

LATE WINTER NEWSLETTER 2015

2015 is a special year for the allotments Society. It is 90 years since The 1925 Allotments Act was passed which led to the formation of Barnes Allotment and Horticultural Association. Their first meeting was held at The East Sheen Council School on the Upper Richmond Road on March 19th 1926.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2015:

THE OPEN DAY will be held on **SUNDAY 17TH MAY**

The allotments will be open to all in the area. Start putting aside home-made jams and chutneys and spare plants for the usual popular stalls and there will of course be the famous BBQ

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THE AGM. will be held at The Trading Shed on **SAT. 20TH JUNE** at **12.00AM**

All on the allotments can attend but only members can vote. This will be a very important meeting: Alex Clark ,who is at present, Chairman and Allotment Secretary, will be retiring from both positions. Society members are urgently needed to fill the posts otherwise it will be very difficult for the Allotments Committee to liaise with The Council and run the allotments efficiently.Two people working together as a partnership (e.g. Sophie and Alastair Kennedy as Treasurer) can work just as well. New names with new ideas even better..... Any applications please send to Alex Clark (see details at end of Newsletter.) Job descriptions for Chairman and Allotment Secretary will be posted at the Site gates or ask your Site Reps for more details.

THE ANNUAL SHOW: The date has yet to be decided but possibly The August Bank-Holiday.

PLOT INSPECTIONS: These will be happening over the next couple of weeks so if you don't want any Warning Letters, start clearing and preparing your plots for spring planting now.

THE TRADING SHED is open every Saturday and Sunday 11.00-12.00am. Only members can buy any goods. Make sure you bring your current membership card. You can renew/join at the Trading Shed when it is open.

Seed Potatoes are for sale NOW in The Shed:

Lady Christy 1st Early

Home Guard 1st Early Introduced in 1942, promoted and made popular by the Home-Guard in the WWII. A good variety to grow on heavy soil. Resistant to 'Scab' disease. Excellent for baking, boiling, mash and chips.

Chalotte 2nd Early. A classic new potato with an AGM for excellent taste. A heavy cropper with resistance to Slugs, Blight and some drought resistance.

Wilja 2nd Early Introduced in 1970s. A heavy cropper with resistance to Slugs and Scab. Excellent for baking, mash, boiling and chips.

Picasso Main Crop A very heavy cropper with resistance to Blight and other serious potato diseases. Drought resistant. Particularly good for baking.

Desiree Main Crop Introduced from The Netherlands in 1962, a very heavy cropper in all soils and has good drought resistance, also resistant to Scab and Virus disease. Waxy texture, good for baking, mash and roasting.

There will be no Onion or Shallot Sets for sale this spring, there was too much wastage last year but you can order Sets for spring planting from Kings Seeds (catalogues available in The Shed, see details for ordering on gates and notice boards) or buy from Adrian Hall (10% discount if you are a member) or sow onion and shallot seed now inside for summer crops.

TREE PRUNING AND CUTTING. The Council has been carrying out tree pruning to Boundary Trees on Priory, Hertford and The Triangle sites. This has mostly consisted of "Lifting" that is, cutting off lower branches and thinning to allow more light to the allotments and some removal of diseased or dangerous trees. They are NOT here to remove trees and saplings growing on your plot. That is your responsibility. So once again, please cut down and dig out any small trees or saplings growing on your allotment before they get too big and cost you money to have removed. This is the best time of the year to do this job, it's easier to see what needs to go and it will get you warm! Fruit trees

should be grown on dwarfing stock and pruned every year, apple, pears quince etc now, fruit with stones (cherries, peaches etc.) mid-summer.

EARLY SPRING ON THE PLOTS

GROWING POTATOES: To “Chit” or not to “Chit”. Many people think there is no need to “Chit” potatoes except 1st`Earlies. “Chitting” enables the potato to produce shoots so that the seed potato begins to grow before the soil has warmed up. The tubers will develop more quickly, giving you an earlier harvest and this can help avoid Blight developing, a disease that usually occurs in July onwards.

