

Allotment Newsletter Autumn 2022

Allotment News

The big news is that we are having a social get together on Sunday 9th October (see details below) . We look forward to seeing all of you there.

This has been an extraordinary year. The hottest and driest on record. We have an article of how to create a self -watering system and how to a make the most of the rainfall. We may be grateful for these next year. So hold on to this newsletter. But maybe if we all install these on our plots we will experience the wettest summer on record! Anything seems possible with the current climate change.

Can I remind everyone that bonfires are **not permitted** until November and then not before 1.0. on a Sunday. A few people asked for a reminder of this when I was doing my shed duty this week.

I have included an up to date list of the committee members at the end of this newsletter so that you know who to consult on any issue.

As apples were so plentiful this year I have included a recipe for my late Austrian Auntie Erna's apple strudel. It is very impressive and so easy to make.

Social Get Together

We are holding a Harvest get together on **Sunday 9th October**. This will be an opportunity to greet old allotment friends with whom we have been too busy watering, weeding and harvesting to spend much time talking to; and making new friend including welcoming newcomers. You will also be able to meet the committee members who are interested in hearing your ideas. Refreshments will be provided and contributions of food and drink from you all much appreciated. We hope to use our allotment apple press for test pressings. Bring your apples and have a go at pressing .It is hard work.



Join into our seed swap with contributions and personal selections . There is also going to be a talk about the use of Strulch, what it means to be self

managing ,volunteerism, and auto irrigation solar systems.

Venue: We hope to use the green by the trading shed for our party but if we have bad weather we can use the forest school/ nature cabin which is opposite Martins School just outside the allotment gates. We look forward to seeing you on the day.

Time: 1 pm - 3 pm

Watering system

Targeted watering

This is probably a bit late for this year but will give you time to prepare for next year by saving plastic bottles. If, for very good reasons you don't buy plastic bottles, you can usually beg them from a neighbour's recycling!

Cut the bottom off the bottle, get rid of the top and just push the bottle into the soil, upside down like a funnel, next to the plant you want to give a targeted water during the growing season. You can fill the funnels up with a watering can or with a hose on gentle flow.

This year I have used them for potatoes, sweet corn, courgettes, celery, celeriac and tomatoes to good effect. If it's as dry next year, I'm going to set up a few bottle watering stations for my fruit bushes and trees.

Some of the advantages:

- doesn't waste water through evaporation from spray or ground surface as the water trickles directly down into the root zone of the plant where it will do most good;
- you don't water weeds! The weeds in the pictures have only come up since we've had rain;
- you get a good idea of how much water each plant is taking up – if it doesn't seem to be trickling down, use a narrow stick to poke through the bottom of the spout to break up any stones that might have blocked the way;

- you get a moment with each plant to check for pests, disease and weeds, and to pinch out sideshoots and so on;
- the bottles will last more than one season if you have room to store them, preferably out of sunlight.



Sweet corn with plastic bottle watering stations



Celery bound up with newspaper for blanching and with plastic bottle watering stations



Plastic bottle watering station on potato plant

Harvesting Sarpo Mira potatoes

This year, I am growing Sarpo Mira main crop potatoes for the first time. They were a substitute for Picassos (my usual choice) which were not available.

I have been surprised at how long their growing season has continued – until I looked idly at the Sarpo website.

If you have also grown Sarpo Mira this year, you might want to look at the website yourself.

<http://sarpo.co.uk/growing-instructions/>

Given that we may not get a frost till much later in the year, and there may be blight in the meantime, here is an extract which might encourage you to harvest Sarpo Mira earlier rather than later:

“Several of our varieties have indeterminate growth meaning that they would continue to grow until killed by frost.

If left to grow too long, the tubers will grow too large often with “hollow heart” and outgrowths making them ugly.”

Janet Francis

Auto Irrigation Solar System



About a year ago Nikolas Koukiasas, C4, set up an irrigation system from his rain water tanks (not the tap) using solar panels and timers. Guttering and pipes run along the eaves of his greenhouse and shed collecting water for the tanks. Small perforated irrigation pipes are then run from the tanks into the greenhouse and into specific parts of his plot where most needed.

Unlike the scatter effect of a hose which is wasteful, expensive and boring, Nick’s system waters specifically to the roots of where water is most needed. He was born in Greece on a farm in a very dry area so from an early age learned about the value of watering properly and efficiently.

His present day work for an Australian Company involves promoting green ecologically sound practices. Because of his watering system on plot C4 he was able to go abroad for the month of August with no worries about plants surviving in his absence. They were all fine. Nick will be on hand on October 9th, 1 – 3, at our harvest party to answer questions and talk about setting up a solar irrigation system.

