

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION
SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2011

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Chairman's Report

Welcome to our summer newsletter. I do hope that you have had a good start to the gardening year after such an awful winter which seems to have killed off a lot of plants and trees during the atrocious weather. As I write this report I look back to the good weather in April and hope that the summer will be good as we seem to have gone back to a cold spell in May. Still the weeds are growing and so is the grass, whilst my potatoes seem to be flourishing along with the winter onions and shallots. The hut has been extremely busy and I am constantly amazed at the increased variety of different products that we stock. Do ask if you cannot find what you are looking for, to see if we can find some tucked away.

Malcolm Greenhalgh is our liaison member with the Royal Horticultural Society and can raise any gardening queries on your behalf. The answers to these queries will be posted on our website, so please watch out for these and any updates on our activities.

As many of you are aware we are holding the annual flower and vegetable show at Penkford School in Newton on 10th September 2011. Please let us know if you can help us with setting up or showing visitors around as we do need a lot more help this year, because of it's being a much smaller, and new venue. I look forward to meeting you at the hut and the show

Regards

Tony Addison.

THE 2011 SHOW

This year our annual flower and vegetable show is to be held at Penkford Special School on Saturday the 10th September 2011. It will be quite a test for us, as the new venue is much smaller than before and will be spread out over a few rooms instead of one large one, because of this, the novice classes in each category have been removed, but replaced with the following.

- A flower, novice, an entry could include a Dahlia, Chrysanthemum, Rose or Gladioli.
- Pot Plant novice, any pot plant either in bloom or just foliage.
- There will be one class for a Fuchsia or Pelargonium.

Schedules are available at the hut, but some of the non-growing classes are as follows:-

- Floral art – Fireworks
- Photography – Sport, Rocks, People
- Art – My Garden Shed
- Cookery – Tea loaf, Muffins, recipes included in the schedule.

Because of the number of rooms we are using this time, we need lots of volunteers to show people around, if you have a spare hour or two and could help we would be most grateful.

If you feel that you might like to sponsor a class, with a donation, maybe in memory of a loved one, just come along to the hut and we will have a list for you to choose which category you would like to sponsor. You can sponsor a category for as little as £3.60, but any amount would be most welcome.

We will be happy to see as many people there as possible, come and bring your friends and help us to make this show as successful as it was at St. Aelreds School.

'Gardening requires lots of water – most of it in the form of perspiration.' Lou Erickson

Leaf Mould

If you want to improve your soil or just give plants a mulch then why not use leaf mould? It's very easy to make and great for the garden. Just collect enough leaves to fill a black bin bag, punch a few holes in the bottom and sides of the bag, wet the leaves, tie up the bag and leave in a shady place. After 12 months you will have quality mulch or leave it for another twelve months and it will produce a superb soil conditioner. By doing this you are not only improving your soil but saving landfill space and energy.

Composting

It's never too late to start composting your garden and kitchen waste.

Composting is an inexpensive, natural process that transforms your kitchen and garden waste into a valuable food for your garden. Finished compost is great for using on flowerbeds, vegetables plots and for mixing into potting soil and can really help your garden to bloom.

By composting at home you can reduce the amount of rubbish you put out for collection, while returning important nutrients and mineral to your soil which improves its overall quality. Home compost is cheap, easy to make and even easier to use.

First you need a compost bin, which you can purchase at garden centres or DIY shops, but try contacting your local council who may have some on special offer and, if not, can advise you where to purchase them. Alternatively a small-boxed area (either wood or netting) in your garden will do. Tel. 0845 077 0757 for details of offers and prices of compost bins.

Many people are unsure of what to put in a compost bin or heap. It isn't only garden waste, but a combination of what's called 'Greens' and 'Browns' what help to make good compost.

GREENS include :-

Grass cuttings, before using weedkiller
Old flowers
Spent bedding plants
Vegetable peelings
Fruit scraps
Tea bags
Nettles
Young annual weeds
Rhubarb leaves.

BROWNS include :-

Dry leaves
Straw and hay
Bedding from vegetarian pets (Rabbits, hamsters etc)
Egg and cereal boxes
Sawdust and wood chippings (untreated)
Shredded confidential papers
Egg shells
Corrugated brown cardboard (in small amounts)
Toilet and kitchen roll tubes

Don't use, any cooked kitchen waste or evergreen leaves, and certainly not diseased plants or twigs.

When it is about 4" to 6" high sprinkle a handful (about 2ozs) of a compost accelerator such as "Garotta" or sulphate of ammonia (which is certainly cheaper, and available from the hut), Repeat this layer after layer until the heap is about 3 to 4ft high.

Depending on the time you have taken to reach this stage the bottom of the heap may have been converted into useful humus (around about 16 weeks) but you may wish to leave it and perhaps start another heap.

