



Bath & North East Somerset ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

Independent association supporting allotment tenants
www.banes-allotments.org.uk

Spring Newsletter 2021



What to do in:

APRIL : Daylight increases and the weather warms up.

Most seeds can be sown now but sharp showers can do damage to young seedlings and there may be the occasional threat of frost so tender plants may need some protection.

- Plant potatoes if you haven't already done so.
- Feed overwintering onions, garlic, shallots.
- Make successional sowing of lettuce, radishes, spring onions, etc.
- As the weather warms up so do the pests, so keep your eye out in order to deal with things early and prevent infestations.
- Divide perennial herbs.
- Stake sweet peas.

MAY sometimes feels like the busiest month of the year because most things can be planted now and as temperatures rise, so do the weeds and the slugs and snails.

- Sow carrots, beetroot, spinach, cabbages, cauliflowers, broccoli, Brussel sprouts , turnips.
- Stake peas and erect climbing bean frames.
- Mulch strawberry beds, thin canes of autumn fruiting raspberries, mulch fruit trees with well-rotted manure.
- Sow flower annuals like cosmos, cornflowers, larkspur etc.

JUNE : This is the time when you begin to enjoy some of the first fruits of your labour .

- Beetroot, broad beans, cabbage, cauliflower, early peas, lettuce, rhubarb, spring onions, radish, spinach can all start to be harvested now.
- Lift the earliest potatoes towards the end of the month and continue earthing up the rows of your other varieties.
- Brussels sprouts, cabbages, cauliflowers, celeriac, courgettes, outdoor cucumbers, French and runner beans, leeks, pumpkins, squashes, sweet corn, outdoor tomatoes can all be planted out into their final position now. As with all young plants water in carefully and protect from birds with netting.

Even No-Diggers Need Hand Tools by David Pole

Many years ago, I was helping to clear out an old warehouse and found an enormous leather bound, loose-leaf catalogue that must have belonged to a travelling salesman. Inside it were literally hundreds of hand tools and ironmongery sundries from slaters' rippers to bifurcated rivets - sold by the dozen. Against many of the illustrations were handwritten notes and prices in pounds shillings and pence. One section of the catalogue contained details of billhooks. You wouldn't believe how many different regional styles of billhook existed up until the early twentieth century. Forks, shovels and spades too were all available in a multitude of regional patterns differentiated by their variety of purposes. Yard forks, potato forks, pitchforks, manure forks, border forks; each region and each task boasted its own highly evolved hand tool perfectly adapted to purpose and locality.

The thing about hand tools - as opposed to machinery - is that they consume human energy rather than petrol or electricity. With a machine, when the going gets tough you just get a bigger one, but with the wrong hand tool everything takes longer, the jobs are never quite done properly and you get backache - all of which means that getting the right gardening tools can save you time, temper and a heap of energy that you can expend somewhere else. The problem is that the tools available in garden centres may be cheap, but they often relate to the kind of gardening that's going out of fashion these days. What may have suited Mr Digwell in his corduroy trousers and trilby hat, isn't much help if you're trying to go no-dig or bio-intensive.

Good hand tools aren't cheap, but they last a lifetime. Since we moved to Bath, we've cleared 200 square metres of rough grassland (OK neglected plot). After breaking two forks and giving my feet no end of grief, I invested in a polished stainless steel groundbreaker spade with a heart shaped blade and pointed end that slid down through the matted roots and halved the time and energy that clearing the plot was taking. It's also brilliant for digging wood chips. Turning the compost heaps is a doddle with an old long handled yard fork that I bought in a farm shop twenty-five years ago. Using a standard digging fork with a shorter handle for the same job is a knuckle banging misery.

