



CHESHAM
ALLOTMENTS
Group

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AUGUST 2018

The Grower

Chesham Allotments Group Rebranded!

Perhaps you have noticed our new logo on the notices on the gates? If you haven't, see the top of the page! It is a fresh take on our previous logo which was originally designed by our Committee Secretary Claire Malan.

If you haven't been to the website recently, you are in for a surprise as it has been completely overhauled and recreated with the same fresh modern twist. You can find out about everything that is happening on the allotments, a bit of our history, essential info for Chesham Allotment holders, hints and tips, plus a gallery of great allotment photos. If you have a good photo of life on our allotments, please do send it in via the contact form on the website or to our email address (at the top)!

We have also taken a dangerous step into the modern world by opening a Facebook page (search for Chesham Allotments Group) and a Twitter account (@CheshAllotments) where you can find up-to-date information about what's going on (and photos of the committee dancing).

We are really pleased with our new 'look' and hope you all are too!



Open Day



18th August 10am - 2pm

The annual Open Day at the Cameron Road Allotments is on 18th August 10am - 2pm. There will be lots of cakes, a raffle and a produce stall. A great chance to bring your family and friends to explore the allotments, and maybe encourage them to get a plot themselves! If you have a plot at Cameron Road, please be aware there may be unaccompanied visitors wandering around the site.

If you would like to donate your surplus produce to the stall please bring to the Focal Point before 10am on Saturday 18th.

All donations received for the produce go into allotment funds.

CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP CALENDAR

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Allotment Cafe	Sat until 13th October 10am to 12pm. (25th August will be held	Focal Point Hut, Cameron Road at Asheridge Road Allotments)
Open Day	Sat 18th August 10am to 2pm	Cameron Road Allotments
Fairtrade Chesham Bakes & Spud In A Bucket Competition	Sat 8th September 10am to 12pm	Focal Point Hut, Cameron Road
Macmillan Coffee Morning Fundraiser	Sat 29th September 10am to 12pm	Focal Point Hut, Cameron Road

CHESHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY DATES

EVENT	DATE & TIME	LOCATION
Late Summer Show	Saturday 1st September	Trinity Baptist Church, Red Lion Street
2018 AGM	21st November	Trinity Baptist Church

CHRIS SPRUTENBURG muses on the 'Slug Problem'

I think we all agree that slugs are our number one enemy, whether it's in the garden or the allotment. There are various methods of dealing with this problem and one of the best well-known are slug pellets. So we scatter them around the plants we want to protect - no problem.

But there is! It is also well known that eye-catching slug pellets are often consumed by birds which are either killed or badly affected by slug bait. I'm the first to admit that I use them because frankly I'm not prepared to put in the hours if I see my spinach, lettuces, beans, onions etc. devoured by our slimy friends. Of course, deploying them around crops protected by netting is fine, but the problem begins when the bait is scattered in the open. One tip I learned many years ago was to sprinkle the pellets near the plant and then place a brick or a plank of wood over them so the slugs can eat them but the birds can't. Tilt the bricks or planks by placing a stone underneath.

All this set me thinking - what if we re-introduced predators of slugs such as frogs and hedgehogs, which would happily munch their way through the armies of molluscs. You would correctly point out that our prickly friends risk being poisoned by the bait, likewise the frogs. However if large numbers of allotment holders or domestic gardeners installed a small pond, introduced frogs and some hedgehogs, then the need for slug bait wouldn't exist. And if birds such as pigeons and blackbirds eat the bait then what about the other birds which have suffered a catastrophic decline in numbers in recent years. Could slug bait be adding to their problems?

If we are all concerned about the plight of many of our birds, then it is worth considering being much more careful about using slug deterrents, then birds wouldn't be tempted to ingest them.

(Ferric phosphate slug pellets are generally considered less dangerous to wildlife than metaldehyde ones and have the advantage that the slugs crawl off to die underground rather than in the open air where animals may eat them. According to RHS studies they are only slightly less effective. Other cheap options are beer traps and bran. — The Editor)

Growing out of your plot?

Due to the success of the Town Council and CAG in improving the standard of allotment maintenance and moving on tenants who are no longer caring for their plots, the waiting list has been greatly reduced. Tenants of small plots who have been maintaining a satisfactory standard on their current plot can apply for a second plot. Please get in touch with the Town Hall if you wish to expand your horticultural reach - but don't take on more than you can dig!

View from the Chair

We all had a lively time at the Summer Social this year, and it was great that we needed the marquee for shade rather than protection from the rain! It's been a long time since we had any rain worth mentioning and that has meant a lot of watering for most of us. At the Summer Social there was a debate about the best time to water and a bit of research has shown that the best time to water is early in the morning, before 10am. The plants can absorb the water and it sets them up for the day. The second best time to water is in the evening when the water won't evaporate away before the plants have time to take it up. The third best time to water...is when you can. But then we come to the second important question of how much water. All the experts agree that it is much better to give a plant one really big drink once or twice a week than a little sprinkling every day. A whole can of water encourages a plant to send its roots deeper into the ground, instead of coming up to the surface where they dry out. So if you can only give your plants a drink at midday, make sure it's a big 'un! Plants absorb water through their roots, not their leaves, so don't waste your time watering leaves, water the soil at the base of the plant. And don't forget, we are not allowed to use hoses for watering, just for filling water butts.

