



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE

5

FEBRUARY 97

EDITORIAL

This editorial starts the third year of publication of this Newsletter. Please retain it for future reference, the back page contains the annual list of Officers and Committee Members.

Have you ever wondered whether you are "allotmenting" efficiently. Three areas which can be analysed and which may help to increase efficiency are (i) seed purchasing, usage and storage;

(ii) utilisation of growing space and (iii) utilisation of growing time.

(i) If one stores ones seeds in, for example, a sealed container such as an old ice cream tub in the fridge, (but get the approval of the head chef first) then one needs only use sufficient seeds for immediate use, the rest can be stored for the future. Under these conditions, seeds such as those of cabbage, tomato, onion, carrot, lettuce and many flower varieties will last upwards of 5 years, particularly if the seeds are sold in foil packets. By storing unused seed, it is possible, for the same outlay, to purchase different varieties to provide continuity of cropping rather than repeat sowings of one type.

(ii) The editor is lucky enough to own two of the most useful books ever written on vegetable growing. (**Know & Grow Vegetables**, by P.J. Salter *et al.*, 1979 O.U.P. : ditto 2, 1982). Growing crops on a triangular pattern rather than in a square allows 14% more plants in the same area, whilst still allowing each plant the same individual space. Spring cauliflowers planted at 9 in spacing produce the heaviest crop for a given space (although they are mug-sized curds). Onions grown at 2 in spacing maximizes yield, even though wider spacing produces larger bulbs. Above 4 in spacing yields are severely reduced. With potatoes, two small tubers will give better results than a large one cut in half. For maincrop plantings the aim should be 8 eyes per sq. ft. The highest yields of runner beans were obtained from twin rows 2 ft apart with 6 in. between canes. Lack of space prevents describing the details of other crops, but as this work shows, it can pay good dividends to experiment and try new methods.

(iii) Not many of us make full use of the growing time available throughout the year. Pre-germinating crops such as carrots, parsnips, peas and broad beans in half a toilet roll tube, and planting the whole lot out to avoid root disturbance can bring forward cropping time by up to a month (with protection, new carrots in April). From the appearance of most plots in December, not many tenants try to grow much winter produce beyond the inevitable brassicas, leeks and root crops. Winter salad crops such as lettuce, corn salad, spring onions, can all be grown easily over winter. Chard and chicory also provide welcome additions to the winter menu. A midsummer sowing of Kelvedon Wonder peas (which are resistant to mildew) will produce an Autumn crop, as will a late July sowing of carrots or turnips.

Although this is only a brief incursion into the topic, it is hoped that it will get you thinking of how you could improve efforts on the allotment and thereby get better value for the money you spend.

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Happy New Year to you all. I hope you get the crops you dream of.

We are making steady progress on the infrastructure of the Association. At long last we now have a detailed plan of the water supply system to the Hunts Pond Road site. Eventually, all the sites will be surveyed under a series of contracts awarded by Fareham to Roy Dixon, a

Land Surveyor from Stubbington. After Roy had completed his survey and produced a provisional map, Robin and I helped him to locate all the working meters and stop cocks/taps. We discovered that we need two different Southampton keys and one Pompey key to be able to turn off all the water supplies, now that all stop cock and meter pits have been cleaned out. Some

meters had not seen the light of day for so long they blinked when we uncovered them. Most had "gone round the clock" and were showing a low mileage.

Our Warsash Fairy Godfather has been busy delivering his barrels to our sites. Those of you who placed orders should have received them

by now. If anyone else needs them please contact me at the Services Hut on Sunday mornings. After filling with a hose, you have a good supply of "warm" water for your tender plants. I have often thought that use of a hose must set young seedlings back with a cold shock.

1996/1997 RENTAL POSITION

The Honorary Treasurer produced this table for the committee meeting in January. The meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every second month. It emphasizes the big hole in our income, nearly £700, that results from having empty plots. If you know of anyone who wants an allotment, please put them in touch with one of the Officers or Site Managers.

| SITE | AREA (rods) | PAID FOR | (%) | NOT PAID | VALUE (£) |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| Hunts Pond Road | 1550 | 1316 | 84.9 | 234 | 374.40 |
| Lodge Road | 163 | 163 | 100.0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Posbrook | 190 | 137.5 | 72.4 | 52.5 | 84.00 |
| Sarisbury | 733 | 609.5 | 83.2 | 123.5 | 197.60 |
| Warsash | 605 | 580.5 | 95.6 | 24.5 | 39.20 |
| TOTALS | 3241 | 2806.5 | 86.6 | 434.5 | 695.20 |

NOTES: (i) This was the position at 31/12 96 – our situation normally improves up to late summer and the new allotment year. (ii) Value based on £1.60 per rod and does not include any membership fees associated with tenancy.