Even if you're exploring no-dig, bio-intensive allotmenting, and if you're a follower of John Jeavons you'll know that the bed building process begins with double digging. No-dig is a destination not a way of avoiding hard work; and while getting those perennial roots out is hellish, you'll never regret doing it in subsequent years. For the minimum intervention allotmenter the emphasis goes from digging to hoeing and, once again, when you read the well-known US writers, they'll be mentioning a whole range of hand tools you've never heard of but which could make hoeing faster and much more effective. Even mature beds need loosening up now and again without upsetting the soil layers - say hello to the broad fork; and nearly all beds need their surface layer breaking up into a fine tilth before sowing and planting; but reciprocating hoes are few and far between and you won't find a Korean Ho-Mi hoe at B&Q. Even the humble trowel has a serious competitor in the Japanese hori hori. Yes I'm a bit of a tool freak, but I'm still using a set of lignum vitae handled chisels that I bought sixty years ago while I was still at school.

The thing about good hand tools is that although they may be more expensive, they're so well adapted to their purpose you never regret buying them, and they're not noisy and don't need servicing every year, although they do need sharpening often. Looked at in the long term they're almost always cheaper over a lifetime - and we all know that gardeners grow old very slowly.

So, if you're interested in seeing what some of these tools look like and what they do you could read almost anything by Carol Deppe, John Jeavons, Jean-Martin Fortier, Eliot Coleman and of course Charles Dowding. The US books also use unfamiliar vegetable names and varieties but with a bit of Googling you can almost always find out the UK equivalent, and food resilience is rising so fast to the top of the allotment agenda we'll all be investigating it soon. Meanwhile I've found one very small UK outlet that offers a full catalogue of most of the tools I've mentioned (honestly it's not my cousin!). With their permission I'm giving their website address - www.blackberrylane.co.uk so you can at least see what these unusual implements look like and how they work.

Laurel Farm Kindergarten by Helena Misciosica

Where little children are immersed in nature and learn to tend to their own vegetable patch.

15 minutes outside Bath there is a magical space where young children play and learn outdoors, are fully immersed in nature and grow their own vegetables which they then chop, cook and eat!

Before the pandemic, Laurel Farm Kindergarten was a beautiful Steiner-inspired Kindergarten - learning and play would mainly take place indoors with one special trip up to the forest, known as the 'Magic Glade' for an explore every day.

The pandemic required the teachers and trustees to rethink the way the day was structured. With only 12 students, there was no need to create separate 'bubbles' but it was important to be as safe as possible by remaining outdoors much more than before.

The children are dropped off at the 'Ark' where they can check to see if the birds have eaten their food, play in running water (which turns to ice in winter!), and watch the crocus and tulip bulbs that they planted in autumn grow. They then make their way to the Magic Glade where they make a fire and cook popcorn or pancakes before they explore the mud kitchen and play on swings.

Part of the weekly rhythm for the children is to help on the allotment at the farm. The teachers empower the children to take charge of the allotment and choose what they want to grow. The older children help to dig and rake while the smaller one's help plant the garlic, broad beans, potatoes, radishes and beetroot.

It feels like magic when they see the green leaves sprouting up and they are in awe of Mother Earth.

The best way to help a child engage with the allotment is to make sure they have one or two suitably sized tools, but if you don't have this a metal spoon, a cup or a metal sieve works well. Children love playing with water too, so you can get a watering can or a bucket which they can use.

Giving the children, however young, ownership of the allotment helps them help you! Get them to help you dig a trench, take out weeds, or if all else fails- go on worm patrol, spotting the worms and keeping them safe while you dig! If you're struggling, set out the holes and let the children drop the seeds or bulbs in. We often notice the planting of the seeds is the easiest bit to get children to help with- they love holding the seeds in their hands and sprinkling!

When it comes to harvesting, the children get incredibly excited about picking the fruits of your labour! Be warned, you may not get many raspberries back to your house though as they will be in children's bellies before then!

Talk to your children about the different vegetables they like and make sure you plant those - corn looks and tastes especially delicious when cooked fresh. Someone said to me the other day that it's with cooking the corn at the allotment to get the best flavour! You can also try exciting vegetables like artichoke which may be new to the children and offer delight when they are fully grown, and you can rip and dip each leaf in butter and lemon.



