

NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2008



EDITORS BECKY AND MARGARET

Chairman's Report

Welcome to our summer newsletter. At the AGM in January we had some changes in your committee as a result of the resignation of two stalwarts of the Association: Richard Jeacock as chairman and William Hart as Hut Manager. I should like to thank both of them for all their past hard work and I look forward to working with the new committee in the future, welcoming Mike Briers as my vice chairman and Fred Dickinson as the new hut manager.

I am pleased to report that at the time of writing the refurbishment of the hut exterior is approaching completion. I would appeal to any of you that can spare any time to help at the hut to speak to me or any of the committee. Our annual show is to be held on 6th September 2008 and I would like to ask if anyone could help us to set out the hall on the Friday evening (5th) and also to clear up after the show on Saturday evening (6th) to please us know.

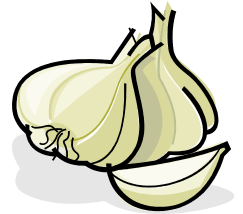
Please continue to support us with your purchases at the hut and try to come to the monthly talks.

Good gardening to you all in 2008

Tony Addison - Chairman

Good Friday demonstration

The day dawned clear and bright and very, very cold, with a forecast of rain later, so, without hesitation we got started with the demonstration. Firstly Rob Williams showed the gathered crowd how to take cuttings from several herbs and asked some of the crowd to have a go for themselves, several of which duly obliged. It was Fred's turn next, and he demonstrated how to grow potatoes in pots. Some of the committee gave out tea and coffee to try to keep the gathered audience warm.



I would like to thank everyone who turned up that morning and braved the most atrocious weather. Someone must have been looking down on us though, because just as the talk was coming to an end it started to snow. What timing !! We couldn't have planned it better.

On the whole it was a very satisfying morning and I think everyone enjoyed it. Any ideas for what you would like to see next year would be greatly appreciated.

WHAT IS A GRANDMOTHER? (by an 8 year old boy)

A Grandmother is a lady who has no children of her own, so she loves the boys and girls of other people. Grandmothers have nothing to do, they only have to be there. If they take you for a walk, they go slowly past leaves and caterpillars. They never say "come along quickly" or "hurry up for goodness sake". They are usually a little bit fat – but not too fat to bend down to tie my shoe laces. They wear spectacles and some of them can even take their teeth out. They can answer any question – for instance – "Why do dogs hate cats" and "Why God is not married". When they read to us, they never leave anything out and they don't mind if it's always the same story. I think everyone should have a Grandmother, especially if you have not got a television. Grandmothers are lovely and the only grown-ups that have plenty of time. Sent to us by a member from Lowton (Mrs Lily Young)

The five worst things about spring gardening

1. Slug invasion.
2. Packed garden centres.
3. Late frosts.
4. Back-breaking work for a month or so.
5. Realizing in early summer that you have forgotten to sow certain plants.

OUR WEB-SITE

Any computer users out there should have a look at our web-site www.nlwgardeners.com There's all kinds of information on there – talks and trips coming up – bargains to be had – results from our show in September and do have a look at our new addition on the “Archive” link . It tells the history of the association with photos and a brief explanation, expertly done by our former Chairman Richard Jeacock.

SATURDAY THE 6TH SEPTMEBER

This is the date of our annual fruit and vegetable show at St.Aelreds school in Newton-le-Willows. Don't be put off by the title, although we do have expert growers who exhibit, there are also classes for the amateur grower and everyone has to start somewhere. There are also competitions in Art, Cookery, Photography and Flower Arranging so please come along and enter, it is only 10p to enter a class and if you are over 60 years old it's free. If you don't feel up to exhibiting, it's no excuse for not attending, it is a super show and worthy of a visit just to look at what everyone else has done. A lot of time and effort goes into arranging and planning for this show and it is for the benefit of our members, so please come along and support us. If you can't make it on the day you might think about sponsoring a class, (maybe in remembrance of a loved one) which may cost as little as £3.20, but any donation would be very welcome.

A LOVELY RECIPE FOR A SUMMERS DAY FROM OUR RESIDENT COOK

Rhubarb and custard iced lollies

Makes about 6

For the rhubarb layer

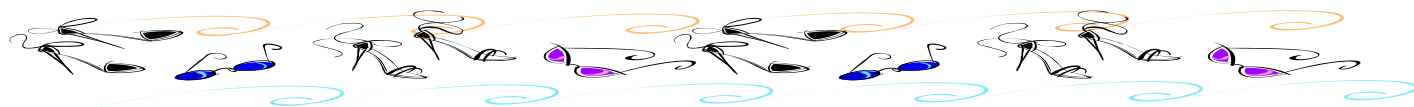
9 oz pureed rhubarb, 3 ½ oz caster sugar, 1 tbsp ginger syrup from a jar of stem ginger

For the custard layer

5 tbsp double cream, 5 fl oz ready made custard, ¼ tsp vanilla extract, 1 tbsp icing sugar, sifted.

Add the sugar to the pureed rhubarb and then the ginger syrup and pour into a small but tall glass to half fill it. Freeze for about 2 hours. For the custard layer, lightly whip the double cream, then stir in the custard, vanilla and icing sugar. Spoon over the rhubarb layer and place a lolly stick into each one and freeze for 2–3 hours. Remove the lollies 15-20 minutes before you need them, or if you can't wait, dip them into warmish water. **ENJOY**

You can use any other fruit puree instead of rhubarb, or a tin of fruit squashed with a fork.



