The Plot Thickens...





WELCOME TO OUR BRAND NEW NEWSLETTER!

This is our brand new newsletter, The Plot Thickens, dedicated to helping all our members with hints, tips, and advice on all things related to cultivating, growing, cooking and preserving! It's particularly aimed at supporting new tenants to keep up with the demands of an allotment. We sincerely hope you find this a useful publication, and would be delighted to hear from any members who would like to contribute!

In this month's issue we have:

- Jobs for June
- Defence Mechanism! a useful review of weeds, pests and diseases to look out for this month
- Monthly Makes- timely recipes for your June produce
- DIY- a simple and cheap make for your growing needs!
- Useful Resources- we'll publish any useful websites, apps and other resources to help you in your allotment journey

Notice to plotholders!

Please can we remind all members to bring their keys when coming on site. There has recently been some damage to the gate which we now have to use member funds to fix. This is really unfair, as it takes funds away from us providing events for you such as the Easter Egg hunt, Summer Show etc.



CHAIRMAN: Adrian Shandley/ Pete Johnson

SECRETARY: Martin Edgar

TREASURER: Louise Leigh

GENERAL MEMBERS: Dave Halsall,

Kath Millington, Sam Bond, Sam Jackson, Andy Hulme

Jobs for June



HANDY REMINDERS

This is the month lots of your produce will start to be ready for harvesting. However it's also when those pesky weeds keep on growing, so here's a handy list of things you can be getting on with in June:

- Strawberries- once you see fruits starting to appear, keep watering as this helps with fruit formation. BUT- don't water onto the fruit itself (this will lead to rotting). A handy tip is to cut off the bottom of old plastic drinks bottles and bury them tip first near the root of each plant.
 This will help direct water to the roots rather than over the fruit.
- Carrots- continue to successional sow for long harvests through the year, sowing a row every two weeks. Keep them covered to avoid risk of carrot fly damage (and consider companion planting to reduce this risk even further)
- Cut flowers- young flowers should be well ready to plant out now. Or, now that the last frosts
 have passed (more on that later!), direct sow into your prepared beds.
- Speaking of direct sowing, it's often easy to confuse emerging weeds with the emerging flowers
 or produce you've sown, when only the first leaves are visible. A handy tip is to sow a little
 cluster of your seeds at the end of each row, which will help you identify them when they
 germinate. Try not to weed until the second leaves have come through, which will make it
 easier to ensure you don't accidentally dig out your produce!
- Make sure you plant out any young runner bean plants this month- and sweet peas too!
- You can also plant out courgettes now- but remember that these produce prolifically, so unless
 you're a courgette fiend, 2-3 plants will be more than enough!

Defence Mechanism!



HIMALAYAN BALSAM

Looks pretty, right?

It's prolific on our site, and is in fact not a pretty wildflower but an invasive plant.

The RHS says:

Himalayan balsam is classed as a <u>non-native invasive plant</u>. It appears on the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, <u>Schedule 9 list</u> and the Non-native Species Secretariat (NNSS) list of <u>Species of Special Concern</u>, meaning there are restrictions on growing, cultivating, selling and transporting it. If Himalayan balsam is already growing in your garden, this is not considered an offence, though it is recommended that you control or remove it. However, you must not intentionally introduce it or cause it to spread.

It starts out with a pair of flat leaves (see top image) but develops into lance shaped leaves (see middle image), and open flowers with four noticeable petals (bottom image). The flowers are usually pink on our site but can range from pink to purple.

The stems are thick, but hollow, and the plant has shallow roots making it really easy to pull up.

If you do spot this, please pull up immediately and dispose of (DO NOT COMPOST). If you are unsure, please contact one of the Committee who will be happy to advise.

Remember:

Let's Beat the Balsam!!!!!