THE JIM LETT HUT

OPEN - SUNDAY 10.00-12.00 noon

Good news for the Hut. Fareham F.B.C. has agreed that the Jim Lett Hut needs a new roof and the walls may be lined allowing better protection for Jim's stock and for it to be decorated. Under the terms of the new lease, Fareham is responsible for Communal Buildings and it is very welcome to see them upholding their side of the agreement.

This spring we are selling ten different varieties of potatoes. To simplify administration, all potatoes will have the same price £1 for 5 lb., £2 for 10 lb.. They will include the old favourites Arran Pilot and King Edward, against which the flavour standards of all other varieties have been judged in the past. It has been the experience of the Honorary

Secretary over the last six years that the yield of King Edward is as good as Desiree, although the size range of the tubers is much greater (more small ones) and is less prone to scab. Try planting a few tubers of an early under the protection of horticultural fleece and you will be rewarded with new potatoes in May.

Horticultural fleece is a new line this year, selling at £ 6.10 for a 8 m x 1.5 m strip. Jim has managed to keep the prices of many of the major stock items (Morgro 8+, soilless compost, canes) the same as last year. All the bulk seed supplies are, as usual, being sold at considerable discounts to normal retail prices. Green Windsor beans must represent an exceptional purchase, since it is the best tasting of all the broad beans and is not widely available (now sold out, proving the point !).

Assistance for the Trading Hut

So far, there have been no volunteers to help with the running of the Jim Lett Hut. At the moment Jim is being helped by an *ad hoc* squad of committee members and one or two ex-committee members. The trading side of the Association, has over the past 10 years, contributed an average of nearly £250 p.a. to our coffers which amongst other things has allowed us to build up the range of machinery available to members for their free use.

If you can help out on the occasional Sunday please tell the Treasurer or Chairman so that a properly formed rota can be established. The Committee is looking into the possibilities of a voucher system to recognise the value to the Association of this service.

CORRESPONDENCE

The following letter has been received from our occasional Titchfield Common correspondent.

POTATOES

Having grown potatoes for many years with moderate success on my Hunts Pond Road Allotment, even winning a few prizes in the local shows, I thought members would be interested to hear of my '96 results.

After giving up my plot with reluctance, and replanning my house and garden (out went the Glen Cova), I decided to change my rotation of flowers and runner beans. As the plot had been untouched for a year I cleared all the weeds and got Terry Cleeve to rotovate it with his antique Gem. Once started Terry did an excellent job. It so happened that my daughter Sian and her husband Phil arrived from Australia at that moment full of energy and eager to sort me out. With my Merrytiller, Phil took out rows 4 ft apart, Sian top-dressed with Growmore and put in 2 rows of broad bean plants, 6 rows of dahlia tubers, 2 rows of runner bean seed, which left just 2 rows to fill -- "How about potatoes?" said Sian. We agreed, jumped in the car and were in the Mill (the one on the Meon at Titchfield) in 10 minutes.

All they had were a few in the bottom of the sacks, but we managed to find 7 lb. of Arran Pilot and 7 lb. of Cara. Within an hour Sian had finished top-dressing with the Growmore and planted the potatoes, which were just sufficient to fill the 2 rows. I thought that 4 ft apart was ridiculous -- I would have

had another row between. However who was I to argue. Practically all the sets came through, though the acres of space between the rows still worried me somewhat. Soon the growth was sufficient for earthing up. This was repeated 3 times with a light sprinkling of Growmore (wonderful stuff). Eventually the haulms reached 2½ ft with equal spread. On 1st June I dug the first root -- a marvellous sample of just two tubers made a nice meal. The heavy crop of Pilot provided meals for the family who invariably took a bag when they left. The quality of the tubers was excellent with no faunal damage. Arran Pilot is a very old variety but is unbeatable as an early choice.

Now for the Cara: the haulm was exceptionally strong and still green when the first root was dug. I have never seen such a crop of huge tubers. After cutting off the tops I dug the whole row which filled 4 sacks - enough to last us the whole winter.

