

The GROWER

March 2018

www.cheshamallotments.org.uk

Email your articles, ideas or news to cheshamallotments@gmail.com

It's All For (the) Show

One never realises how important organisations are until they're gone. But this could happen with Chesham's two horticultural shows, the 'early' and 'late summer', which show off the very best of what can be grown locally. Attendances and entries have been steadily falling in recent years and, if more people from our allotments and private gardens don't enter, both could disappear, not immediately, but over time... Sadly many people don't seem to be aware of them but they are widely publicised on Facebook, in The Grower, YourChesham magazine and Twitter. There are a number of other shows in Asheridge, Bellingdon, Amersham and some are just hanging on.

Both of Chesham's shows are held in the upstairs room of the Trinity Baptist Church in Red Lion Street where flowers, fruit and vegetables are laid out lovingly on trestle tables. When they are all in place there is something quite magical about the sight and mixed aromas of the wide range of produce on show, plus the cakes and sponges, tea and coffee. By the time the prizes are distributed the mellow early autumn sun sends shafts of light through the latticed windows, giving the exhibits a golden hue.

The shows are great points of contact for the exhibitors and the public who support the events. This year in Chesham the early summer show will be on July 7th and the late summer on September 1st. Most exhibitors are middle-aged or elderly, so many more youngsters or people with young families need to be encouraged to enter. Only one brave girl entered the junior section in last year's late summer show so we need grandparents and parents to encourage their younger family members to have a go. Of course that requires some effort and more experienced gardeners could encourage their offspring to grow some potatoes in a bucket* or lettuces in a raised bed. Of course there are many more vegetables like radishes or carrots that they could grow. And importantly, it's vital to get organised in good time so you are well prepared.

This year, the horticultural society is introducing three classes for novices at the early summer show - there are already two novice classes in the late summer show. These will be for people who have never won first prize in the class at any show and anyone winning any prize in the novice class will not be eligible to enter that class in future years. The classes will be a vase of three roses (one or more varieties), a vase of six sweet peas (one or more varieties), and six pods of peas.

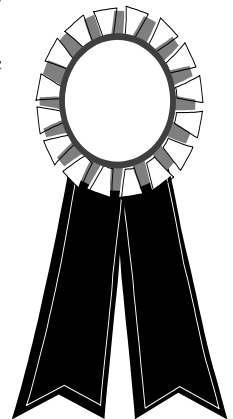
There are those who don't enter because the shows tend to be dominated by three or four individuals who have exhibited for years. However, I'm quite sure that they would be happy to pass on some growing and showing tips at the Saturday coffee mornings and encourage some competition. From experience, it is hard to beat the adrenalin rush when you realise you've managed second or even first in a particular class. Often I walk around the plots and wish some of the plants had been entered. I started when quite by chance I grew a massive lettuce, joined the Chesham Horticultural Society and won first prize!

Of course you have to be a member of the society to enter so go to its website, look for 'contact us' and fill in the form.** I hope that many of you will decide to get competitive - 'entry is ridiculously cheap and the prizes are equally small' - because it's not just about winning but having fun at the same time and helping to preserve an important tradition.

Chris Spruytenburg

*See our new 'Spud in a Bucket' competition

** Or join at the Potato Sales: details on the back page



FISH & CHIP SUPPER/QUIZ 19th May
BOOKING FORM INSIDE!



CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Coffee mornings	On Potato Sale days 24th Feb and 3rd & 10th March, then Saturday mornings from 14th April to 13th October 10am—12pm.	Focal Point Hut, Cameron Road 23rd June and 25th August at Asheridge Road
Fish & Chips/Quiz Evening	Saturday 19th May 7pm	Town Hall, Chesham
Summer Social	Saturday 7th July 7pm	Focal Point Hut, Cameron Road
Open Day	Saturday 18th August 10am to 1.30pm	Cameron Road Allotments

CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY DATES

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Potato Sales	Saturday mornings from 9am on 24th Feb and 3rd & 10th March 2018	Sales Hut (1st gate Cameron Road)
Plant Sale	Saturday 19th May from 9am	On the steps of The United Reform Church, Broadway
Early Summer Show Late Summer Show	Saturday 7th July Saturday 1st September	Trinity Baptist Church, Red Lion Street

Fish & Chip/Quiz Night 19th May 7pm Chesham Town Hall

BOOKING REQUIRED FOR(no. of people)

COST £10 PER HEAD

I enclose payment of

Name.....

Plot No..... Tel No.....

Email.....

**Please bring your own
drink and nibbles
AND a dessert with a
view to sharing.**

**There will be a raffle, so
bring some extra cash!
Contributions for raffle also
gratefully received.**

Please Indicate the number of
meals required below :

FISH

SAUSAGES

FISH CAKES

VEGETARIAN

**Please email cheshamallotments@gmail.com
to reserve your places or hand your form/
payment in at the Coffee Mornings or at
JPS Stationers in the High Street or to any
Allotments Group Officer/Representative.
Please make any cheques payable to
Chesham Allotments Group. Thank you.**

View from the Chair

It's been a cold winter but as I write this I see signs of new growth appearing and I feel quite hopeful that spring will arrive at some point. And, of course, for us at the allotments the first signs of spring are the Chesham Horticultural Society Potato and Onion Sales and the opening up of the Focal Point for our first coffee mornings of the year.

When you come up to have a hot drink and a slice (or two) of cake, we hope you will notice the discreet new fence which has been erected along the sloping side of the Focal Point lawn. Hopefully this will prevent any more tumbles and also allow chairs to be moved a little closer to the edge when we have lots of visitors for the Summer Social and Open Days. Our grateful thanks to Chesham Town Council and Chesham Connect for the grants to make this happen and to all who came to help put it up.

The CHS judges will be making their merry way around all the plots on Tuesday 19th June for the first round of judging for the Best Plot competition. Remember, it is not just about tidiness: points are awarded for number of different crops grow and the health of the crops too. And if you are a newcomer thinking 'hey, I've got no chance' - a trophy is also presented for the Best New Plot so why not give it a go? All the details of the judging process are in the March 2016 edition of The Grower, available to read on our website.

And finally, did you know that 28th March is National Weed Appreciation Day? No, me neither!

Allium Leaf Miner

A lot of people will have found their leeks in particular affected by allium leaf miner, with rots developing where the plant has been damaged and little brown pupae in the stem of the leeks. Can we ask people not to compost affected plants on the site as most heaps won't be hot enough, the pupae will simply hatch and the problem perpetuates. RHS advice is to cover with ultra fine enviromesh or horticultural fleece during March and April and October and November. Plants potentially affected are leeks, onions, chives, shallots and garlic.

Chris Challis

Discount card:

don't forget to pick up your free discount card from the Focal Point at the coffee mornings. It entitles you to a 10% discount at JPS Stationers in Chesham and 10% discount on many items at South Heath Garden Centre. If you know of a business that would like to be added to our scheme please get in touch.

A Plea from the Heart

I have good blood, no; very good blood, I have sweet very desirable blood. How do I know this? Because every creature at my allotment plot bites me and sucks my blood. I know I am not alone in this, but I am suffering. The bites start at my ankles, up behind my knees, around my groin area, around my middle, on my chest, shoulders, back and even behind my ears. They are driving me mad. The insect bite creams available just don't seem to work. So, do we have an amateur, or even better, a professional Dermatologist among our clan?

When I spoke to my Doctor about it, I was told, some people just attract these insects, other people do not. Many years ago, standing in a queue waiting for fish and chips or haggis and chips, in the centre of Portree, Isle of Skye, about every fourth person was being attacked by midges. Can anybody help, in time for this season? Kind regards, The Scratcher.

