

Cheltenham and District Allotment Holders' Association

President: Alderman Christine Ryder

www.cheltenhamallotments.org

Affiliated to the National Allotment Society and the Gloucestershire Federation of Gardening Societies.

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2019

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C&DAHA Autumn Meeting Monday September 2nd – Marion Stainton

“Growing vegetables: getting the best from your efforts”.

This is a 'back to basics' talk which focuses on a practical approach to planning and managing your vegetable growing. The emphasis is very much on planning in that prevention is better than cure, especially in this world where sustainability is very much in our minds. The approach is not an organic one, but one where chemicals are only used as a last resort. <http://www.marionet.co.uk/the-brooks>

Raffle tickets will be on sale, to be drawn at the end of the meeting.

Membership Advantages Include:

- The Seed Scheme (savings of approx. 40%)
- 10% discount at:
 - Dundry Nurseries, Bamfurlong Lane,
 - Cleeve Supplies, Tobyfield Rd,
 - Mobile chiropodist, Tel: 07713209729,
- insurance giving public liability cover related to your plot,
- a Newsletter four times per year,
- three meetings per year – two with a guest speaker.

(Please inform your neighbour plot holders who are not members of these benefits).

Facebook

Follow us on Facebook, look us up under 'Cheltenham & District Allotment Holders Association', [here](#) is a link.

Website Passwords

C&DAHA Website

The new password for access to the members' area of our website is **Snowball**, a variety of cauliflower that I am growing this year.

National Website (nsalg.org.uk)

The User Name is: s9327

Password: nsalg12

Information on the Internet

Visit <http://www.allaboutallotments.co.uk/>, this website contains a wealth of information about allotments.

Email addresses

If you are a new email user or have changed your email address, please let me know. This ensures you receive this quarterly newsletter promptly as well as the occasional bulletin of topical news. Please notify changes to newsletter@cheltenhamallotments.org

IMPORTANT - SEE ITEM ON ASIAN HORNETS ON PAGE 8

National Allotments Week 2019

12th to 18th August 2019 is National Allotments week.

This year's campaign week theme is "Shared Harvest" celebrating the fact that plot-holders share their crops with family, friends, colleagues and worthy causes, including food banks. Each plot in the UK can benefit up to 8 people! This year National Allotment Society will be taking a look at and publicising the practice of donating crops to food banks.

Perhaps you and your fellow allotmenters would like to organise an event relevant to the theme on your allotment site.

Allotmenteeer Liability Insurance

At the end of each month I send the details of all those who joined that month to the National Allotment Association. They then send me an email confirming that all those people are now covered by the Allotmenteeer Liability Insurance that they provide as part of our society's affiliation to them.

All members who have joined for 2019 are covered unless they have said they wish to opt out. I have a couple of people who joined in May who are not yet included, but they will have cover from the end of May.

Dates for Your Diary

C&DAHA Meetings for 2019

Monday December 2nd – Annual General Meeting

All meetings start at 7pm and are held at the Municipal Offices, Promenade, Cheltenham. All members are invited to attend.

Other Forthcoming Events

Ashton under Hill Open Gardens

Saturday 8th & Sunday 9th June, 1pm to 6pm

At least 25 gardens open plus refreshments, stalls and exhibitions. Entry price: Adults £6.00 Children free, discounts available for larger parties. Further details at www.ashtonopengardens.co.uk

National Allotment Society AGM

June 8th

Dennis Sutton will be representing the C&DAHA at the National Allotment Society AGM on Saturday 8th June, if you have any issues that you would like him to raise, please email him at: densutton@madasafish.com.

Churchdown Horticultural Society – Coach Trips

HAMPTON COURT GARDENS, HEREFORDSHIRE
Wednesday 12th June 2019, departing Churchdown 8.30 am, returning 6pm

The gardens at Hampton Court Castle attract visitors from all over the country. They feature an abundant Kitchen Garden encased by original Victorian walls, stunning formal gardens, vast lawns and river walks. At the centre of the maze, the gothic tower offers panoramic views across the estate and a secret passage leads down to the Sunken Garden. The trip

includes a one hour "walk and talk" with a Senior Gardener.

Cost: £25, or £24 for senior citizens (65+), which includes coach and entry to the gardens and guided tour. Optional entrance to the house can be bought on arrival.

There are various pick up points in Churchdown

- Churchdown Library
- Parish Council Car Park
- St Johns Church
- The Old Elm
- Winstone Road

The Society will also be running a trip to Painswick Rococco Gardens on Saturday 7th September. This will include a tour with the Head Gardener. The cost of this will be £19.50 to include the coach, entry and guided tour.

If you are interested in joining these trips, please contact Karen Feighan, either email karenraask@hotmail.co.uk, or phone on 07903 302442, and she will send a booking form.