Laurel Farm Kindergarten cont.....



At Laurel Farm, when the vegetables are fully grown, they get harvested and used in warm lunches for the children- in our delicious seasonal soup or with rice and beans. The children adore to find potatoes- they think it's like digging for buried treasure!

It has been fascinating to see how confident the children have become since moving the setting outdoors. They feel at one with nature and they can now spot herbs such as dill or wild garlic growing. We've also noticed that they haven't been unwell this year- perhaps the outdoor air helping them gain more immunity or perhaps the extra vitamin D! Another benefit of being outside has been the way everyone gets on and engages with each other so well- there is no wrong way for the child to play, no toys to give up, no rush, no activity to move onto. Outside, children can't be too noisy, too loud or move too much! Everyday tensions disappear and the children find a harmony with each other.

We have felt very grateful that during this strange and sad time, where we've been asked to stay home, go online more, Laurel Farm has been a real tonic for the children of the kindergarten - an antidote to everything that is going on in the wider world.

To find out more about the kindergarten or the Greensprouts parent and child group please see laurelfarmkindergarten.co.uk

Helena Misciosica
Trustee at Laurel Farm
Bloomfield allotments

HISTORY CORNER



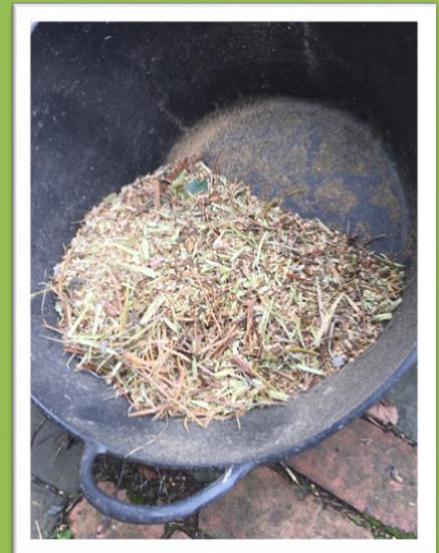
Larkhall Composting Method by John Ingham

Traditional garden composting is rarely as easy as it should be. There are two basic methods – composting in a bin and using wormeries. The first method excludes food waste and often produces slimy wet material which isn't much good in the garden. Wormeries can be expensive and don't deal with large amounts of material. For at least twenty years I have been using my own system which has elements of both, and which seems to work. All our household goes though it – bones are literally the only food waste material which goes from our house into the Council collection. The compost produced seems to work well as a mulch on my vegetable beds and around fruit bushes as well as going under all sorts of vegetables on the allotment.

The system is simple. I mix all our food waste, even including meat, fish, pasta and bread, with garden waste and some shredded materials. These all go in bins with clip-on lids. The bins have a number of small holes drilled around the bottom. The bottom 150mm (6in) or so of the bins are buried in the soil so that worms, wood lice and whatever is interested in eating the material, can get into it. I even put occasional slugs and snails into the bins. The holes of course help with drainage although I don't collect the liquid which comes out. This I'm sure would make a good plant feed.

Basically, whatever is interested in digesting the material is welcome (mice and rats should not be able to penetrate the system – they haven't got into my bins so far). Once the materials have been through the guts of a creature, no matter how large or small, they make a lovely rich compost. I add shredded materials which are generally made from thin prunings or sticks. These are passed through a shredder and then sieved. This material I use to line my waste bins in the kitchen and to make occasional layers in the bins in which worms can breed. I believe cardboard or newspaper might work as well but both contain impurities – printing ink or mineral oils. I wouldn't want these to end up in my food. Leaves, turf, even soil might serve this function just as well. Once a bin has filled with all this material, I leave it for a month or two to “digest” whilst a second bin is filled. In fact, I usually have three bins on the go just for kitchen waste. The length of time for the first bin to digest depends on the time of year and the materials. Once digested I put it through a garden sieve and all the large stuff which won't go through the sieve goes into the next bin to spend more time digesting. The fine stuff which goes through the sieve makes great compost or mulch.

ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN INDEFINITE GROWTH ON A PHYSICALLY FINITE PLANET IS EITHER MAD OR AN ECONOMIST” – DAVID ATTENBOROUGH.



It's complicated ... but it's important!



Combe Down's historic allotments date back to the 1890s and occupy land which is still privately owned by a descendant of the Vaughan-Jenkins family (formerly of Combe Grove). The site is leased to the Council on a short lease. It is squeezed in between Upper Lawn Quarry and Monkton Combe School, and is currently subject to several actions which sadly threaten the long-term survival of the allotments and which are causing anxiety among the plot holders and the wider community.

The entire allotments site together with a wider area of land including part of Monkton Combe School's playing field (Glen Field), Oldfield Old Boys' Rugby Club and a paddock off Shaft Road are subject to a Mineral Policy Designation and are encompassed by the Council's Minerals Safeguarding Policy M1. This means that that none of this land can be developed in any way (i.e. housing) that would stop stone from being extracted if economically required at some point far into the distant and unspecified future. The Area of Mineral Search defined under the Council's Minerals Allocation Policy M2 encompasses part of Glen Field and an additional area of allotments (but not the entire site).

Combe Down has a proud history of limestone quarrying and mining, and the Hancock family's Upper Lawn Quarry is the last remaining active quarry in the village. Upper Lawn Quarry received planning permission in 2018 to extend its operations, resulting in the loss of 12 allotment plots that will now be quarried. This isn't the first time plots have been lost to the quarry in living memory. Many current allotment holders are on their second or even third allotment following previous plot losses due to quarry extensions.

The Council required the allotment holders on the twelve plots earmarked for the quarry to leave their sites following the granting of planning permission, as the area was removed from the Council's lease and handed over to the quarry. Plot-holders were either accommodated elsewhere on the site or gave up allotment gardening altogether. The area quickly became derelict, with dense overgrowth becoming a hiding place for deer and other creatures that make life on an allotment particularly challenging!



The planning conditions require the quarry to reinstate the same number of lost plots before quarrying begins, using topsoil from the lost allotments. Land off Shaft Road belonging to the same landowner, which has been allotments in the past, was short-leased to the Council so that the 12 reinstatement plots could be created. In addition, the landowner agreed that the whole field could become allotments and not just the 12 reinstatement plots, with the Council bearing the cost of any additional plots created over and above the 12 that the quarry must reinstate. This field is also protected from development by the Council's Minerals Protection Policy.

There are at least 35 applicants waiting for plots at Combe Down, so if these additional allotments could be created and let, they would quickly be allocated. The Council would then begin to receive sufficient rents to make any investment in the site cost-neutral (such as a new gateway and access path and some new water troughs).

The quarry's planning permission expired on 28 February 2021. With just a couple of weeks to go, the quarry operator cleared and fenced off the derelict area. However, as far as is known, no commitment has yet been given as to the reinstatement of the 12 lost plots required by the planning conditions.

The Combe Down Allotments' Users Group, supported by the Allotments Association, has offered to help with any reinstatement and to meet part of the costs of a new access gateway to serve the reinstatement site. The Group is also willing to create a community orchard on part of the new site. However, the Council is now reluctant to create any additional plots because of the lease, which daily grows ever shorter.

With the support of the Allotments Association, we will continue to try and maintain CDUG, and the Allotments Association continue to hope that the quarry will fulfil its planning conditions and reinstate the 12 lost allotments. We are extremely disappointed however that the Council seems unwilling to progress the new, additional allotments. The continued loss of such amenity, particularly at a time when the Council has declared a Climate Emergency, seems to run entirely counter to common sense and significant local public demand.

