

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2012

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CHAIRMANS REPORT

Welcome to our summer newsletter. I do hope that you have had a good start to the gardening year. As I write this report I look back to the good weather in March and hope that the summer is good, since we seem to have gone back to a cold, wet spell in early June.

At the hut we have been extremely busy with sales. Ask Fred or David if you cannot find what you want, to see if we actually have it tucked away in a place you haven't looked. The plot at the side of the hut continues to be improved and we have managed to complete two thirds of the paths with wheel chair access. If any of you are getting rid of any three foot by two foot (sorry I am not yet in metric mode) concrete flags please let us know so that we can complete the rest of the paths. We are planting the raised beds with different vegetables and trialling different planting methods. Information sheets are available in the hut for you to view. These will be updated on a regular basis by Malcolm Greenhalgh who has organised the planting. Alternatively you can view the information on our website www.nlwgardeners.co.uk.

The annual show at Penkford School in Newton is on 8th September 2012. Please let us know if you can help with the setting up or showing visitors around as we need a lot of people to ensure that the show runs smoothly. I look forward to meeting you at the hut and at the show.

Regards

Tony Addison

TRIPS

The first trip of this year saw us up at the crack of dawn and setting off on our trip to Alnwick gardens. Although it was a lovely sunny day when we left, the cloud soon came over and by gum was it cold. The gardens themselves were spectacular and the water feature is awesome. Most of us took a tour round the poison garden (probably to get some ideas for ourselves) and it was very interesting, I didn't know so many of the everyday plants we have in our gardens were poisonous. The hotel in Newcastle was very good, evening food was excellent, beds comfy and breakfast tremendous. So onwards to Beamish, what a lovely day out it was. The trams, trolley buses and the boneshaker buses were just as I remembered them and took us all round the museum. The mining village, the farm, the town and best of all was the "chippy". Chips and fish cooked in dripping, on a coal fired range and served in a newspaper, oh, what luxury. It was sad to have to come away and the 6 hours we spent there wasn't enough. Hattons (the coach company) are going to do another trip next year to the same part of the country, hopefully visiting Bamborough Castle, Holy Island, and maybe a visit to Durham City centre. Watch this space for details.

MOTTO FOR LIFE

The more you give, the more you get.

The more you laugh, the less you fret.

The more you do unselfishly, the more you gain abundantly.

The more of everything you share, the more you'll always have to spare.

For life is good and friends are kind, and only what we give away, enriches us from day to day.

"Hospitality is making your guests feel at home even when you wish they were."

RECIPE

A great cake for the children to make. (It involves no baking). Just sit back and enjoy
3 oz butter, 2 tbsp golden syrup, 2 tbsp baking powder, 6 oz digestives (crushed),
1 packet of 175gr Maltesers, half crushed and half left whole.

Method

Melt the butter and golden syrup in a small pan. Stir in the digestives, cocoa powder and the crushed Maltesers until well combined. Allow to cool slightly, and stir in the whole Maltesers. Line a 1 lb loaf tin with clingfilm and put the mixture into it pressing down but try not to crush the whole Maltesers. Chill until set (about 2 hours), if you can wait that long. Serve in slices.

ENJOY

HOW TRUE IT IS

Another year has passed and we're all a little older.
Last summer felt hotter and winter seems much colder.
I rack my brain for happy thoughts, to put down on my pad,
But lots of things, that come to mind just make me kind of sad.
There was a time not long ago when life was quite a blast.
Now I fully understand about 'Living in the Past'.
We used to go to friends' homes, football games and lunches.
Now we go to therapy, to hospitals, and after-funeral brunches.
We used to have hangovers, from parties that were gay
Now we suffer body aches and sleep the night away.
We used to go out dining, and couldn't get our fill.
Now we ask for doggie bags, come home and take a pill.
We used to travel often to places near and far.
Now we get backaches from riding in the car.
We used to go out shopping for new clothing at the Mall
But, now we never bother... all the sizes are too small.
That, my friend is how life is, and now my tale is told.
So, enjoy each day and live it up... before you're too damn old!!
You pass this way only once so enjoy it
While you can; Live, Laugh and Love!