1. To “chit” potatoes: As soon as you buy Seed Potatoes, place in a tray or box, in a bright, frost-free place. Make sure you place the potato’s “rose” end is uppermost, that is the end that has most leaf-buds or “eyes”. When the “eyes” have produced strong green-purple shoots about ½ in long they are ready for planting.
2. Plant the “Chitted” potatoes in furrows about 8cms /3ins deep, 40cms/1.6ft apart, in rows 75cms/2.ft apart. Before planting, add some general fertiliser e.g. “Growmore”, or “Fish, Blood and Bone” along bottom of furrow, cover the potatoes and when first foliage emerges. “Earth-up” as soon as the first leaves appear, (you will need to do this a couple of times), that is cover with a ridge of soil to protect the new growth and make sure the developing tubers are not exposed. You may need additional protection with fleece in frosty weather.
3. Blight is the most common potato disease. It can be a serious problem in warm wet summers from July onwards
 - “Bordeaux Mix” sprayed on leaves will help if repeated several times
 - Water the base of the plant and NOT the leaves in dry weather
 - Plant alternate rows of potatoes with higher and lower disease resistance.
 - Check the leaves and remove any showing signs of disease (brown patches on leaf and stems) and if the crop has formed

tubers of a reasonable size, remove all the foliage to ground level.

- Either BURN or BIN any diseased material to prevent disease spread. DON'T put in your compost heap.

For more information: www.potato.org.uk/gardeners

GROWING SWEET PEAS “Early Birds” get the best Sweet Peas.”

- It is said that their roots go down as far as the shoots go up.
- Sweet Peas are very susceptible to “checks” during growth through insufficient water or too much water near the roots.
- To prevent this, dig a trench 3ft wide and 1ft deep leave open for a couple of months to allow weather to break up soil.
- In March dig a trench 1ft deep, line with a few ins. of well rotted manure then soil and then manure until the trench is filled, making sure all is well trodden down. In the final layer add a few handfuls of “Growmore” or “Blood, Fish and Bone”.
- Meanwhile, sow the Sweep Pea seeds in February inside in a sunny place in tall “Long Pots” or in wooden boxes 2.6 ins apart in seed compost (or a mix of ½ All Purpose compost, ½ sand or vermiculite)
- “Harden off” the plants when they are about ½in high by placing them outside in a sheltered area or a cold frame for a couple of weeks. Then plant out in the trench.
- Make sure they have lots of twiggy branches to hold on to, in between a good strong wigwam of canes or poles.

(From: “Over the Garden Fence” 1949: gardening advice written by an ex-nurseryman for the new homeowners next door)

THE FIRST ALLOTMENTS IN THE BOROUGH OF BARNES

In the 1980s urban workers were increasingly enthusiastic for allotments. Towns became more crowded and the working class tenement often lacked a garden. The Borough of Barnes had ceased being a rural village and had begun to expand with the coming of the railway in the mid 1800s, the once thriving Market Garden industry was disappearing under houses. In 1985 The Barnes Council gave permission to the newly formed Council Allotment

Committee to: “Conclude negotiations and enter into agreements for certain lands for allotments” This was land on North Worple Way, (known as Goddard’s Land) and South Worple Way on the side of Tinder Box Alley owned by a Capt. Fitzgerald and a Mr A. Atwood but leased to Mr Martin Poupat, a market gardener who had agreed to give up the land reserving only the right to harvest his rhubarb and reclaim £5 for hurdles surrounding the land. The 5 acres of land was then to be leased to The Council for an annual rent of £5.10/- an acre. The land could be reprocessed by the owners for building purposes with one months notice to be served to the existing allotment holders. In Feb.1896 the Allotment Committee reported to the Council that rent was to be charged at 1/- 2p per rod, a survey was underway to peg out the plots and applications for the allotments were ready to be accepted. The plots ere only for The Working Classes. In August 1901 an application for a plot by a Mr L ittlewood, a fishmonger, was turned down “by reason of his not belonging to the labouring population”. After WW1 the newly formed Barnes Allotment and Horticultural Association had a fight on its hands to keep the Worple Way allotments. Homes For Heroes was a Barnes Council priority and though allotments were seen as essential for health and the economy, housing won out, the allotment Site becoming Ripley Gardens.

DR JOHN TYMAN

Mention John Tyman and a smile will pass over the faces of all who knew him. Being somewhat deaf didn’t stop him from chatting and giving generously both advice and spare seedlings from his plot in the Palewell Pavillion Site. What many of us did not know was that he was an eminent chemist in his particular field.

John died at the end of last year leaving a wife Barbara. He was “A Good Man”.