Trip to Harrogate show

The coach arrived on time and we went to Culcheth first to pick up some of our friends from there. The coach journey was a little tedious, but we finally arrived and what a day it was. The sun shone all day and there were lots of people at the show. The daffodil and tulip exhibits were a joy to see, as were the flower arranging displays. Lots of places to eat, but not enough seats meant we had to stand and eat wherever we could. There were lots of plants to be had, but not many bargains, still, no pain, no gain. At 4pm we headed back to the coach all footsore and weary, but with memories of a great day out. We are now looking forward to the next outing to Blists Hill at Ironbridge.

DID YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER BY E-MAIL?

If you've got this newsletter through your letterbox instead of via e-mail as requested, or you haven't been receiving any reminders about events we have scheduled, it could be that I haven't been able to send out your e-mail. Sometimes this has been because you have changed your e-mail address since you've joined, or you have a filter so that it automatically goes into your junk file, or, I have been unable to read your written address! Whatever the reason, if you want to be contacted by e-mail, send me a message at silmike_briers@hotmail.com – this way I'll be sure to get the right address.

SILVANA BRIERS

General secretary

Butterflies

What could be better, than on a lovely summer evening, watching the butterflies dance upon the flowers in your garden.

Then you had better think about sending an invitation to them to come along – HOW ?

By planting flowers and shrubs which feed them the nectar and pollen that they need to survive. With this in mind I have listed some of the plants that can help to do this.

Early Plants include Cowslip, Dandelion, English Bluebell, Grape Hyacinth, Pansy, Sweet William and Wallflower .

Mid Season Plants include Buddleia, Heather, Lavender, Verbena, and Wallflower.

Late Season Plants include Coneflower, French Marigold, Honeysuckle, Ivy and Michaelmas Daisy.

Remember to plant your flowers in a sheltered spot, in full sun, as the butterflies rarely visit cold or draughty places.

If you want to read more about the work of the wild life trust visit the web site at www.wildlifetrusts.org



Broadening our horizons

We are going to be involved with a number of schools this year, including attending their open days, and promoting our association, by giving out leaflets and explaining to people just what we are about. We are using this as an experiment, if successful we will visit more schools next year, because we believe that we need to start at an early age to maintain a healthy interest in gardening. If you know of any child that has an event coming up and would like us to attend, then please let us know, or come along to the hut and talk to any of the committee.

Competitions

Jack won our "Kids corner" competition and won 4 tickets to the cinema for himself and his family. He has promised to write a column for us in the next issue of the newsletter about his love of cacti and succulents and tells us that this year he is hoping to be growing some strawberries. He is also developing an interest in Alpines.

THE FLOWER QUIZ was won by Mr & Mrs C Webster of Newton-le-Willows who kindly donated their winnings to the association. Thanks for that lovely gesture, it is greatly appreciated.

Words seen on a gravestone

Look and see as you pass by, as you are now, so once was I.

As I am now, you're sure to be, prepare for death and follow me.

UNDERNEATH SOMEONE HAD WRITTEN

"To follow you I'm not content, until I know which way you went".

ST. PETERS' SCHOOL PROJECT – by Fred Dickinson

The children who attend the class sessions at the hut are amazing.

Over the past three years they have endured all sorts of weather, performed all the tasks set for them and still managed to show enthusiasm for the next session – their parents should be very pleased with them.

This year has been terribly slow to start and the children have only recently suffered their first session of weeding of the year and were amazed at the huge pile of uprooted new growth that they collected – filling four sacks with their efforts, then undaunted, they quickly planted two rows of potatoes before going home for a 'wash and brush-up'.

They now have a brand new 'bean wall' (a full size permanent supported network) against which they will be able to plant and raise runner and climbing dwarf beans. The materials for the bean wall, seeds and tubers are supplied for the children by the Association in line with our policy of promoting gardening amongst the young. The resulting fresh vegetables will be supplied to the school kitchen so that all children at the school have the opportunity to taste what has been produced by their peers (I'm told that last year when the vegetables appeared on the lunch menu, they disappeared at an impressive rate and none were left).

Well done to the Environmental Studies group !

KIDS CORNER



The worm has turned!

Create your very own wormery and mini composter. Take a large clean glass jar and put about 3cm of sand in the bottom, add 4cm of soil and then another 3cm of sand and keep going until you have almost reached the top (leave about 10 cm from the top). Collect some earthworms by digging over a couple of patches of earth in the garden and put them into the jar. Add a few odd leaves, vegetable peelings and pieces of apple and a quarter of a cup of water. Put the lid on and get an adult to help you to put a few holes in it so that the air can get in. Worms hate light so tie some paper around the jar and place somewhere dark and cool for two weeks. When you go to check your wormery you will see a difference because worms are important as they aerate the soil, bringing nutrients closer to the surface and creating good drainage. Worm poo is packed with goodies like potassium, phosphorus and nitrogen which feed the soil and therefore helps things to grow. Did you know that worms are roughly 1000 times stronger than humans relative to their size?

Something for the ladies !!

Why not try making a natural jewellery collection using seeds and nuts. Wash the seeds well; leave them to dry in the sun and then lace together using a long needle and some strong thread. You can dye the seeds/stones a lovely mahogany colour by soaking them in cold tea.

Talks still to come

26th June :- Flower arranging – Ideas for the show.

30th October :- "Christmas is coming" – Holly Wreaths.

We still have 1 trip left this year. On Saturday the 12th July the coach is going to Ness Gardens and Norton Priory, leaving Sam's Bar at 9am. The cost for this trip is £13.65 payable at the time of booking

FINALLY Don't forget the Flower and Vegetable show on the **6th September** and why not bring along your friends, you are in for a treat.