MAKING A MINIATURE HERB GARDEN

All culinary herbs grow well in a grow-bag and you can have a collection of your own favourites right near to the back door, just where you need them. Thyme, oregano, sage, lavender, parsley and rosemary are just a few that you can put together to make a useful and attractive grow-bag and if they are pruned back regularly they will stay fresh and bushy for at least two years. Mint is best grown on its own and will last indefinitely in a grow-bag if kept well watered and fed regularly during the summer.

“Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience”

“We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public” At least some of us do.

ONION POWER

You may think these are Old Wive's Tales but perhaps next time you're ill, think about this article. Raw onions are a huge magnet for bacteria, so if a raw one (preferably with the ends cut off) is placed in each room when you have 'flu, it will absorb the virus, turning it black as it works, leading to quicker recovery and preventing other members of the family contracting it. HOWEVER, the reverse of this is also true – you shouldn't eat an onion that has been sitting for a time after it has been cut open. LEFTOVER ONIONS ARE POISONOUS. You should never keep a portion of a sliced onion, not even in a sealed bag in the fridge. It is already contaminated enough just by being cut open and left out for a bit. Overcooking excessively might work, but certainly not to eat it raw. The toxic bacteria created while you've left it can cause adverse stomach infections and even food poisoning.

P.S. Dogs should never be given onions either, their stomachs cannot metabolise them.

Silvana

THE 2012 FLOWER AND VEGETABLE SHOW

This year the show is again at Penkford School, Wharf Road in Newton and is on the 8th September. We will be very pleased if you would all come along and give your support, whether it is as an exhibitor, or a sponsor, or just come along and see what everyone else has had a go at. It is a great afternoon out and it gives you the opportunity to meet other members, swap tips and generally have a chat to the committee.

The categories this year are as follows:-

PHOTOGRAPHY :-	Castles, Water, and Wildlife
COOKERY :-	Jam Swiss Roll, Cranberry Scones, Jar of Jam or a Jar of Chutney.
CHILDRENS COOKERY :-	Chocolate and Orange Slab Cake
ART :-	Flower Power

If you have a pot plant that you are particularly proud of, have a look in the schedule it could be that you can enter it in the pot plant section, it's worth having a go.

Good luck to all those who enter and hope to see the rest of you there on the day, if you can't make it you could always sponsor a class, it costs as little as £3.60 but any amount would be very acceptable. Just come along to the hut and we can help you to sponsor a class or two. Thank you in anticipation.

CLEARING THE AIR

After painting and decorating, banish those paint smells by placing pots of Azalea, Ivy and Mother-in-laws tongue in the room.

The leaves absorb and break down toxins.

TO RIPEN FRUIT

Slightly under-ripe apples and pears will ripen and soften more quickly if laid on a bed of nettles. Or fill a paper bag with nettle leaves and add the unripe fruits. Check each day and remove the fruits as they ripen, it is advisable to wear gloves when doing this.

["Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak"](#)

BEWARE THE LEEK MOTH

This is another nasty 'accidentally' introduced pest which, in 2011, got as far north as Burton-on-Trent. It is a small moth, the larvae of which burrow into the stems and bulbs of leeks and, to a lesser extent, onions and garlic. Entire crops can be ruined completely. The adult moths are on the wing in May-June, with a larger second generation in August, which is far worse as far as leeks are concerned. By that time onions and garlic will be harvested, and the overwintering onion and garlic sets won't have been planted. The plants will show signs of damage in late August-beginning of October; the bulb/stem rots from the inside.

Please let us know if and when your leeks are attacked by this pest, so that we can inform others through the RHS that the leek moth has reached north Cheshire/south Lancashire.

There is no chemical means of controlling this pest. The only way of preventing it is by covering the crop with fleece or very fine Enviromesh, so that the female moth cannot lay her eggs on the plants.

