

Corner Plot

April 2022



www.basingstoke.gov.uk/allotments

Inside this issue

A tale from an allotment | Inspiration to grow the unusual | Allotment competition | Experience with onions | Polite reminders | Grumps from the chair | Annual tenants meeting



supported by
Basingstoke
and Deane

A TALE FROM AN ALLOTMENT.

In late spring, I duly sowed my carrots in drills of one foot wide and thirty feet long. The seed was well scattered and can usually be counted upon to give a long lasting crop that can also be stored for winter use.

As the weeks passed the carrots emerged and wonderful top growth promised a bumper crop which was on good ground and protected within a fruit cage and then...

Suddenly the little patches of top growth disappeared and closer examination revealed hollowed out carrot tops very neatly done, like shallow saucers. Day after day the problem was repeated. No rabbits were troubling the allotment and the nibbling was not rat-like as it was far too delicate.

Then one morning while I was quietly weeding near the carrots I caught sight

of a vole, possibly a shrew, happily nibbling away at the carrot patch. Catching sight of me the offender made off at pace.

I have since discovered that during COVID-19, uncut verges, roundabouts and hedges have led to a population explosion of voles right across the country and the issue was even raised on Gardeners' Question Time.

What did I do? Well, nothing. Who wants to trap a vole? Not me! At the end of the season all that was left was 17 ounces (about half a kilo) of prepared carrots!

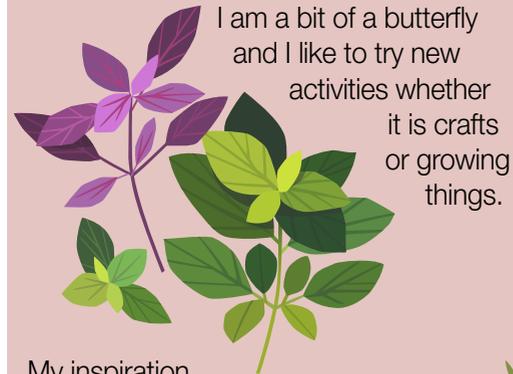
Thanks to a lunch-time visitor, Mavis Pinnock, who sent me this card having heard my sad tale.

Ron le Marechal



Mr LeMarachel grows exceptional carrots
and is so kind...
unlike Mr McGregor₁

INSPIRATION TO GROW THE UNUSUAL



I am a bit of a butterfly and I like to try new activities whether it is crafts or growing things.

My inspiration comes from all sorts of places such as newspapers, magazines or television programmes. Recently it was the Hairy Bikers Go North series that sparked my inspiration for herbs.

The episode featuring Alison Dobbs from Herbs Unlimited in Yorkshire

was particularly good.



Alison talked with great knowledge about the more well known herbs and also the less known plants - I never knew that there was a Banana Mint! I am really looking forward to growing some as I enjoy

making and eating banana pancakes for breakfast and think adding banana mint to the batter would be delicious. The Herbs Unlimited website and blog www.herbsunlimited.co.uk are worth checking out for useful tips and information on herbs. Unfortunately they

don't appear to sell plants so I have found another company called Victoriana Nurseries www.victoriananursery.co.uk who supply a vast arrange of herb seeds and plants. Whilst browsing their website I came across Angelica, a herb I have been longing to try. I remember buying crystallised angelica at Christmas time and I haven't seen it for years. It is an ancient herb that grows to about eight feet tall. The stems and roots can be eaten as a vegetable and the young stems crystallised for sweets and puddings.

I was going to say put pen to paper tell us about what inspires your planting on the allotment then I realised I didn't use a pen! So do write, type, post or email your thoughts, tips or recipes to Mark Littlefield for the next issue of corner plot.



Susan Beard



BASINGSTOKE ANNUAL ALLOTMENT COMPETITION

ENTRY FORM 2022

All competitors wishing to enter this competition must complete this form and return it to Mark Littlefield, Specialist Services Officer, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council no later than **Wednesday 1 June 2022**. It is intended that judging will take place in late June / early July 2022.

I wish to enter the Basingstoke and Deane Annual Allotment Competition 2022. Applications should be received no later than **Wednesday 1 June 2022**.

Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss Initials _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Email _____

Name of allotment site _____

Plot number _____ Size of plot in rods _____

Signature _____ Date _____

There is no fee payable. Basingstoke Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Association (BALGA) members will be entered in the countrywide Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies competition for which further prizes can be won.

Subject to no future COVID-19 restrictions, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council propose re-start the annual allotment competition this year which is open to all tenants of allotments in Basingstoke Town.