The reason for this result is not clear but potatoes have never been grown in this area before. Will they do as well next year? We did find a trace of blight on a few of the tubers, but there was no signs in the foliage. I now have to wait 2 years until Sian and Phil come over again.

Trevor Cox

(It is great to know that Trevor has made such a successful recovery. Please may it continue. Ed.)

MISCELLANEA

- ◆ **Skips.** The Committee have agreed that skips should be made available on the weekend of the 21st March (the week before Easter). They will only be provided if asked for, so contact your Site Manager. Please use them only for "hard" rubbish, metal, plastic, large pieces of timber and the like.
- ◆ **Plots clean - up.** Please remember that next May, the Committee will be inspecting all sites to check on the condition of plots. Those tenants who have failed to cultivate them will be issued with eviction warnings.
- ◆ **Hedges.** Now that we are responsible for maintaining our hedges, other than the long Hunts Pond Road one, we have contracted Geoff Lambeth of Fareham to carry out all necessary work for us. This year we will be cutting all hedges and where necessary, getting Geoff to fill in gaps with hawthorn saplings. He will also be resetting the gate in Lodge Road. If there is any work you think needs doing, please discuss the matter with your Site Manager, or one of the Officers.
- ◆ **Soot.** A local chimney sweep has arranged to supply as with bags of soot. They are completely sealed in bags inside bin liners and are left at the side of the Services Hut. **Help yourselves.** Remember, soot scorches if applied when fresh, so make sure it is exposed for a few weeks before use and avoid direct contact with plants.
- ◆ **25th Anniversary.** This will occur on 7th September this year. We are still looking for ideas to commemorate the occasion. The only suggestion so far is to commission the Association Officers Board authorized at the 1993 A.G.M.



WESTERN WARDS ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Hon. Secretary

*Robin Halliday
45 Locksheath Park Road
Locks Heath
Southampton SO31 6NA
(01489) 574733*

Hon. Chairman

*Brian Coles
270 Hunts Pond Road
Titchfield Common
Fareham PO14 4PF
(01489) 574884*

Hon. Treasurer

*Bill Jacob
The Hurdles
Titchfield Common
Fareham PO14 4AN
(01489) 582719*

1996 A.G.M. ELECTIONS

In addition to the Officers, the following members were elected to run the Association for the coming year.

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SITE MANAGERS

HUNTS POND ROAD

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|---|--------------|
| plots 39D/40A | ALASTAIR BURNETT | 10 Westminster Gardens, Titchfield Common, Fareham PO14 4QB | 01489-583671 |
| plots 38A2/39A | COLIN CRISP | 37 Cyprus Road, Titchfield Common, Fareham PO14 4JZ | 01489-600533 |
| plots 12C1/13C | NORMAN HATCH | 58 Lambourne Drive, Locks Heath, Southampton SO31 6TY | 01489-571162 |

LODGE ROAD

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------------|---|--------------|
| plots 44C/44D | SANDRA MILAM | 10 Hardy Close, Locks Heath, Southampton SO31 6NJ | 01489-582054 |
|---------------|---------------------|---|--------------|

POSBROOK

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|---|--------------|
| plots 68-70 | JIM MITCHELL | 31 Coach Hill, Titchfield, Fareham PO14 4ET | 01329-845745 |
|-------------|---------------------|---|--------------|

SARISBURY

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|--|--------------|
| plots 6A/7A | JIM BRADSHAW | 24 Woodlands Close, SarisburyGreen, Southampton SO31 6AQ | 01489-600991 |
| plots 28A/29A | RAY BROWN | 20 Daisy Lane, Locks Heath, Southampton SO31 6RA | 01489-583295 |
| plots 35A/35B1/36A | FRED WHITE | 81 Peters Road, Locks Heath, Southampton SO31 6EL | 01489-584288 |

WARSASH

| | | | |
|----------|-------------------|--|--------------|
| plot 30A | KIT COLSON | 15 Osborne Road, Warsash, Southampton SO31 9GJ | 01489-589648 |
| plot 18A | ERIC ROCK | 16 Queen's Road, Warsash, Southampton SO31 9JY | 01489-576628 |

TRADING HUT

SECRETARY

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--------------|
| JIM LETT | 23 Cyprus Road, Titchfield Common, Fareham PO14 4JY | 01489-573421 |
|-----------------|---|--------------|