Prestbury Open Gardens

Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd June 2019, 2 - 5pm

Fourteen delightful gardens dotted around the historic village of Prestbury. Entry: £5 per adult to cover both days (accompanied children free). Tickets available at any open garden or at St Mary's Church

Profits to St Marys Church.

Plant sales in aid of The Butterfly Garden.

Daglingworth Village Hall Committee presents



Rosa 'Albertine' scrambles up the house

A Presentation on Kiftsgate Court Gardens

By

Vanessa Berridge

Vanessa Berridge's latest book, *Kiftsgate Court Gardens: Three Generations of Women Gardeners*, has just been published and celebrates a 100 years of gardening by women. She will be talking about this well-known garden which is full of style and colour and has an abundance of wonderful and unusual plants.

Cirencester Botanical Artists will be exhibiting a selection of botanical paintings, prints and drawings including work by one of this year's RHS exhibitors.

Refreshments and Bar drinks will be available

7.00 p.m. Thursday, 27th June

Daglingworth Village Hall

Tickets £10

Please pre-book tickets from

Rhian Evans rhian.s.evans@gmail.com 07772 013214

Rose Parrott parrotts21@gmail.com 07853164924

- Ryeworth & Haver
- Severn Road
- Hayden Lane

Spring Events

C&DAHA Spring Meeting

At the C&DAHA Spring Meeting was held at 7pm on the 4th March 2019 at the Municipal Offices.

Nicolas Morgan gave a talk called "Making the most of your greenhouse". Nicolas worked at RHS Garden Wisley, when he left, he moved back to the Forest of Dean. He has 2 green houses, a 10 x 8 and a 12 x 8. Here are the key points that I took from his talk.

- 1) Get the biggest greenhouse you can have, don't think 'I'll start small'. Half-clad greenhouses are good if everything is going to be on benches
- 2) Location – you want as much light as possible (an open site rather than an exposed site). Put the ridge East/West so there is good exposure on the south side.
- 3) Ventilation – Automatic vent openers are invaluable. Take one out in the winter so you can open one window a little to keep the humidity down.
- 4) Insulation – put up bubble plastic from December to January only, it reduces drafts, but light as well.
- 5) Cleaning – it is important to clean the greenhouse to keep light levels high as well as getting rid of bugs. Hot soapy water is best, make sure the gutters are cleaned as well.
- 6) Controlling the environment – temperatures should not exceed 38C or plant metabolism shuts down. If temperatures go below 12C plant development will be slow, there will be a slow movement of nutrients and hardening of plant tissue can occur (silvery foliage in tomato plants means they are too cold).
- 7) Cooling – have ventilation on the ridge and a louvre at the bottom of the green house to get a chimney effect. This is better than leaving the door open.
- 8) Humidity helps to cool the air temperature and reduce plant stress; it also aids plants setting fruit. Damping down is best done between mid-morning and mid-afternoon.
- 9) Shading – Nicolas suggests painting with something like Coolglass is the best option, paint an area when you find the sun is getting too strong, then as the sun gets stronger towards mid-summer paint more glass. The total amount painted will vary from year to year according to the weather. Don't

MyHarvest

A research team at the University of Sheffield are working with members of the public growing food in allotments, gardens and other own-growing spaces across the UK to understand the yield of typical UK staple fruit and vegetable crops.

If you would like to participate, details of how you can do this can be found on their website myharvest.org.uk.

Request for Committee Members

The current C&DAHA committee does not have representatives from all the allotment sites in Cheltenham. We would very much like to have people on the committee from every site so that we can fully represent the views of our members. The committee meets for about 2 hours 4 times a year. If you could spare that time, please let one of the members listed at the top of the front page know. We need members from the following sites:

- Reddings Road
- Warden Hill
- Hatherley Road
- Croft (each of the 3 sites)
- Hall Road

use green shading as this takes out some useful spectrum. External shading will work much better than internal shading.

- 10) Tomatoes – many old varieties grow well in a cold green house. It is possible to create an arch over the greenhouse path and this way get many trusses from each plant (perhaps up to 10).
- 11) Growbags – a good way to grow tomatoes and peppers is to put each plant into a pot and let it root down into a growbag. Don't buy the cheapest growbags, make sure they contain at least 25 litres of compost.

Cheltenham Horticultural Society Spring Show

The CHS Spring Show took place on Sunday 24th March. The show was a great success, when I visited, the Pump Room was packed with people and there were some terrific displays of flowers, produce and baking. C&DAHA member Claire Plowright (Midwinter) won the George Morley Cup for floral art and Yvonne Gregory (Asquith) won the David Richards Salver for best exhibit in the photography classes.



Our stand attracted a good few visitors during the afternoon, manned here by Chaz Pearce.