To add to the site's challenges, Monkton Combe School has raised the possibility that it will seek to re-route the public footpath alongside Combe Down's allotments. The school is proposing that the path be moved inside the ancient wall that runs the length of the allotment site. This would mean further loss of allotment land, as any path would have to be wide enough for people and vehicles to share together, and security fencing and replacement footpath lighting would be needed. It would also mean the disappearance of the historic allotment gateway, built by Mr George Fisher of Combe Down in 1895 and paid for out of Parish Council funds, as this would be absorbed into Monkton Combe School's estate and lost to the village.

With the support of the Allotments Association, we will continue to try and maintain engagement with the Council, the quarry, the school and the landowner in the hope that all these issues can be resolved positively and to everyone's advantage, but we are not optimistic. Any offers of support in these efforts would be much appreciated.



Spring heat in a cold greenhouse by Anne Love

Starting tomatoes, chillies and peppers off early is tricky as at a certain point they need to go out to the greenhouse for better light however it's still too cold in an unheated greenhouse at night for them to really thrive. One option is to make a hot box, the traditional way is to build a big box and fill it with fresh horse manure, but far easier and cheaper use a straw bale. Strawbales can be bought for £3.75 locally. Place your bale in the greenhouse where you want to use it, cut side up.

Next, wrap it in some sort of waterproof cover, opened compost bags work well, pin them in place with ground cover pins. Water the bale several times over a couple of days to let the water really absorb. Once the bale is good and wet sprinkle half a cup of high nitrogen fertiliser on top of the bale and water in. You can use organic fertiliser such as blood fish and bone or just bonemeal but it stinks, like rotted meat. Alternatives are any soluble general all-purpose fertiliser with a high nitrogen content. For free you can make nettle tea especially in spring as this has high nitrogen content. Easiest is ammonium sulphate, as it is odour free and very soluble.

Leave it for a few days, If the bale doesn't start to heat up, water in more fertiliser. After a week the bale will be about 30C warm to touch inside, a garden thermometer is handy. Just place your seed trays on top, the heat from underneath will keep them warm overnight. An added bonus is a bale makes a lovely warm seat on a cold day. Make sure the bale is kept moist, if it gets too hot and dries out there is possibly a risk of fire!

After a month the heat may dimmish slightly, just add more fertiliser. When it's warm enough to put your seedlings outside keep watering the bale and let it cool down. Dig pockets in the bale top and fill them with good compost, plant tender crops such as chillies, peppers, tomatoes or cucumbers. They will grow on the bale and benefit from the slight warmth as the bale continues to compost. Just keep watering and use a balanced fertiliser. At the end of the season depending on how disintegrated the bale is, it can be allowed to dry out until next year and reused or spread as mulch or composted.



Bales £3.75 cash only, from Penn Hill Farm Shop, Penn Hill Road BA1 3RX Tel 01225 421 456. The Trading Hut stocks, Blood Fish and Bone, Osmo Pro organic, Seaweed meal, black plastic sheeting and fabric pins.

Canal Gardens

Paul Pearce the Team Leader Parks and Trees at BANES is in discussion with Tesco's about the collapsing boundary wall. Tesco's are waiting for a report from their structural engineer but in the meantime they have noticed that people are climbing down the wall into the allotments with gardening tools. They are arranging for a new fence at the rear of the Tesco car park to prevent this.



We are also in discussion with Paul Pearce about the unusable plots just to the right of the entrance gate. This where the contractor who demolished the school buried lots of concrete and metal play equipment. A contractor is looking at the possibility and cost of creating three plots with raised beds.



Claverton Down Horticultural Society

The Allotment Association no longer has an Annual Produce Show. But we are planning to support local Horticultural Shows and encourage all members to take part. The Claverton Down Horticultural Society hope to be able to hold their annual show this year on 4 September. Updates and details will be on their website .

