

THE URBAN JUNGLE

THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTHWOOD HILLS ALLOTMENT AND SMALLHOLDING SOCIETY

Winter 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

-  Plans for site
-  Recipe: Stuffed Marrow
-  What to do about blight
-  New website
-  Poem
-  Site Photos

CHAIRPERSON AND SECRETARY'S ADDRESS

Persistence has been the key this year. It's been a really challenging few months taking on this new role for both myself and Mandy. Things should have been a lot easier, but as they say, "that's the way the cookie crumbles".

We have both learnt so much - and although it has taken up a lot of our time (what with both of us working full time and studying) - we have enjoyed being your new Secretary and Chair.

Looking back at what has happened in the last few months we can only be grateful for the wonderful plot holders who have supported us and the work they have done to ensure our mission for everyone to grow their carrots in a friendly and supportive environment is achieved!

So many of you have been so kind and encouraged us along the way and we both look forward to the next few months and the challenges ahead.

As always, if you need anything, please ask and we will do our best to help you.

Mandy & Sian

PLANS FOR ORGANISATION OF SITE 2022

Hi, my name is Kevin Sutch and I am the site representative for the JSA committee.

I am working closely with David and Mike to keep the site up to date and identify jobs that need to be done. To that end we have pulled together the following list which we hope to be able to tackle. As we are not at the allotment full time, it is clear that all this work will not be completed in a year, but we will be asking for volunteers and create working parties to help achieve what is on the list.

Before I go into detail you need to understand your role and responsibilities as a plot holder. You must:

- Cultivate at least 50% of your plot
- Keep it tidy
- Keep within your plot borders
- Cut grass paths adjacent to your plot
- Keep drains or trenches adjacent to plots clean and free of blockages

If we all do this, we can then concentrate on the issues that affect us all.

Our plan is to tackle the following main areas:

Resolution of flooding, from smallholding to the field next to allotments.

Set up starter plots and make it clear to all that they are starter plots.

Skip hire – an opportunity to remove more rubbish from the site.

Inventory and assessment of equipment.

Identify faults in the water system.

Secure the fence that fronts Joel Street either side of the gate to the smallholding, review and cost of repairing or replacing perimeter fencing.

We will ask you to help when we think help is required such as:

Creating a grass cutting team

Establishing a list of jobs that plot-holders can sign up to / or action

Working party group dates for jobs that need to be done.

clear overgrown plots to be able to re-let or provide plot-help to those who have asked as a one off of clearance/strimming/general help.

One thing that has not been done for a very long time but will also take some time is to identify, measure, and mark out all plots and to check with the RE database on charges and size of plot. We hope to be able to have this completed by the end of the year.

If you have any areas that you feel need to be addressed, please let us know either by putting a note in the post box by the petrol station gate or by sending the committee an email.



RECIPE FEATURE

Stuffed Marrow

Tried and tested with marrow grown in our allotment, this recipe is a family favourite. It also uses onions, carrots and garlic that can be grown at the allotments...



Ingredients:

- 500g Turkey mince (or substitute with any other meat or quorn mince)
- 1 Marrow, cut into thick, 4cm slices
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 carrot, grated
- 3 garlic cloves, chop
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 100g green lentils
- 1/2 tsp chilli flakes
- 1/2 tsp ground cayenne pepper
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 60g grated parmesan
- A handful of breadcrumbs



Method:

1. Rapid boil lentils for 10 minutes before turning down to simmer for 30 minutes.
2. Pre-heat oven to gas mark 6 or 200°C
3. Heat oil in frying pan and cook the onion, carrot and garlic, pepper and chilli flakes, until they begin softening. Add turkey mince and brown. Add the tomatoes and cook for a further 5 minutes.
4. Scoop out the middle of the Marrow (you can freeze this for later or try it with mash!) and arrange the rings on a baking tray lined with grease proof paper.
5. Drain lentils and add them to the rest of the stuffing mix.
6. Spoon the mix into the marrow rings generously and cover with foil. Bake in oven for 30 mins.
7. Remove foil and top with cheese and breadcrumbs. Bake for a further 10 minutes or until the crumbs are golden and the marrow is tender.
8. Enjoy with a side of rice or salad!

HOW CAN YOU AVOID BLIGHT?