Dick Turner



We have a new email address: cheshamallotments@gmail.com. Send us a quick hello with your plot number to be added to our email list for occasional reminders of allotment events. Your details will not be shared with anyone else.



A slice of Madeira, m'dear?

Once again the Focal Point Hut will be serving beverages and a nice slice of delicious cake for the Potato Sale mornings and from 14th April to 13th October on Saturdays between 10am and 12pm. As well as being a good social event and a chance to catch your allotment representatives, the coffee mornings help raise funds for the allotments. And it is still only £1 for a hot drink and a piece of homemade cake! If you would be happy to spend a Saturday morning serving at the Focal Point Hut or you would like to provide a cake sometimes, please contact Beverly at beverlymackay@virginmedia.com.



Chesham
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Spud in a Bucket Competition

Have you ever wondered what sort of yield you can get from one potato? Well wonder no more. Enter our Spud in a Bucket competition to find out!



CAG is pleased to announce a new easy to enter competition for all ages.

The rules are simple

1. Plant one potato in a bucket (or container of your choice)
2. Nurture your potato plant in any way you see fit, but don't dig down to see how your crop is doing!
3. Bring your bucket along to the coffee morning on Saturday 8th September 2018, where it will be emptied and the potato yield weighed. Competitors are responsible for taking away their bucket, compost and potatoes
4. Entry fee is £1 per bucket. You can enter as many buckets as you want : perhaps try different varieties?
5. The prize for the heaviest yield will be £20



Potato and Onion Sales: 24th Feb and 3rd & 10th March from 9am

What we will be selling this year:

Potatoes: First Earlies - Arran Pilot, Foremost, Pentland Javelin

Second Earlies - Apache*, Charlotte (salad), Elfe*, Kestrel

Early Maincrop - Desiree, Picasso

Late Maincrop - Cara, , Setanta* (NEW), Rooster*

Onions: Sturon , Red Cross (a new variety, hardy and low bolting)

Shallots: Golden Gourmet, Red Sun

Potato prices - £4.00 per 7lb; 70p per lb for quantities less than 7lb.

*Except (limited quantities of these) Apache, Elfe, Setanta and Rooster which will be £5.00 per 7lb; 90p per lb for quantities less than 7lb.

Onions and shallots—£1 per half lb.

The Trading Hut, Cameron Road

Besides the three Potato Sale Saturdays, the Trading Hut will be open every Saturday from 17th March, through to at least Saturday 5th May, including Easter Saturday 31st March, 10am to 11.30am. I can also open it at other times by prior appointment with me on 07718609719.

As in previous years we will also be selling 6X manure, growmore, fish blood & bone, bonemeal, sulphate of ammonia, sulphate of potash, superphosphate, sharp sand, silver sand, coarse grit, fine potting grit, perlite, vermiculite and fairtrade string. All at discounted prices. *Adrian Norris*

CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

MARSHALL HALL (Chairman) Plot 47A/47B CR	TIM ANDREW (Vice Chair) Plot 48A CR	RAY WILLIAMS (Treasurer) Plots 215/216 CR	BEVERLY MACKAY (Coffee Morning Organiser) Plot 3B AR
ANDREW SINCLAIR (Community Liaison) Plot 45B CR	JIM ABBOTT (Historian & Archivist) Plot 31/32 CR	DAVE HALL (Maintenance and Facilities) Plot 12 CR	TONY MUIR (Website) Plot 28 AR
CLAIRE MALAN (Secretary) Plot 235A CR	KATE HUTCHINSON (Editor—The Grower) Plot 58D/80A CR	CHRIS SPRUYTENBURG (Education and Orientation) Plot 93 CR	CHRIS MACKAY (Database Manager) Plot 6A AR
JANE MACBEAN Town Council Representative		CR = CAMERON ROAD AR = ASHERIDGE ROAD	Email: cheshamallot- ments@gmail.com