<https://www.clavertonhortsoc.org/>



SPRING PLANT SALE

Sat 15th May 2021

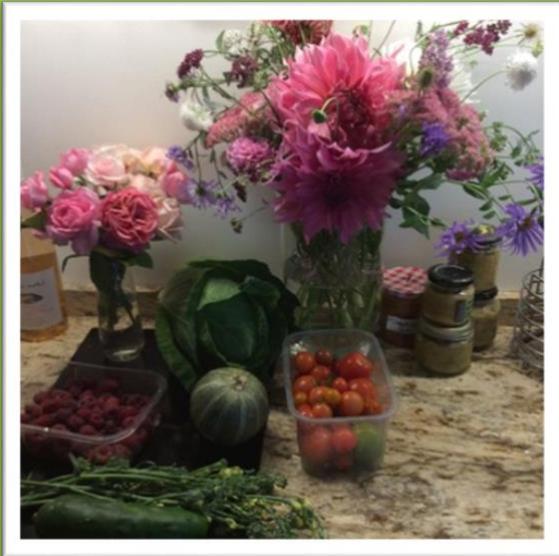
An opportunity to kick start your growing season with great value plants. Annuals, perennials and herbaceous flowers, herbs and vegetable seedlings, gardening books.

Covid safe outdoor sale.

10:30am-12:30pm Admission £1

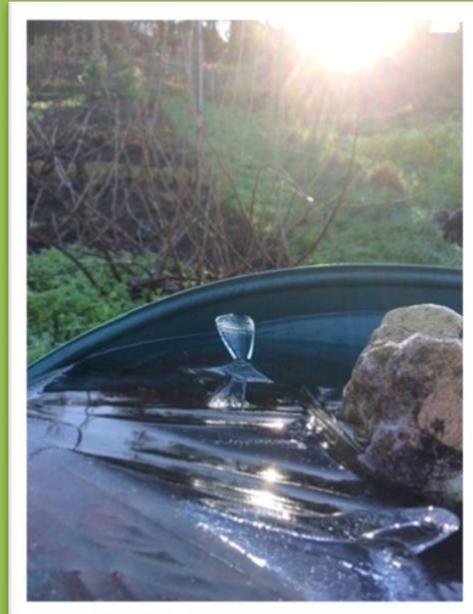
Claverton Down Community Hall grounds

Anna from LCE sent in her photos of September time harvest, in spite of the lack of rain over summer, vegetables, fruits, pickles, sauces, and flowers. Good living.



Carol from Fairfield Valley Allotments

The day before the snow in February, I found this beautiful ice goblet in the upturned lid of my compost bin. Can anyone explain how it was created, especially as a triangular shape! Perhaps the wind coming up the valley and doing a turn around the icy lid?



Allotment Code of Conduct

A gentle request to all plot holders to keep to the allotment code of conduct and to keep to the rules in their tenancy agreement.

Recently there have been quite a few complaints about dogs running free over the sites. Dog poo on your plot is not pleasant!

- Keep all dogs on a lead
- Not to wash veg and tools in the water troughs as can block the watering can rose.

You can look up the rules here

https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Sport-Leisure-and-Parks/Allotments/allotment_rules_guidance_as_amended_2019_final.pdf

I love Dahlias by Anne Love



End of season cutting before the first frost

As far as I am concerned, the belle of the flower ball is the dahlia. Their long flowering period - June to first frosts, the range of colour - pretty much every colour except blue - and the ease of growing makes them a must have for every plot. Not only do dahlias look lovely but they make super cut flowers, lasting a week in a vase.

I started growing dahlias once I got an allotment as they require quite a bit of space and don't really do well in pots. Plant them out in spring once the danger of frost has passed. Slugs love them, so you will need to protect their initial growth. If you have left the tubers in from last year, rake back the leaves or whatever protection you have applied and put down slug bait, much earlier than you think is necessary and repeat, until the shoots are well clear of the ground, then they can fend for themselves.

Early spring is the time to divide up dahlias, so get friendly with owners of dahlias you fancy! The tubers are the food storage, apparently eatable but I haven't tried, with each tuber you must have a growing bud, there are many more tubers than growing buds. The easiest way to see where the buds are, is by leaving on a finger length of the old stalk on the plant. Once you have established where the buds are you can divide up the clump with a spade. Tidy up any damaged tubers and replant the pieces.

