

# THE URBAN JUNGLE

The Newsletter of the Ruislip-Northwood Co-operative Small Holding and Allotment Society  
Limited

Issue 12 - August 2009

## Introduction

Having said that we are going to issue this newsletter four times a year, we are slipping in an extra edition because there is information that the Committee needs to pass on in a timely manner. In particular can I draw your attention to the first item which concerns seed orders. If you would like to take advantage of this offer, you need to get your skates on, because the orders need to be back to Cathy by 20<sup>th</sup> September.

## King's Seeds Scheme (Cathy)

Further to the information posted in the June newsletter... we have now received the Kings Seed Scheme 2009/2010 Catalogues, a copy of which can be obtained from either Trevor or Cathy, (Seed Secretary).

Onion Sets and Shallots can be ordered for this years planting and will be delivered from early October 2009 onward, seed potatoes will be despatched early to mid January 2010 onwards, subject to weather conditions.

Completed order forms must be handed to either Trevor or Cathy, together with the correct remittance, before the **20<sup>th</sup> September 2009** cut off date. Please note that, to avoid unnecessary work, we are asking that members select the "Individual Packing" option on the order form, which, for only an additional £1, ensures that your order is despatched directly to your home address, rather than in bulk to the seed secretary for onward distribution.

We would urge you to check out the highly competitive prices offered by this scheme which we believe wouldn't be beaten by any local suppliers. Don't forget – orders before the 20<sup>th</sup> September please.

## Security

If you read the local newspaper, or if you have been down to the bottom allotments in the last few days, you will already know that there has been a suspected arson attack on one of our member's property. In order to gain entry to the allotments, the Fire Brigade had to cut the padlock on the top gate and this has been replaced by a spare. The reason it's a "spare", of course, is that some keys have problems with it! Most will work eventually if you "jiggle it a bit"....

We are working on the matter, but you can't just walk into a local locksmith and buy a replacement off the shelf. (There are 20 key variations to the padlock, and ours is not the most common!)

However we now expect the new one to be fitted in the next day or two. Tests show it should work with all the existing keys, but if you have a problem, send an e-mail to the usual address.

It seems appropriate to remind you all that any suspicious behaviour or any incident, such as theft or damage, (however trivial you think it), should be reported to the Committee to ensure that they are aware of all problems. Thank you.

## A Big "Thank You" (Angela)

There wasn't space in the last issue to thank the members on the four Trench Working Parties in March who managed to clear a deep drainage ditch from the cross path as far as the paddock; Giovanni, Peter, Ted, Tim, Eddie, John, Alan, Adrian, Cathy, Barbara, Rachel, Joe and daughter Ruth, and Deryk - or the Fencing Working Party on May 14<sup>th</sup>, led by Peter; Mick Lawer, Kevin, Richard, Giovanni. This sealed the remaining gaps in the Joel Street hedge around the upper gate. The Hedging Working Party on July 16<sup>th</sup>, led by Ted and Peter, trimmed the outside of the hedge from the lower main gate as far as Tesco's. Thanks to Graham, Janice, Jaya, and Andre for all their help. Thanks to Janice and Graham for removing the rubbish from the litter pick. Particular thanks to Peter, Ted, Mick and Matthew for their use of the hedge cutter, which was hard work! Matthew has learned a new skill!

## **Mowers**

As some of you may have realised, these have been giving problems recently. We have now purchased a new machine: Mower 4. This is a lightweight machine ideally suited for regular use on short grass paths around the site; at present it is the only serviceable machine available to the Committee Members who kindly trim the main paths. If you have long, neglected grass on your plot, please hire a brush cutter which is powerful enough to tackle it; the local shop offers reasonable terms. We hope to have at least one other mower in place in the near future.

## **Bark and Pallets (Trevor)**

In addition to deliveries of wooden pallets, we have now arranged chipped bark to be delivered on a regular basis. In both cases, these will be stacked against the Tesco wall in the car park. Please help yourself. Bear in mind that, although the bark is ideal for using on paths around raised beds on your plot, it should not be used as a mulch or compost: apart from the risk of introducing diseased material to your soil, it will also alter the ph level if used too lavishly.

## **Ten (or twelve!) things to do with Courgettes**

If, like me, you are suffering from an over supply of courgettes you might want some suggestions as to what to do with them, apart from giving them away! I have been searching through my recipe books and here are some of the things I'm going to try. (Angela has suggested Courgette loaf and Courgette Chutney too)

- use them to make ratatouille
- courgette soup
- use them in a Spanish omelette (frittata)
- bake a chocolate courgette cake
- courgette and rice tian
- courgette tea bread
- courgette and lentil moussaka
- use them in a green curry
- cocoa and courgette muffins
- baked potato with a curried prawn and courgette topping.

## **Recipe – Plum and Blackberry Crumble**

I'm not sure if I have given you this one before, but it is one of our favourites around this time of the year as long as the weather is not too hot!

For the crumble

- 140g/5oz plain flour
- 50g/2oz demerara sugar
- 85g/3oz butter, cut in pieces
- 50g/2oz finely chopped toasted hazelnuts

For the filling

- 700g/1lb 9ozs plums, stoned and quartered
- 250g/9oz blackberries
- 2 tbsp cassis, optional, but good
- 50g/2oz golden caster sugar
- 1 rounded tbsp plain flour

Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. For the crumble, mix the flour and sugar in a bowl and rub in the butter to make fairly lumpy crumbs. Stir in the hazelnuts. (Or process the flour, sugar and butter in a food processor, then mix in the nuts.)

Mix the plums and blackberries for the filling in an ovenproof dish so they fill it. Drizzle over the cassis. Stir the sugar and flour together and toss gently with the fruit. Sprinkle the crumble loosely over and bake for 40-45 minutes until golden and bubbly. Serve warm with custard or vanilla ice cream.

## **And finally .....**

I was determined to include a recipe this time but, as a result, I have not been able to include an article about manure/composts. Hopefully this will be in the next newsletter, which should be out soon.

Jenny Jessup