

# Newport Parish Council

## Allotment Newsletter Spring 2015

Newport Parish Council, The Riverside Centre, The Quay, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 2QR - (01983) 559119  
Maxine Yule (Clerk) Email: maxyule@gmail.com



### What's happening where you are?

#### Clatterford

The Parish Council are under negotiation with the IWC to take over the Recreation Ground adjacent to the allotment site. This should not have any effect on the site or if it does, it should be for the better!

#### Hillside

We hope to improve the pathway along the bottom of the site by laying shingle or pebbles. Hopefully this will improve the drainage problems that occur every winter. If you could help Alan lay this over the next few months please let us know.

#### Field House

We are still keen to have bees on the site so if there are any potential bee keepers out there please get in touch.

#### Castle Road

Castle Road is the last remaining key-operated padlock, we assume you are still happy with this but if enough of you would rather move to a numbered padlock (so you never have to remember your key again!) we would be happy to accommodate this.

#### Pan

You may have noticed Alan's 'forest' is progressing well on the old WISE grass area as you come into the site. Thanks to the Big Tree Project, organised by Natural Enterprise in partnership with Spectrum Housing, we have been able to plant a number of different native species of trees that have added to our Christmas trees and fruit trees. If you would like to help us look after them please contact Alan.



The start of something big!

#### Millers Lane

The fruit trees did well on the bank last year and we are hoping they will yield a bigger harvest this year. Please help us look after them and feel free to enjoy their produce. We hope to add to them this autumn so let us know if you have any suggestions for different varieties.

*Please do let us know, via email, letter or phone any news you have from your allotment - photos of produce, plots, blooms and prized sheds welcome!*

### What to sow and plant in May

- Plant in pots or trays under glass, Dwarf and climbing French beans, runner beans, sweet corn, outdoor cucumbers, courgettes, pumpkins, squashes, outdoor cucumbers – all which can be planted out next month.
- Savoy cabbage, winter cabbage, endive, kale and sprouting broccoli can all be sown in the open ground now, ready to be planted out next month.
- Continue making direct successional sowings in the soil of lettuce, radish, spinach, turnips (switch to kohlrabi when the weather becomes hot) beetroot for summer use and also maincrop beetroot to put into store at the end of summer.
- Leeks, Brussels sprouts and French beans sown last month under glass, can now be planted out.
- This is also your last opportunity to sow peas and parsnips this year

### What to sow and plant in June

- Successional sowings of beetroot, kohlrabi, lettuce and winter cabbage seeds can all be done now – follow the instructions on the back of your seed packets, but it is worth starting them off in trays indoors and then transferring them outside after a couple of weeks. Sow every 2 – 4 weeks for a continual supply of produce.
- 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.

(Information taken from [www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk), the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners.)

### Naughty ....but nice!

For those of you with a sweet tooth and an abundance of beetroot here's the ideal solution - Chocolate Beetroot Cake!



#### Ingredients

- 250g well-drained, cooked beetroots, pureed
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 300g caster sugar
- 250ml vegetable oil
- 3 eggs
- 225g plain flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

#### Method

- Prep:20min Cook:25min Ready in:45min
  - Preheat oven to 180 C / Gas 4. Grease and flour one 20x30cm (9x13 in) or similar sized baking tin.
  - In a large bowl, combine pureed beetroots, eggs, vanilla, oil and sugar. Mix with an electric mixer on low speed until well combined.
  - In a separate bowl, mix together flour, bicarbonate of soda, salt and cocoa. Add to the creamed mixture, beating together well.
  - Pour batter into prepared tin.
  - Bake for 25 to 30 minutes until done.
  - Cool and frost with your favourite icing.
  - Finish with a comfy armchair and a pot of tea!
- (Recipe courtesy of [www.allrecipes.co.uk](http://www.allrecipes.co.uk))

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### News in brief .....

- **Allotment Forum** - Wednesday 29th April 7.00pm at the Riverside Centre. Do come along and join in this informal gathering as it's a great opportunity to meet and chat with your fellow Allotment 'Plotters'!
- **Allotment Produce Show** - this was held in 2013 and was a lovely event which took part as part of Pan Fete. However due to lack of take-up in 2014 the Produce Show was not held last year. If you would like to participate in this please do let us know so that we can organise an event for this summer. Either email or phone Maxine Yule by 30th April or let her know at the Forum meeting.
- A reminder that bonfires are not permitted on the allotments between 1st April until 30th September.
- Please can allotment tenants not dump rubbish on allotment plots and take all their rubbish away with them. Rubbish left on sites obviously equates to time and money out of the Allotment budget being spent on clearing it away. If you have any problems, please contact Alan on 07580 032 216
- Plantlife are asking for volunteers to take part in the National Plant Monitoring Scheme which was launched recently. The scheme is the first of its kind and asks for volunteers across the United Kingdom to visit a kilometre square local to them and record the plants they find there in several different plots. The scheme will enable Plantlife to explore how plants in different habitats are responding to changes in the environment. For more details visit [www.npms.org.uk](http://www.npms.org.uk)
- [www.thrive.org.uk](http://www.thrive.org.uk) is an interesting and informative website detailing the work of Thrive, which "uses gardening to bring about positive changes in the lives of people living with disabilities or ill health, or who are isolated, disadvantaged or vulnerable. This therapy is known as social and therapeutic horticulture - the process of working with plants to improve physical and psychological health, and communication and thinking skills."
- National Gardening Week 2015 will be taking place 13-19 April. For more details go to [www.nationalgardeningweek.org.uk](http://www.nationalgardeningweek.org.uk)

### Your wild plot!

As many of you will be aware, an allotment site offers so much more than simply an area for growing produce and enjoying communal gardening - it also offers a hugely valuable habitat for wildlife, particularly as 'green space' in urban areas is increasingly encroached upon by the demands of modern life.

A diverse range of species can be found including, to list just a few, slow worms, toads, hedgehogs, a multitude of insects and birds. And with just a few simple measures you too can offer additional habitat on your own plot, no matter what size it is. For instance, by leaving a small patch of nettles you will be providing food and a breeding area for butterflies. Or make a 'bug hotel' from short sections of hollow bamboo cane tied together. And of course if you have a shed this could provide the ideal location for a bird box (position it between north to east to avoid overheating or cold winds).

Natural England have produced a very informative leaflet titled 'Wildlife on allotments' which can be viewed or downloaded free from their Publications & Products section at [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)



Common toad by Peter aka anemoneprojectors (Flickr)



Slow worm by Erik Paterson (Flickr)

### A little ray of sunshine .....

Why not plant a few sunflower seeds on your plot this year - not only will the flowers provide a lovely splash of colour but they will also attract bees and other pollinating insects during the summer and at the end of their lives the flower heads are packed full of food for birds. And of course, for those of you with a competitive streak, you could always have an informal "whose flower is tallest" competition!

If you have spare seeds of any type why not bring them along to the Allotment Forum (Wednesday 29th April, 7pm, Riverside Centre) for a Seed Swap?

### And finally .....

If you would like to contribute a photo, recipe, article, etc. to the Summer newsletter please contact Maxine Yule using the details shown at the top of the newsletter.

Be sure to check our website for regular updates and for all the latest news and information on the allotments. [www.newportwight.org](http://www.newportwight.org)

For any queries relating to the maintenance of the allotments please contact Alan on 07580 032216.