You can also take cuttings. In spring place the tuber you would like to take cuttings from in a shallow tray of compost, so the top is clear - preferably under cover. When the shoots start to form take a really sharp kitchen knife and take off the shoot with a piece of tuber attached. This can be difficult as the buds are often in cracks and crevices of the tuber. Make sure there are several buds left so you don't remove the only shoot on the plant!

There are lots of YouTube videos explaining how to do it, they always choose easy tubers, not the ones you really come across. Put the cuttings round the edge of the pot in potting soil, add 1/3 vermiculite to help with drainage. You are not supposed to need to cover the cuttings, but I find I am more successful if I loosely cover the pot with an upturned transparent container. Place the pot in a cloche, greenhouse or windowsill but protected from direct sunshine until the cutting is established. Once you see roots appearing from the bottom you can pot up your cuttings individually. The cuttings usually flower the same year. As they grow, water and feed with high potash fertiliser, Tomorite or seaweed meal occasionally swap over to a balanced fertiliser such as OSMO all-purpose fertilisers. As the stems develop you can pinch out the side buds, producing longer stems and bigger single blooms. Alternatively, you can just leave them to get on with it however you do need to dead head regularly to encourage more flowers.

When the first frosts blacken the stems cut the dahlias down, in Bath you don't need to dig up the dahlias to over winter just pile up leaves, straw or bracken over the crowns to protect them from frost and saturating wet. Occasionally a tuber is killed over winter but then keeping them indoors can also be tricky, too dry, they dry out too wet they seem more inclined to rot more in storage than in the ground.

As dahlias are super popular at the moment they can be bought everywhere, but the nicest collections of blending and complimenting colours came from Sarah Raven.

All the items mentioned in this article are available from The Trading Hut see the price list for details.

If you would like to contribute to the next Issue of the newsletter please send any articles, photos, recipes, gardening tips or questions to

newsletter@banes-allotments.org.uk

Not forgetting any contributions to history corner.



After a year's delay a new garden centre opens selling high quality plants and innovative garden products, such as Bag for Life compost and serve yourself bird seed. As a social enterprise, the project already offers free City & Guilds training programme for people with mental health issues and other life challenges.

Matt Smail, Manager of the Urban Garden, said: "For people who struggle with depression or low motivation, gardening activities can energise them and bring a new sense of purpose. I am delighted that 6 people have already achieved their Level 1 Award and I'm looking forward to welcoming more."

Matt has been helping unemployed young people get back into work since he started the Grow Yourself CIC in 2015. He said: "For someone who's been out of work for a while, it can be hard for them to find structure and purpose in their lives. At the Urban Garden we give people horticulture skills and employability skills to help them get back into work – such as getting back into a routine, customer care and how to write a good CV."

The Urban Garden works in collaboration with Bath charity Grow for Life and Bath & North East Somerset Council. The council is providing the site for the garden centre and supplying the plants.

Seed and plant sale at the Trading Hut

Have you got some packets of seeds which you are not going to use? Please donate them opened or unopened to the Trading Hut put on them table opposite the doors and we will pick them up and sell them on. All proceeds to Dorothy House.

Saturday 8th May seedling sale at the Trading Hut.

No doubt all of us seed sowers will have extra seedlings, we wonder what to do with and can't bear to chuck in the compost. Put them to good use and donate them to the Trading Hut we will sell them, all proceeds will go to Dorothy House. Last year we raised £50 in a last-minute effort. This year I thought I'd be more organised and see what we could achieve.

I am a great supporter of Dorothy House, it's local and there is hardly a family in Bath who their wonderful services have not helped, including my family.

Anne Love
Trading Hut Team

NOW THAT I'm 7- by Leslie Hynes

(Born during the boredom of Covid & the reflection on happier days. It captures some of the feral antics of my
– very happy – childhood.