You can tell when the compost is ready, for it will bear no resemblance to anything that you originally placed on the heap and should look and be similar in texture to peat.

It really is as easy as that to make a compost heap and you'll get the benefit in two ways, firstly your garden soil will improve and secondly the amount of waste that you send to landfill will be considerably reduced.

'Gardening adds years to your life and life to your years.'

From the kitchen

SIMPLE SALMON FISH CAKES

Makes 8, (serves 4)

10 cream crackers

1 small onion, coarsely grated

Juice of half a lemon

1-2 tbsp sunflower oil

418g can red salmon, drained, skin removed and flaked into large chunks

198g tin sweetcorn, drained

6 tbsp mayonnaise

a mugful of frozen peas, defrosted

watercress salad and lemon wedges to serve

1. Crunch the crackers into a food processor, then tip in the sweetcorn. Blitz until the crackers and sweetcorn form a loose paste (it should look like chunky peanut butter). Empty into a large mixing bowl.
 2. Mix the grated onion, mayonnaise and lemon juice into the crushed mixture until everything is bound together. Gently stir in the peas and flaked salmon (crushing any small bones with your fingers as you go), trying to keep the salmon flakes as chunky as possible. Divide the mixture into 8 and shape into cakes.
 3. Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat, add the fish cakes and fry in two batches for 4 minutes on each side until crispy and brown (you may need to add another tbsp of oil to the pan for the second batch). Drain on kitchen paper, then serve with a watercress salad, extra mayonnaise and lemon wedges.
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FRUITY ICE CUBES

Put several small summer fruits (raspberries, redcurrants, blueberries) with strips of lime or lemon zest or mint leaves into each section of your ice cube tray, then top up with water. Freeze until solid, then pop out of the tray and store in plastic bags in the freezer.

They are great for dropping into non-alcoholic drinks, summer punches and cocktails.

HOLKER HALL FLOWER FESTIVAL

The Holker Hall Flower Festival was a great day out again, we chose the weather very carefully, the sun shone all day, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day. We are now looking forward to Hampton Court Flower Show in July and the Flower Show at Harrogate on 17th September, just come along to the hut and book your seat.

I saw this article in a magazine and thought how apt it is.

ATTITUDE

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life.

Attitude, to me, is more important than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do.

It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill.

It will make or break a company.....a church.....a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past, we cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude....I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you....we are in charge of our

ATTITUDES

TIP :- To relieve the symptoms of powdery mildew on courgettes, cucumber and pumpkin, dissolve 5g of baking soda in a litre of water and spray onto the affected leaves.

'A garden is a thing of beauty and a job forever.'

Sometimes we struggle to find plants for certain places in the garden, such as shade, wet and dry

These are some plants which like dry shade

Fatsia Japonica, great for flower arrangers, with huge leaves

Bergenia, this is also a good one for flower arrangers and flowers March to May.

Crinum, this is a lily-like plant with pink flowers in July to late August.

Hellebores, deadhead in June and cut off the foliage in November to make the most of your plant.

Choisya, a lovely bush with stays green all year round and flowers from April to June.

These are some plants which like damp shade

Convallaria, or Lily of the Valley.

Podophyllum, this has large leaves and the flowers (which are underneath the leaves) are purple.

Primula sieboldii, these plants only appear in March and will spread, if left undisturbed. The flowers appear in April and May.

Brunnera, all brunnera are long-lived, trouble free plants with a froth of blue or white flowers in March to June.

Pulmonaria, flowers March to May with silvered apple-green foliage and purple flowers.

You know you are getting old, when everything either dries up or leaks.

One of the many things no-one ever tells you about getting old, is that it's a nice change from being young.

Being young is beautiful – but being old is being more comfortable.

*Long ago men cursed and beat the ground with their sticks. It was called Witchcraft.
Today it's called Golf.*

TIP :- If your leeks develop rust spots, maybe you have grown them too close together, feed them with tomato feed to make them more resistant to the disease and if the attack is severe try applying a little Vaseline on the affected area to arrest the spread of spores.

AND FINALLY

There are many inevitable price rises that we cannot avoid, not least the increase in VAT we have had to pay on all manner of stock items.

Why not let us help you to keep prices down as low as possible in three simple steps :-

1. Take a long hard look at your potato, onion, garlic and seed needs for 2012 season.
2. Decide on the vegetables & varieties you want to grow and the quantities of seed, sets etc that you will need.
3. Place your order with me "FRED" **before the 16th October 2011**

Anyone wishing to place advance orders for potato and onion/garlic sets should either e-mail, approach or telephone me in late September for a list of available varieties.

Tel 07908361512 or e-mail indewoods@talktalk.net

The items you order will be set aside for you on arrival and the price you pay will be discounted even further than normal hut prices because they will be 'sale guaranteed' thus helping us to reduce waste.

Help us to help you save money

Fred Dickinson
Hut Manager