Margaret Walters (Croft) took the prize for the heaviest leek. An interesting creation from Yvonne Gregory took a 3rd prize in the “Animal made from vegetables” class.



Dennis Sutton (Asquith) took first prize for “Three Different Winter Vegetables”, in this case for very a good-looking Leek, parsnip and some purple sprouting broccoli. Three stems of forced rhubarb won a second prize for Dennis in that class.



Layla Avaron won first prize in the “One Winter Vegetable” class for this excellent looking leek. Second prize was taken by this Winter Squash (Crown Prince) from Yvonne Gregory.

Malvern Spring Show

The Malvern Spring Show took place from the 9th to the 12th May, the weather was good on the day I was there (Friday 10th) and the show was packed with people, it felt as though there were many more people there than last year.



The National Allotment Society stand at the Malvern Spring Show. A lovely looking arrangement of pots full

of well grown and healthy-looking vegetable plants. All the plants were grown by Rosemary and Colin Smith, they looked terrific and earned a Bronze medal.



Rosemary & Colin Smith with Phil Gomersall, President of The National Allotment Society.

In the couple of hours that I assisted on the stand, it seemed to be very busy with lots of people coming to ask questions about allotments and growing vegetable. I gather this was the case over the whole period of the show.

Tips, Tales and Sales

Pass 100 Compost/Soil Conditioner, an Update from Scott

Earlier this year I mulched my vegetable garden with PAS100 soil conditioner. See the article in the spring issue.

The material was not dug in but laid as a deep mulch over the vegetable and the flower beds in my garden at home.

The material has remained as a mulch, very little if any has been incorporated into the original soil. It has retained its original loose, friable structure and dark colour.

Weed suppression has been good and due to the way the material is processed little or no weeds have been introduced. The material cannot accurately be described as a compost it is more of a soil conditioner and so far it looks as though it will be an effective one. Harvesting of root crops this season will incorporate the material, this action should help improve my heavy clay soil. Though the PAS 100 material has not the same nutritional value as the spent mushroom compost I used the previous year, it has so far been a "good buy" Perhaps the ideal would be alternate years of spent mushroom compost and PAS 100.

Pea Moth - a tip from Chaz

To avoid the nasty little caterpillar in your pea pods, try sowing either early or late. This is because the Adult

moth lays their eggs on flower of the pea between June & July. Or sow mangetout as the pea moth doesn't like them. Happy Sowing

Free Trees from the Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust has a scheme to give free trees to schools and community groups. If you are interested more details can be found on their website at www.woodlandtrust.org.uk.

VHS Tapes Wanted

Dundry Nurseries are involved in recycling as a way of raising money for the butterfly garden. If you have any tapes that you do not want, please can you take them to the nursery, there is a container at the back of the nursery for them to be put in.

Kate's Allotment – Spring



This was my final crop from the allotment from last year's seed sowing. These leeks are a mixture of Below Zero and Porbella, as its been such a mild winter both have overwintered equally well.



I bought some Tayberries (Buckingham) this year, they were planted out in March, I'm not sure how much they will grow this year, but they are looking nice and healthy.



The first carrots (Sweet Candle) of this season coming up and in need of thinning.



It won't be long before we are self-sufficient in lettuce again (these are from a Mixed packet). Last autumn I bought a powered cool box and have been keeping all my seeds in that. It has been very noticeable how quickly everything has germinated this year, particularly lettuce, having been chilled before sowing.



I think I need to get on with some weeding (the weeds are mainly scarlet pimpernel and fat hen), but in amongst the weeds, the shallots (Matador F1) that I started from seed in February and planted out on the 1st April are growing well.



These are cauliflowers, a variety called Snowball, a dwarf compact variety which I think will be more suitable for us. I grew igloo last year, they did well, but the heads tended to be a bit big for us.



These are a variety of Brussels Sprout called Early Half Tall, I thought I would try growing a short variety this

year and see how they compare with the usual varieties I grow.



The first row of peas (Kelvin Wonder) were planted out in mid-April (I always start them in pots or guttering). I've had to put net over them to deter the pigeons, of which we have no shortage.



The broad beans (The Sutton) have masses of flowers and beans are just starting to form. I haven't grown this variety before, they were planted in the autumn. The metal hoop was put in so I could put fleece over the plants without flattening them when the weather was cold, as this variety are not as hardy as the variety Aquadulce Claudia that I've grown before.



The potatoes I'm growing this year are Athlete and Pink Fir Apple. The two rows on the right of the picture were planted out on 24th February, the earliest I've ever planted out potatoes. I checked the soil temperature (7°C) and it looked fine, so I put them in.



These are leeks (Below Zero), this year I'm growing leeks under environ mesh again. Last year I seem to

be plagued by leek moth, I cut the plants back as soon as I spotted each attack, the leeks grew back but then were attacked again.