The competition is in two classes, Class one for allotments with five rods and under and Class two for allotments with over five Rods. The competition is judged by the Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies (HFHS) and this year the judging will take place in early July.

There is no entry fee for the competition. Any costs incurred for judging, awards, etc. will be met by the council.

Completed entry forms (included within this edition of Corner Plot) must be received by Mark Littlefield (Ground Maintenance Projects Officer) no later than **Wednesday 1 June 2022**.

Demand for allotments is very high, especially due to the pandemic and now that all allotments within

the town are tenanted it is clear that a great many gardeners are working them with skill and imagination. It is therefore time to put your talents to the test by entering this year's competition. All are welcome to enter whether you have been working an allotment for a long time, or whether you are new to growing your own fruit and vegetables.

The main competition is open to a maximum of 30 allotment plots. Should we be fortunate enough to exceed this number then area representatives will inspect entries in early June to reduce the number to be officially judged to 30.

Some allotment sites enter plots into the competition each year, if your site is one of those which has not entered don't be shy, have a go!

Please complete the application form, cut out and return it to Mark Littlefield no later than **Wednesday 1 June 2022**. Entry forms received after this date will not be entered into the competition.



MY EXPERIENCE WITH ONIONS*

Onions and shallots have been a difficult crop on my plot for quite a few years. I tried planting sets for the first time, three years then had a go at growing them from seed and both had the same result - mildew and in some cases floppy necks which I believe to be neck rot. I have found that planting over wintering onions suffered more than the one planted in late March/early April. I was concerned that perhaps I had the dreaded onion rot on the plot so I gave up on onions for a while. I know advice says three years but I wasn't sure of the problem and I am not a very patient gardener so I gave it a couple of years. Last year I planted onion sets in beds I had not used previously for onions.

All the onion sets I had bought prior to last year were ones I picked up from garden centres, however last year I placed an order with a mail order supplier. Much to my surprise the crop I had was the best ever, although of course didn't plant enough to last through to this year's harvest.

This year I am planning to plant onion sets again and will be keeping my fingers crossed for good results. After all we are at the mercy of the weather and Mother Nature when it comes to growing our crops.

* First Printed in corner plot 2018



Polite reminder to tenants

Please note that the following are NOT permitted on allotments:

- Vehicle tyres (these contain toxins and are hazardous waste)
- Carpets, underlay or astroturf (these contain chemical additives)
- Cockerels (in order to prevent early morning noise complaints from nearby residents)
- Waste from off site

GRUMPS FROM THE CHAIR

ALLOTMENT THEFTS

I am sorry to say that thefts from allotments continue. It is impossible for these incidents to be prevented as most occur at night and security fences and hawthorn hedges etc can only go so far as a deterrent. More troubling are reports of thefts that occur on an allotment that can only have been carried out by other users of the allotments. Vegetables taken and wooden beams for a shed awaiting erection are just two recent reports. Clearly incidents like this are not taking place when other allotment holders are working their plots, so, again, is not easily stopped. It does, however, leave a particularly unpleasant taste in the mouth; that someone on your site is the offender. Let us make no mistake - THIS IS STEALING - and the perpetrators are THIEVES! Please let's all keep our eyes open and report any concerns to the Council Allotment Officer or your site representative.

Ron le Marechal, Chairman of Area and Site Representatives



Annual tenants' meeting



It is proposed to hold the Annual Allotment Tenants Meeting this year on Thursday 1 December 2022 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Deanes Building, Civic Offices.



Committee members

Grounds Maintenance
Project Officer.
Mark Littlefield

Chairman
Ron Le Maréchal

Minute Secretary
Vacant

Committee area representatives

Susan Beard
(Carpenters Down)

Tim Briston
(Churchill Way)

Ron Le Maréchal,
Iain Crawford
(Eastrop)

Mick Phelps
(Elizabeth Road)

Bill Fergie
(Hackwood Road)

John Champion
(Stag Hill)

Tony Gritt
(Whiteditch)

Martin Eastwood
(Burgess Road)

Site representative meeting

It is proposed to re-commence holding Site Representative meetings this year on Thursday 12 May 2022 and Thursday 22 September 2022 both at 7pm in the Council Committee Room, Deanes Building, Civic Offices.

©Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council March 2022

www.basingstoke.gov.uk/allotments |   @BasingstokeGov

customer.services@basingstoke.gov.uk | 01256 844844 |

www.basingstoke.gov.uk/signup

For a large print copy of this
leaflet please call 01256 844844