Last year it seems that everybody who tried to grow tomatoes had their crops damaged by blight. What can you do to avoid it, or at least get some useable crops? Here are some tips, based on our experience this year.

Firstly - know the enemy.

Blight is spread by fungal spores which can survive from previous years in the ground, and on old plants, supports etc so we never grow tomatoes or potatoes in the same bed in successive years. We use new support stakes (or clean old ones with a dilute solution of Jeyes Fluid), we never reuse old ties and remove all infected material from site as soon as possible.

Secondly - we grow so-called blight resistant varieties.

Do not grow varieties known to be susceptible. Sadly, these are usually the old varieties and often the best tasting ones. Last year we had success with Crimson Blush, Honeymoon, Oh Happy Day, Mountain Magic, Primabelle and Ferline.

Thirdly - we take defensive measures.

We spray regularly with soluble aspirin (75mg/litre of water) even before blight appears. We have found that to be useful in controlling blight although not totally preventing it – and it stops the plants getting headaches. We leave space between plants and remove excess leaves to allow air to circulate.

Fourthly - when blight appears we remove any infected leaves at the first sign.

Last year we were able to take a crop of the fruit for several weeks after blight first appeared.

So finally - did we get any tomatoes last year? Well yes, we did have a reasonable crop by following the above advice and being rigorous about removing infected material. Was it worth it? Definitely – there is nothing to beat a home-made tomato soup.

Mike & Jenny

NEW WEBSITE AND EMAIL OPTIONS

Hello everyone, it's Alex, your Data Representative and your Web Manager.

We've been hard at work over December and January looking into sorting out the website and email issues... and I'm happy to say we have a solution.

For starters, we have a new website - www.joelstreetallotments.co.uk!

Currently it has all the basics, but not much more. Please feel free to send in links, articles, photos, anything you would like to help make this website really and truly ours. I would love to see something like a Plot Holder's Diary page... with bits and pieces about what people have got up to each month. Triumphs, pitfalls, knobbly carrots and all!

Also, to go with our new website, the society now has its own business email. This has two main benefits:

First: you will be able to recognise emails sent officially via the Committee because they will end with '@joelstreetallotments.co.uk'. All official committee/society business should go through one of these accounts. E-mail addresses for specific committee members will be listed on the notice boards, or if you aren't sure who you need, emails sent to 'Committee@joelstreetallotments.co.uk' will go to every committee member except the smallholding Representatives.

Second: our business email provider lets us create 'Groups'. The members of each Group are not visible to anyone except the List Moderators (who can see who is trying to send an email to the whole Group) and the Web Administrator (who adds your email to the Group initially - that's me) so your privacy is assured - no more blind copying or accidentally missing people off!

We would like to encourage everyone to sign up for our 'All Members' group, even if you don't sign up to any others, as this will be how we email details for the AGM and other essential information. Nothing else will be sent out to this Group. Instead, there will be other groups to opt into for the newsletter, community events, wood chip/manure alerts etc.

Important note for the Groups - you must opt-in to the Groups to join them. No one can add you without your permission. There are two steps:

First request an invite through www.joelstreetallotments.co.uk/Subscription, and then accept your Group invite. As the new kid on the website block, this will probably end up in your spam folder until we build a positive reputation, so make sure to check after your request. It can take a day or two to come through. To remove yourself from a Group you have joined, you can go to the same Subscription page or you can use the 'opt-out' link on each group email. The power is entirely in your hands.

Happy planting!

POETRY CORNER

Sacrifice

Written by Anthony Knight, one of our plot holders

The cold wind blows
golden brown leaves
 over the mass granite
grey
 gravestones
The twinkling sun
sinking
 slowly in preparation
for another dawn
 Imagination strays
 Hundred of the
sacrificed
 play cards, smoke
cigarettes
 laugh, joke, smile
read letters from home
 ready for their final
dawn
 Steadying their
nerves, drinking tea
 fixing bayonets ready
for the last push
 The murderous
clanking of machine
gun fire
 Cold, damp, mouldy,
muddy trench life
 left behind.
 Eating a sandwich
drinking my hot tea
 I gaze among the
graves
 hoping that those
cheery grey soldiers
 do not think that
their sacrifice was in
vain

GENERAL SITE PHOTOS



Edited by Rabinder & Pramila