In this picture, the nearest covered bed contains potatoes covered in fleece against a forecast frosty night. Just behind that is the environ mesh covered leek bed. To the left of that is my first brassica bed (Cauliflowers and short brussels sprouts) covered by mesh against butterflies and whitefly, behind that is a mesh surround that stops the pesky carrot fly from getting at my carrots. I'm using stock wire to create the supports for the mesh covers.

Relevant Suppliers

Gardening Gloves

For gardening gloves and hand care products, have a look at www.lovelyhands.co.uk, Claire Wiseman is based in Cheltenham and has recently set up 'Lovely Hands' as an on-line business.

Coffee Sacks

Kate Davis stocks 'coffee sacks', which some gardeners find useful. She is local, her email address is katedavis968@hotmail.com, phone: 07583 905922.

The sacks are £2.00 each with discount for bulk buying.

Specialist Garden & Pet Bedding Supplier

E-coco Products UK are a specialist supplier based in Bredon. They supply peat free composts for orchids, citrus, chillies and many other plants and organic substrates for chicken bedding and other small animals. You can contact them through their website

e-cocoproducts.co.uk, Email

ecocoproductsuk@gmail.com, Tel: 07792 116164.

Bulk suppliers of Manures/Composts

Horse Manure

Home Farm Equestrian Centre, Brockhampton Lane, Swindon Village, GL51 9RS

www.homefarmequestriancentre.co.uk

Wholesale Supplier of Gardening Products and Tools

K G Loach, www.kgloach.co.uk, 01260 275902

KG Loach have been around for around 50 years, as they are a wholesale supplier, they would be of use if you can get together with fellow allotmenters to buy in bulk.

Café at Naunton Park

The Naunton Park Baker and Graze café (<http://www.bakerandgraze.com/>) is in the Naunton Park Pavilion next to Asquith Road allotments, there is seating both inside and outside overlooking the park.

Recipe – Kale and Beef Stew with Chocolate

This recipe came via Chaz Pearce who is on the CDAHA committee, although it sounds unpromising, apparently it's very good. I shall be trying it out once I have some Kale this year.

Kale and beef stew with chocolate

Serves 4

METHOD

- Heat 3-4 **tablespoons of oil** and cook a **sliced onion** and **2 celery sticks** slowly. Add **150g (5½oz) mushrooms**, some diced, some sliced.
- Remove and set aside. Dust **450-500g (15¾-17½oz) cubed braising steak** in **2 heaped tablespoons flour** and fry in the hot pan until browning.
- Meanwhile, cook **200g (7oz) peeled diced celeriac** and **200g (7oz) peeled chunked carrots** for

5-10 minutes in **200ml (7fl oz) hot water**, until softening.

- Add celeriac, carrots and cooking water gradually to pan, stirring constantly and scraping residue from pan bottom.
- Add onion mix plus, one at a time, stirring constantly, **2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**, **400ml (14fl oz) beef stock**, leaves stripped from **3-4 sprigs thyme**, **freshly ground black pepper** to taste and a **teaspoon of redcurrant jelly**.
- Stir well and cook for 2-3 hours until meat and vegetables are tender and sauce is smooth and thick. Add **20g (¾oz) dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids)** broken into pieces for the last hour.
- Just before serving stir in **2-3 handfuls of prepared kale** and cook for 2-3 minutes until bright green and wilted. Serve immediately.

Many thanks to all who have provided input to this newsletter 🌟🏆

ASIAN HORNET

Vespa velutina

What is it?

An invasive non-native hornet originally from Asia. Suspected records should be reported immediately. A highly aggressive predator of native insects, posing a significant threat to honey bees and other pollinators. Accidentally introduced to France in 2004 where it spread rapidly. In 2016 the first UK sighting was confirmed in Gloucestershire, and a second sighting was confirmed more recently (2017) in North Devon.



Where might I see it?

Most likely to be seen close to bee hives - bee keepers should be alert. Active from February to November in suburban areas in the south of England and Wales, or around major ports.

What does it look like?

Distinctive hornet, smaller than our native species. A key feature is the almost entirely dark abdomen, except for the 4th segment which is yellow.

- Slightly smaller than native hornet
- Dark abdomen, 4th segment yellow
- Bright yellow tips to legs (native hornet dark)
- Entirely brown or black thorax (native hornet more orange)

Asian Hornet abdomen

Native Hornet abdomen



Makes very large nests



'Hawks' outside honey bee colonies killing bees as they attempt to defend their hive

DANGER!

This hornet stings. Do not disturb an active nest. Seek advice using the details below.

For more information or to report any sightings please email:

alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

If you have an iPhone or Android, download the free recording app:

Asian Hornet Watch