

# NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2009



EDITORS BECKY AND MARGARET (contact 01744 21482)

### Chairman's Report

Welcome to the summer newsletter. I hope that you have had a good start to the gardening year. It has been a cold windy spring and my garden has had a slow start but is starting to flourish now that we have had some warmer days and rain. It has been pleasing to see the hut so busy over the past few weeks and I must praise Fred and all the volunteers for the hard work they have done from potting up to assisting members with their purchases. We always need more help and I would be interested to hear from anyone who would like to join the list of volunteers.

The trip to the Malvern show was fully booked this year, we had a great day and it was good that lots of you came with us to make the trip successful.

Please remember the Annual Show on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September and let's make it successful with more competitors and entries.

Have a good summer. Tony Addison - Chairman

### HOUSEHOLD FOODS TO FEED YOUR GARDEN BIRDS

Raisin, sultanas and currants.

Fat (enjoyed by tits thrushes and wrens).

Cooked, unsalted rice.

Grated mild cheddar cheese (a treat for robins, blackbirds, wrens and song thrushes).

Dry porridge oats.

Pieces of apple, pear, even if they have started to go off (a treat for thrushes, tits and starlings).

Peanuts sold for the express use of feeding the birds.

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### TIPS FOR BASIL

- **BASIL :-** Basil oil is delicious drizzled over sliced tomatoes, but it can also be used in cooking and as a general salad dressing. There are two simple ways of making it. First whiz up the leaves with some olive oil in a food processor. Lightly heat the mixture in a pan for three or four minutes to release the flavour and then let it cool before pouring into a jar. Alternatively, just put a large handful of the leaves in a jar of olive oil and allow it to rest for a month in a dark cupboard.
- Pinch out the tops of your basil plants to ensure future growth is outwards and not upwards. Don't let them flower either.

## **DON'T FORGET THE SHOW!!**

The show preparations are well underway, fingers crossed the weather will be kind to all growers ensuring that we will have plenty of exhibits.

Irrespective of the weather we always lack many entries in the novice classes, there are 2 in particular, the first being Class 82 – A mini collection of 3 kinds of vegetables, these can be anything from potatoes, (remember our growing potatoes in pots session!!) onions, peas, and tomatoes – the list is never ending so you have plenty to choose from.

The other is class 51 - Floral Art – this is for all budding flower arrangers, the topic this year is a Treasure Trove,( a petite arrangement). I'm sure some of us will have the skills and imagination to show this, using flowers.

There are other novice classes in flowers, pot plants and vegetable sections, for more information please collect a schedule from the hut and if you have any questions do not hesitate to ask.

I hope you can help by entering in a class whether its cookery, flowers, art, photography or vegetables. Remember age is no barrier; there is also a children's section so please encourage your children or grandchildren to enter.

Another way you can help is by sponsoring a class, which in some cases only costs £3.20. You can also do this in memory of a loved one. So if you can help please ask at the hut.

If you are not able to enter any exhibits, please try to visit the show on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September at St.Aeldreds school in Birley Street. I look forward to seeing you there.

Ursula Harrison (Show Secretary)

## **RECIPE**

### **Potato, leek & rosemary soup**

50g/2oz butter, 450g/1lb leeks, trimmed and finely sliced, 700g/1½ lb potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped, 900ml/1½ pints vegetable stock, 4 sprigs of fresh rosemary, 450ml/¾ pint full-cream milk, 2 tbsp chopped parsley, 2 tbsp crème fraiche, salt and pepper

#### **Method**

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan, add the leeks and cook gently for 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove 1 tablespoon of the cooked leeks and reserve for garnish.
2. Add the potatoes, vegetable stock, rosemary sprigs and milk. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat, cover and simmer gently for 20-25 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.
3. Cool for 10 minutes. Discard the rosemary sprigs, then pour into a food processor or blender and blend well to form a smooth textured soup.
4. Return the soup to the cleaned saucepan and stir in the chopped parsley with the crème fraiche. Season to taste with salt and pepper. If the soup is too thick stir in a little more milk or water.
5. Reheat gently without boiling, then ladle into warm soup bowls. Garnish the soup with the reserved leeks and serve immediately with wholemeal rolls.

This year we have been very short on volunteers at the hut in Rob Lane. We would like to ask if anyone has a couple of hours to spare, particularly on a Sunday morning or a Wednesday evening during the spring, please come and join us we would be happy to see you.

IT REALLY IS AMAZING — YOU HANG SOMETHING IN YOUR WARDROBE FOR A WHILE AND IT SHRINKS TWO SIZES !!

Due to the closure of the Kirkfield Hotel, our talks this year have been moved to “Newton Cricket Club” on Crow Lane. The talks this year so far have been a huge success, partly due to the improvement in parking facilities, and the room being much larger can hold many more people and also the seating is much more comfortable. There is only one talk left now, which is on the 29<sup>th</sup> October and will be “Decoration ideas for Christmas”. Please come along and enjoy an evening with us, you don’t have to be a member to come along, so why not bring a friend with you.

