more surprised than me being awarded FIRST PRIZE for my spray chrysanthemums...never grown one before.... beginners luck.

We couldn't put the show on without sponsorship and we're very grateful to the Rotary Club of Newton-le-Willows, Winwick Parish Council, Penkford School, Hilton's Travel, Jewellery by Silvana, Lapwing Gardening, Loach (Horticultural), Newton Hair Design, Greyhound Hotel, Quintessential Cakes, Healing Garden, Think Ahead Stroke Group, and Kings Seeds. We also had numerous individual sponsors for some categories in the schedule.

GET READY FOR THE 2018 SHOW!

We will be awarding the *BERT JACKSON MEMORIAL CUP* again this year for the best plate of fruit or vegetables by a beginner (someone who has never put anything into a Show and who is new or fairly new to growing fruit and vegetables). The plate can have just one type or several types of fruit or veg. It's up to you. Just make it look nice!

THE ARTHUR GREEN PERPETUAL TROPHY, donated by the Green family, will be awarded to the best scented rose. Just pick one rose that smells nice and put it in the Show!

GLADIOLI NEED GROWING AND SHOWING: We are obtaining some Large Gladioli and Butterfly Gladioli for you to buy from our Hut, grow and put in our Show. Large Gladioli 5 corms for £1.30, Butterfly Gladioli 5 corms for £1. Plant the very end of May or very early June and they should be in flower for our 2018 Show, Categories 19 and 21 (Large), 22 (Butterfly).

Angie Murray (Show Secretary and Prize Winner)

GARDEN FERTILISERS THAT WE SELL IN THE HUT

*Those marked * are organic.*

	N	P	K	Note
A) These we bag up				
Bonemeal *	3.5	19	0	
Hoof & Horn*	12	0	0	
Fish, Blood & Bone*	3	9	3	
Dried Blood*	11	0	0	
Growmore	7	7	7	
Potato	6	10	10	
Onion	6	8	15	
Q4 Fruit and Vegetable	5.3	7.5	10	
Rose	5	5	10	
Chrysanthemum	5	8	11	
Sulphate of Ammonia	21	0	0gets brassicas going!
Sulphate of Potash	0	0	48a hefty flower fertiliser
Epsom Salts	0	0	0Magnesium 10, for magnesium deficiency (yellowing leaves)
Liquid tomato feed	5	5	10	
B) Prepacked in boxes; dilute as per instructions				
Chempak 2	25	15	15great for leafy vegetables
Chempak 3	20	20	20an all round feed
Chempak 4	15	15	30for fruit and flowers
Chempak 8	12.5	25	25summer feed, especially leeks and onions

C) Prepacked in bottles; dilute as per instructions

Maxicrop Brown*: a seaweed extract that is a growth stimulant and helps prevent fungal attack

Maxicrop Green: a full feed that includes seaweed extract (N5, P10, K5)

Maxicrop Blue: For iron deficiency (leaves yellowing, though yellowing may also be caused by magnesium deficiency...see Epsom salts).

N = nitrogen (usually as urea, nitrate or dilute ammonium salts) for leaf growth. N is highly soluble, so washes out of the soil easily by heavy rain. Brassicas that seem not to be growing are often in need of a nitrogen boost.

P = phosphorus (usually as phosphate) for general growth but especially root and bulb growth.

K = potassium ('potash' to gardeners and occurs as several salts) especially vital for flower and fruit production.

NOTE ON ORGANIC 'COMPOSTS'

Some writers suggest that plants that we grow can get lots of nutrients from things like leaf mould, homemade garden compost (we all should make this from garden and kitchen waste and shredded cardboard) and well-rotted manure. The truth is that these contain few nutrients, especially as far as fruit and vegetables are concerned. They really are predominantly 'humus' and are vital soil improvers. Use as much as you can get on your fruit and vegetable beds, but do not avoid using some of the fertilisers listed above.