*My best days, they come, you know,
Quickly, 'cos I want them so.
Sometimes they just start right up,
When I confront - ? a buttercup.*

*Shadow-splitting sunshine, shady
Shares its secrets – what if – maybe.
Fields are fun, there just for browsing,
Undirected, like the cows in.*

*Trees abound – for climbing higher
Maybe help me – to aspire.
Exploding pigeons raise objection
Retreating, I plead false affection.*

*Squirrel ! Didn't help my case
Scampered swiftly down my face
Don't have muscles like my brother
So I let go – and called for Mother.*

*Lying on my back, the sky
Strangely, seems so mighty high.
Miles and miles of empty upside
Oblivious to my sorely backside.*

*Never daunted, nothing feared
Hurtling onwards, heart so cheered.
Dashing, gravity's downhill
Whims and fancies – where I will.*

*Smelly ditch holds me at bay
Flying – seems the only way.
If I manage not to jump it
Will my nose – transpose to crumpet ?*

*Stealthily, I deftly amble
through the grabbing, stabbing bramble.
Berries, bursting, can't help gorging
Stained, stung hands like blacksmith's, forging.*

*Stopping just to catch my breath
Countless bruises – quite near death.
Scratches, patches, blood and gore
Couldn't have enjoyed it more!*

*Life's so good – now that I'm seven
Not sure I'd trade all this for Heaven.
Goodness, dusk – its time for tea
Late again – ooooh Happy Me !*

We also have a B&NES Allotment Association Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/998604550549287>

AND FINALLY.....

A Message From The Crop Drop Project



Last summer and autumn, a number of allotment sites ran collection boxes for surplus crops, which volunteers then took to the various local projects working with people who struggle to access adequate fresh food. You can see more at www.cropdrop.org.uk

Feedback ...

Feedback from allotmenters last season told us that those who had kindly donated crops to share wanted to know how and which crops were valued by the recipients in the food projects. While we had explored plans to arrange visits with food projects, alas, continued lockdowns prevent much in the way of physical interaction. So instead, we asked the food projects to share a few words of how your crop donations help their service users. We have compiled this YouTube of the responses for you to enjoy:

<https://youtu.be/ZKvfFhjrW04>

... and plans for this year

Maybe it's still a bit too cold, wet and windy to even entertain the idea of advancing courgette plants or frantically multiplying beans pods across your A-frames. However, we hope we may remain a consideration for when you're planting and working your plots in these coming months. In other parts of the UK some 'Grow a Row' campaigns [are running](#), where growers have purposefully planted out extra crops for the purpose of passing them onto local food charity projects. We would like to promote this idea in Bath and hope that you might help support us. The CropDrop team have compiled responses from allotment and food project contacts as to what would be helpful and how.

In Summary

- Anything that can be easily shared
- Anything that can encourage a variety or change in diet
- Whatever you enjoy or have a knack for growing, or perhaps something new, weird or wonderful.
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To help with this initiative we have a new poster which includes some information on which food projects receive the donated produce in your area and what we can redistribute. We hope to put these on allotment site notice boards soon, to reach all plot-holders, not just members.

Collection boxes will return to sites once we judge that there may be surplus crops available. If there was no collection at your site last year, do contact Sam at CropDrop [<mailto:sam.cropdrop@gmail.com>] to discuss having one for the coming season.



Produce to share this season? Able to grow some extra?

Local community projects value fresh fruit and vegetables

CropDrop is a community organisation connecting growers with community food projects to share abundant produce.

Last season we helped share 1700kg of produce from B&NES growers with 21 local projects. In Bath these included Bath Area Play Project, Bath Brightstart FOOD club and Mercy in Action Pantry

Our 2020 recipients told us they loved receiving fresh local vegetables. "Our members can cook healthy food for their children and teach them all about where food comes from."

Whatever you like growing will be appreciated: vegetables, herbs, fruit and seedlings.

If you can grow it, we can share it!

To find out more, please email us:

hello@cropdrop.org.uk



cropdrop.org.uk



[@cropdropbanes](https://twitter.com/cropdropbanes)