Monthly Makes



BACON, BROAD BEAN AND PEA SALAD

This recipe is taken from **The Allotment Cookbook** by Pete Lawrence, and is a delightful spring recipe, perfect for using up gluts of broad beans and peas

500g broad beans, podded

200g podded peas/ sugar snaps or mange tout

8 rashers streaky bacon, cubed

4 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for frying

3 thick slices of stale bread, cubed

1tbsp sherry vinegar

2 tsp finely chopped mint

Salad leaves of your choice

30g pea shoots to serve

Directions:

- 1. In a saucepan, boil the beans and peas until soft, then put to one side. (If you're using sugar snaps or mange tout, cook these whole).
- 2. Fry the streaky bacon in a little oil until golden and crisp. Then remove from the pan and rest on kitchen paper.
- 3. Fry the bread cubes in the residual bacon fat until golden then remove to rest on kitchen paper.
- 4. Make the salad dressing by adding olive oil, sherry vinegar, and mint in a bowl and whisking until well combined.
- 5. Assemble the salad (preferably while bacon and bread still warm) and drizzle over dressing.
- 6. Drizzle over dressing, and top with a handful of pea shoots to serve.

DIY Project



DIY PALLET COMPOST BAY

A compost bay is essential on your new plot, and to keep costs low, it's easy to create one of these from free pallets which are so easily accessibly via Facebook marketplace, or even skips!

This method is taken from **The Garden Ninja** website, as there is also a handy Youtube video you can follow too.

Here's the Youtube link with all the details:- https://youtu.be/qZDCUhtq7cg

Instructions:

- · A minimum of four pallets for the first bay
- Sharp wood saw
- Hinges
- · L-shaped brackets
- Decking screws
- · Electric drill
- Screwdriver
- · Staple gun
- · Chicken wire (optional)

Stack your first three pallets into a box shape on a flat, stable surface. Ensure the pallets are aligned. Make sure that the ground underneath is either earth, <u>turf</u> or porous. If not, your composter won't work.

Drill a pilot hole in one of the bottom corners of each pallet and then screw in a decking screw to anchor them.

Drill and screw another decking screw into the top corner, using pilot holes before each decking screw. Do this for both corners.

Then proceed to screw decking screws into each of the pallets' braces from the floor up to the top on each side. This should secure each side to the other. Use as many screws as you have braces, i.e. the square blocks that separate the two sides denote the braces.

Once you have done this, add brackets /angle brackets to the side of the compost bin frame. This helps add rigidity to the frame to hold the weight of the compost contents. Again, predrill holes to avoid splitting the wood. I would advise a minimum of three: top, middle and bottom.

Once you have done this, you can add a door with the final wooden pallet. Taking a pallet of the same size, cut this in half just below a brace with a sharp wood saw. Wear gloves and take your time for a neat cut. Sand off any splinters or snags to neaten the door. Ensure you add hinges on one side for easy opening/closing! Add a latch and eye on the other side to secure the door. This stops wind or contents from opening the door.

You can then use chicken wire to line the inside of the bay, which will help stop contents falling out (line the inside, not the outside, to avoid compost getting caught in the voids between the layers of the pallets.

Useful Resources

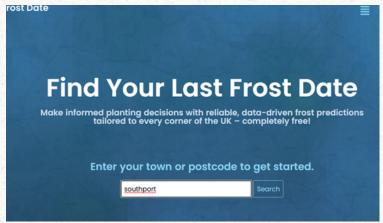
WWW.LASTFROSTDATE.CO.UK

This is an incredibly handy website which will tell you the last frost date of any place in the UK, by town or postcode. It uses open-source daily minimum temperature data from the Met Office, spanning from 1960- so you can be sure it's pretty reliable.

To use, navigate to www.lastfrostdate.co.uk, and the enter the postcode (for reference, our site postcode is PR9 8AE). Click Enter.

The on-screen map will now show you the exact spot and the last frost date.

It will also give you historical data on air frost, light frosts and hard frosts, as well as average frost-free periods, and safest time to plant out tender plants.





Give it a try, see what you think!