JUST WHEN I WAS GETTING USED TO YESTERDAY, ALONG CAME TODAY.

#### JOBS TO DO IN AUGUST:-

1. Keep hedges trimmed.
2. Collect and store seeds from your favourite flowers.
3. Cut raspberry canes
4. Harvest onions when the tops die back
5. Clip off faded lavender with shears.
6. Dead-head roses
7. Prune about ¼ of the oldest blackcurrant stems.

#### JOBS TO DO IN SEPTEMBER :-

1. Harvest tomatoes, if still green harvest the whole vine and hang upside down to ripen.
2. Keep picking runner beans, French beans, courgettes and cucumber regularly.
3. Begin lifting root vegetables such as carrots, beetroot, and turnip, but leave parsnips until after the first frosts as they are much sweeter then.

#### JOBS TO DO IN OCTOBER :-

1. Lift and pot up tender plants and bring under cover
  2. Clean greenhouse glazing inside and out to let in more light, then pin up bubble wrap to keep in the heat.
  3. Wrap grease bands around the stems of apple trees.
  4. Put netting over ponds before the leaves start to fall.
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Have you ever noticed, the older we get, the more we're like computers. We start out with lots of "memory" and "drive", then we become outdated, "crash" at odd moments, and eventually have to get our parts replaced.

I would also like to thank our tireless band of helpers at the hut, who turn out in all weathers to make sure that our members get their purchases, delivered to their cars safely. It would be remiss of us not to thank also the group of volunteers who turn up each week to help out in the polytunnel to prick out, pot on and sell the plants. We are, after all, a band of volunteers who work tirelessly to make sure that you have your gardening requirements at the best possible price, thanks largely to the good job that our Hut Manager (FRED) does in badgering the wholesalers for the best possible deal. If you need to ask any questions about anything pertaining to the hut, Fred’s phone number is 01744 21482 and his E-Mail address [indewoods@talktalk.net](mailto:indewoods@talktalk.net) He will be only too pleased to help in any way he can.

The open day at the hut on Good Friday went very well. About 30 people attended the demonstration on a new type of hanging basket and the weather was a little kinder than last year. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, with a cup of tea or coffee and a piece of home-made cake. We did a roaring trade in the baskets themselves and have sold quite a few more since. Thanks to all those people who turned up on the day, we really appreciate your support.

Rob Williams, who did the demonstration, has done a fact sheet about hanging baskets :-

1. The baskets on demonstration are plastic and a bonus to these are that they don't dry out as quickly as their counterparts, because they have a built in reservoir and you do not need any liners, so once you have bought your basket, there is no more cost involved.
2. One draw-back is that you can see the plastic until the growth on the plants builds up, but choosing the right plants can counteract this, choose trailing plants such as Surfinas, Fuchsias, Bidens and Ivy leafed Geraniums, making sure that you water well during the summer as they dry out very quickly, but you can put in water retaining gel and a slow release fertiliser when planting them up. Also give them a liquid feed once a week.
3. A Hanging Basket can also be used for other plants such as herbs, salad crops, strawberries and some kinds of tomatoes.

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## **COMPOST**

Garden compost is made by rotting down vegetable matter and is used to improve the soil. It should not be used to sow seeds or pot up your plants. Good compost is made from a mixture of suitable materials added in small amounts. There is no need to add accelerators or water, providing there is a balance between green, damp materials and drier, more woody ones, and if the compost bin is properly insulated, it is best not to turn the compost as this will cool it down and slow up rotting. There is also no need to ventilate the container as air will enter with the waste, and it is not necessary to add soil as micro-organisms will be introduced on the roots of plants. To ensure the finished compost is not too acid, 140g/sq m of garden lime may be sprinkled over the surface at 30cm intervals. Any plant material will compost, but some types will do so more swiftly than others. Lawn mowings, vegetable peelings and if your carpets are made from natural fibres, the dust from the vacuum-cleaner, break down quickly. Coarser items, such as hedge clippings and tree prunings, are best shredded before being added to the heap. Mix bulky waste, such as cabbage leaves and shredded or crushed woody stems or brassica stumps, with fine material, such as lawn mowing, before adding. Lawn mowing should not be put directly onto the compost heap. They will pack down to form a slimy, airless mass. Mix them with other materials before adding them to the heap.

If your compost heap is unlikely to be disturbed after May, it is a good place to plant a marrow or a couple of courgettes. However, watch out for slugs and snails.

### **Receiving the Newsletter & Reminders Via Email**

*The email database has been growing and growing but it is now time to weed and prune it. Quite a lot of people on the list are no longer members, so after this newsletter, all those who have not renewed their membership for this year will be deleted.*

*Please go to the Hut and renew your membership if you still wish to continue to receive the benefits our members enjoy.*

Don't forget our website is still at [www.nlwgardeners.com](http://www.nlwgardeners.com) and you can visit for all the latest offers and information about the talks at the Cricket Club, the coach trips, and any news and archives.

**THE NICE PART ABOUT LIVING IN A SMALL TOWN – WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, SOMEONE ELSE ALWAYS DOES.**