Our next big social event is the Open Day on Sat 18th Aug. If anyone wants to give us a hand putting up the marquee at 6pm on 17th, or would like to donate cakes or produce for the veg/fruit stall, that would make us very happy. Do take the chance to bring your friends and family along to see what you get up to.

Finally, you may notice the AGM is a month later this year: it seems a better time to wrap up the year as we are coming to the end of harvest time. Looking forward to seeing you all there!

CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Tuesday 2nd October

All allotment holders are invited to the AGM and Prize Giving on
Tuesday 2nd October 7.30pm at Chesham Town Hall.

Please come if you can so that a full committee can be constitutionally elected, and to have your say on current and relevant allotment matters. The winners of Best Kept Allotment Large/Small and Best New Tenant will also be announced. If you are interested in joining the committee, please get in touch via our email.

Agendas for the AGM will be posted on the allotment gates in September.

Our email — cheshamallotments@gmail.com:

@ If you have provided us with your email address, you will have recently been contacted asking for confirmation you would like to remain in the list. This is to comply with new Data Protection Laws. If you haven't responded yet, your details will have been removed. Please 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. @

How is your Spud in a Bucket doing?

Don't forget to bring your bucket along on 8th September when not only will Fairtrade Chesham be making all the cakes, we will also have the big weigh-in !



Chesham
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I scream, you scream.....but THE LADY'S NOT FOR CHURNING

I think we can all agree that it has been a tad on the warm side this year (up to the time of writing of course, cue snowstorms in August).

Ice cream seems like a good solution to the heatwave: surely it would be better to use our own fruit crops rather than buy it from the supermarket but, if you haven't got an ice cream maker, traditional recipes involve an hourly trip back to the freezer to repeatedly whip up your egg custard until it submits to smooth creaminess. A bit of a faff in this heat. What is the answer? I hear you cry. Well no-churn ice cream of course. Condensed milk is the key ingredient. Mixed with cream, it provides the sweetness and creaminess a good ice cream needs. Most of these recipes are incredibly simple requiring only a few ingredients and very little time. All of them use half a tin of condensed milk on the principle that you might wish to try more than one. Just double the quantities if you want to use the whole tin, or secretively eat the rest with a spoon or spread on good white bread and butter.

Redcurrant No Churn Ice Cream with Raspberry Ripple

Gently cook **200g of redcurrants** with a squeeze of **lemon juice** for about 5mins until soft. Cool. Mash with back of spoon. Whizz up **100g raspberries** with **40g caster sugar** in a blender. Whisk **300ml double cream** until soft and billowy, add **half a tin of condensed milk (195g)** and the redcurrants and mix together. If at this stage you can't be bothered to freeze it, just eat, it is a delicious mousse. Spoon into a 1l tub, drizzling the raspberry purée as you go to create the ripple effect. Freeze. Eat.

Gooseberry Variation:

Gently cook **300g gooseberries** with a good squeeze of **lemon juice** until soft. Blend cautiously, removing half when still a little chunky to add to the ice cream, and blend the rest with a tablespoon of **sugar** to a puree for the ripple.

Other Fruit Variation:

Take 300g any fruit, cook if needed but otherwise just blend and add to mixture.

Spiced Carrot No Churn Kulfi - sweet but perfect after a spicy meal.

Put **50ml milk**, **half a tin (195g) condensed milk**, **2 medium sized peeled and grated carrots**, **2 green cardamom pods**, **pinch of cinnamon** and **2 cloves** in a heavy saucepan and bring to the boil. Simmer gently for 20mins until the carrot is soft. Cool. Fish out the cloves and pods, blend until very smooth. Whip **300ml double cream** and fold in the carrot mixture. Pour into a 1l tub and freeze. Serve with some hazelnuts or pistachios sprinkled on the top.

Cucumber and Mint No Churn Ice Cream

Peel and deseed about **180g (half an average supermarket one) cucumber** and blend to pulp. Finely chop a **handful of tender young mint leaves**. Whip **300ml double cream** and stir in **half a tin of condensed milk (195g)** and the pureed cucumber. Add the mint. Start with a couple of pinches and add to taste. You don't want too much as it will overpower the cucumber. Pour into a 1l tub and freeze.

Gin Variation:

Add a generous glug of good gin to taste.

Basil and Courgette No Churn Ice Cream - particularly good with strawberries

Finely chop a **handful of basil**. Cook a **chopped courgette (180g)** in the microwave (or steam) until soft. Blend to pulp. Whip **300ml double cream** until soft and billowy, add **half a tin of condensed milk (195g)**, the courgette and some of the basil and mix. Taste. Add more basil until you are happy with the flavour. Don't go overboard as the basil flavour increases with freezing. Pour into a 1l tub and freeze.

Olive Oil Variation:

Add a glug of good quality extra virgin olive oil. Sounds weird but olives are fruit, we just normally eat them with savoury flavours. Try it!

No Courgette Variation:

The courgette doesn't add a lot of flavour to this, it just uses up a courgette, so by all means leave it out.....it tastes just as good without!

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	cheshamallotments@gmail.com