



Gnosall Allotments & Gardens Association Newsletter

Issue 25

Feb 2015

Shed Opening

The GAGA Shed will be open for sales and advice on Sunday March 8th and a shed opening rota, for the 2015 season, will be published this month.

Should any member wish to purchase any items from our stock prior March 8th just simply contact one of the Committee members and they can organise for the shed to be opened.

We are always open to members feedback on what we should stock for the membership – simply contact Bob Colman with your recommendation.

Members may recall, hence this reminder, that the EU has imposed a ban on the sale and use of **Bordeaux Mix** from November 2015; hence GAGA is not able now to stock this product. We would point out we do stock replacement fruit and vegetable fungicide that members have and can use.

Allotment security

In response to the increasing thefts and vandalism within the Allotments over the last two years we are working in conjunction with the Gnosall Parish Council to find suitable locking devices for both the Allotment entrance gate and the small gate that allows access to the Allotments from the Open Acres boardwalk.

All Allotment members will be provided with the means of unlocking and be responsible for locking the gates as they enter and exit the Allotments.

Seed Potatoes

Seed potatoes have been delivered to GAGA and will be distributed to members this week.

Chitting

Most seasoned gardeners "chit" their seed potatoes prior to planting them, as chitting potatoes is regarded as essential for producing good crops of early varieties and can also make a difference to main-crop harvests.

For those gardeners who want to know how to chit a seed potato, this simply means getting them to produce nice little sprouts - just like they do when you've kept them in the cupboard for too long!

Set your seed potatoes out in egg boxes or trays with the 'rose end' facing up. (The rose end is the end with the most 'eyes' in it.) Place them in a light, frost-free room - the greenhouse or spare room is fine - and leave them be for a few weeks. It takes about four to six weeks for potatoes to sprout shoots, by which time you'll be ready to plant them out.

A useful explanatory video is available at:-

<http://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/projects/basics/how-to-chit-potatoes/256.html>

Events

Your committee are in the planning stages for the following events that should prove to be of interest to both Allotment holders and Gardener members.

1. An "Gardening Expert Speaker" evening event during April
2. A joint visit with Moreton Gardening Club to a local Stately Home with gardens in June
3. Having a Plant Stall at this year's Gnosall Carnival, all GAGA's proceeds going to the charity that looks after the "fabric of the St Lawrence Church". Once again we will be looking to members' contributions of plants.

Gardeners – catching up jobs

© Source: Weeder's digest Sunday Times

Picking snowdrops yet? Remember you can divide the ordinary vigorous ones (which are in leaf) now, spreading them thinly among tree roots. Less vigorous and expensive varieties are better divided after the leaves have died down in summer. Protect your investment.

Plants in garden centres always flower way ahead of plants in the garden. Don't let them tempt you into thinking spring has sprung and you can now plant anything; plants that are at all tender are better left until the end of March when growth is about to start.

Gardeners – catching up jobs

If the wind manages to dry off your wooden garden chairs, get some oil or preservative on them so it has time to soak in before you need them. Slap on as much as will soak in to the end grain of the feet; those bits always rot first.

Snow that turns to ice in the crowns of tender plants can be a real killer. Bundle the leaves of phormiums, restios and young cordylines and tie them together until the ice has melted.

Check your pots of bulbs. The moment the shoots poke through the compost they need to be brought into as much light as you can offer or they will become drawn. Water just enough to keep the compost moist until the leaves are expanding and there's need for more.

Can you plant when the ground is frozen? Not a great time, but yes, it's better than having a plant kicking about in the snow in its pot. Lift off the frozen top layer of soil and plant into the unfrozen soil below, then put the frozen soil back on top. Never bury frozen soil, it freezes roots.

In the Allotment this month

Source <http://www.realmensow.co.uk/?p=396>

- Get ready for broad beans
- Weed strawberry and fruit beds
- Make a frame for sweet peas
- Sow peas, mangetout, aubergines and chillis in greenhouse
- Lettuce leaves under cloche
- Bag up compost

February Recipe Leek & Potato Soup



Image credit
– BBC

Source: <http://www.gardenstyle.info/february-recipe-leek-and-potato-soup/>

A classic soup for this cold winter weather.

- Preparation time: less than 30 minutes
- Serves 6 to 8
- Cooking time – 20 minutes

Ingredients

50g of butter

1 glove of garlic, finely chopped

450g of potatoes, peeled and cut into small pieces

1 medium onion, roughly chopped

450g of leeks, sliced

1 litre of chicken or vegetable stock.

Preparation

Heat the butter in a pan and add the onion, garlic and leek, season with salt and pepper.

Cook until softened.

Add the potato and stock and bring to the boil.

Reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes, or until the potato is tender.

Don't overcook or the soup will lose its flavour.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly.

Pour the soup into a blender and blend until smooth.

Add more seasoning if necessary.

To serve. A nice way to finish this soup is to finely shred some white leek and gently cook it in the hot butter for a few minutes until it is softened but not coloured. Pour into warmed bowls. Drizzle some fresh cream over each serving and top with a little pile of buttered leeks and a scattering of chives and black pepper and serve at once.

GAGA Committee members

- Ray Finney (32) Chairman
- Simon & Lynn Whittick Secretary (29/30)
- Susan Howlett (A) Treasurer
- Bob Colman (J)
- Tony Barrow (L)
- Ray Woodward. (11)
- Phil Barnes (55)
- Ann Newman (B/D)
- Neil Fletcher (13)
- Frank Insull (10)

All Committee members are keen to help all members and keep you informed on what is happening. If you have any questions, or want information, please do contact us.

Emergency information for Allotments area

In the event of an accident when calling for an ambulance / emergency services use the post code ST20 0EZ and the NGR: SJ 82733 20660.