APPLES AND PEARS...DO YOU WANT LARGE NUMBERS OR QUALITY FRUIT?

When you read this the natural fall of small apples and pears will already have occurred and those fruits that remain will probably all mature if you let them. However if you want top quality, large fruit you may need to thin out further. It really is worth doing! Wherever a group of flowers emerged from one bud you may see two, three or four swelling fruits. Thin these to only one per site, and the single fruits will be far better in size and quality.

Also don't forget that, though the stalk comes away from the stem easily when it is time to pick the fruit, most varieties of apples and pears are still not fully ripe then. They will need storing for a few weeks to soften and for starch in the fruit to turn to sugars. They need storing for a few weeks to soften and for starch in the fruit to turn to sugars.

Malcolm G

EVER THOUGHT OF SHOWING YOUR POTATOES?

Stage your potatoes on potato plates, with the heel end (end where they were attached to the stem) towards the centre of the plate and the eyes, or rose end towards the outside edge. Select tubers that match in size, even if they are only small, it's better than having an uneven set. Wash your potatoes as late as possible so that they retain their fresh, shiny look. Keep them covered once you have washed them (a piece of kitchen roll wrapped round each one is good, put them onto the plate and best of luck.

BLUEBERRIES

Did you know that blueberries are very good for you, containing lots of antioxidants, which are said to help combat some cancers, and also high levels of vitamins including A, K and C, plus iron, magnesium, potassium, phosphorous, calcium and many other minerals.

MONEY SAVING TIPS

- 1) No need for costly silver cleaning products – use good old toothpaste instead. Gently rub tarnished silverware with a blob of toothpaste on a soft dry cloth. Leave for 5 – 10 minutes, or longer if needed and rinse off with water. Dry and buff with a soft, dry cloth for shiny silverware.
- 2) If the grandchildren have been leaving dirty fingerprints on your wallpaper, save yourself the cost of stain remover by rubbing the prints with a piece of white bread until the marks vanish. This may sound like an old wives' tale but it really does work.
- 3) Remove the dirty rings from shirt collars by dousing them with shampoo and rubbing them before they go into the wash. It works because shampoo contains ingredients that are made to remove body oils, and other greases.

4 STEPS TO GROWING HYACINTHS IN POTS.

Make up a free-draining mix of bulb fibre, ordinary multi- purpose or peat-free compost mixed with a few handfuls of horticultural grit.

Indoor bulbs look best in ornamental pots, such as ceramic kitchenware bowls. If they don't have drainage holes in the base, place a layer of horticultural grit at the bottom of a 30cm bowl to prevent waterlogging. Fill the bowl three-quarters full with compost and then bury five bulbs, pointed end up, in a circle so that just the top half inch shows. Don't mix varieties because they flower at different times. Hyacinth bulbs can irritate the skin so wear gloves when handling.

Sprinkle a layer of horticultural grit on top of the compost and leave a small gap between the grit and the rim for watering.

Water the bulbs in, so that the compost is moist but not water-logged and check pots regularly because lack of water stunts growth. Place the bowl in a cool, dark place below 10 C. Check for slugs, snails and mice, and water occasionally. After about 10 to 12 weeks, once the tip of the bulb has started to grow, uncover and bring indoors.

HAPPY HYACINTHS

THE HUT ORDERS

Fred has asked that anyone who would like to order potatoes, garlic, onions, shallots and seeds for next year, do so before the 13th October. Pre-orders usually attract a lower price because Fred can avoid waste and the order will be prepared and ready for you to collect.

Also, anyone interested in winter onions and garlic should see Fred before end of August to avoid disappointment

AND FINALLY

David Hemmingway does a marvellous job of keeping the Web-site up to date and it would be a shame if you missed out on seeing his good work. Please have a look, it has photographs of everything that we do (including the talks at the Cricket club) and hints and tips on a great many things to do in the garden. There is also an archive section, which many of you will remember, you know in the "good old days"

The address is www.nlwgardeners.co.uk