Plastic in the stream

Tony's plot is next to our boundary with the Fuel Land's where a culvert takes the west stream under the fence and across to their site. There's a grid across the opening which collects debris to stop it being washed into the pipe and recently this seems to have become quite clogged with plastic bags, old flower pots etc. Without a decent flow through there is a risk of flooding to neighbouring plots, so Tony has asked if ploholders next to the stream could keep an eye out for discarded plastic bags etc which might end up in the stream and get washed down. Picking stuff up or fishing it out would be appreciated!

Barnet Community Harvester

For many of us, autumn is all about apples. Fruit trees are dotted across Barnet and are such a positive feature of the area.

Chipping Barnet was developed on Barnet Common and for many years included nurseries and market gardens, let alone being near ancient forest [Enfield Chase](#), it's no wonder there are so many beautiful trees.

If you're sorted for chutney (like [this tasty spiced version](#)) and had enough crumbles, pies and tarts and still feeling overwhelmed, you might want to contact Barnet Community Harvesters. This new local network is helping residents harvest their fruit and donating surplus to local food banks and [Homeless Action in Barnet](#).

The group is seeking Barnet residents with unpicked fruit trees in their gardens and allotments and will match these locations with people who are able to pick the fruit. Tree owners will be relieved that the produce will not go to waste, while pickers enjoy the reward of foraging for food, meeting their neighbours and feeding the community. So far they have harvested more than half a tonne of fruit.

The group has been set up by Daniella Levene who has trained in community orcharding and orchard management and worked closely with [The Orchard Project](#).

What she is keen to do is research Barnet's fruit tree heritage by identifying and mapping fruit and nut trees on public land. She is especially looking out for unknown apple varieties such as Barnet's lost apple cultivar the "Finchley Pippin" and "Voyager", a Hertfordshire raised apple developed by A.R. King of Barnet. There is so much public open space in Barnet that without a useful practical resource like this map, the produce would otherwise be wasted. A positive result of the Covid crisis and lockdown has been an appreciation of the natural environment and renewed community action. Whether you need help harvesting your fruit or an enthusiasm for picking, you are invited to join the community harvest this autumn and be part of creating a greener and more sustainable Barnet. (You might have spotted them on BBC London News on Tuesday evening – some uplifting news after too much grim stuff.)

To get in touch please email barnetcommunityharvesters@gmail.com.

Auntie Erna's Apple Strudel

Auntie Erna made her own filo pastry but I buy mine!

The principle is to take 6/8 sheets of filo pastry, Brush each layer with oil or butter and lay them on baking paper on a baking tray.

Cover the surface with peeled sliced apples (I use Bramleys) and sprinkle with sultanas and walnuts to taste. Leave 3 cms at each end for sealing the apples in

When the surface of the pastry is covered tuck the ends over the apples and then roll the a pastry and apples into a log.

Brush the top with some more oil or butter and put in a hot oven 180.

It takes about 20 mins to cook. Take it out when the apples are soft and the pastry is brown.

Sprinkle with icing sugar when you take it out of the oven and then a little more when it is cold.



‘Kimchi for beginners’ or ‘If I can make it, so can you’

You’ve probably heard of Kimchi, seen it for sale for £10 a jar in health-food shops. It’s basically a wonderful and tasty way to get fermented veg into your body, which will be very grateful. The science is a bit beyond me, but there are recognised benefits, it’s dense in nutrients, low on calories, full of probiotics and packed with vitamins. Whilst it’s a Korean dish, as an allotment holder, you already have all the basic ingredients, you can easily make it, and all it will cost you is a bit of time. Who knows, you might even enjoy making it.

Ingredients

There are lots of variations on what can go in, so feel free to play, but here is what I’ve used:

Cabbage leaves, red and green
Kale
Chard
Carrot
Onion (any colour)
Peppers (any colour)
Garlic

And pretty much anything else from your plot, apple, pear, brussel sprouts, the list is endless.

Sea-salt

Soy sauce

Fresh ginger

A few chilli flakes if that’s your thing

Okay, the method.

You need a good-sized shallow dish, one you can get your hands in.

Chop all the veg fairly finely (imagine the size you’d like to make a nice mouthful) and layer by layer, put it into the dish, sprinkling sea-salt over each layer as you go. For those who avoid salt for health reasons, worry not, the process of fermentation means the salt basically gets ‘eaten’, so the usual problems salt can bring are gone. I’m always surprised that my big bundle of veg seems to shrink, so be generous, and as well as the homegrown stuff, you may want to add some fresh ginger, a bit of soy sauce, and chilli flakes.

Now for the interesting bit.... roll up your sleeves, plunge both hands into the mixture and massage, squeeze, crush the veg. and keep doing this until things get messy, wet, or you get fed up, then pack the whole lot down tightly into a jar; **really** pushing down, no air pockets. As you’re doing this, the liquid will begin to rise up and cover the veg.

You may need to place a small heavy object (a stone, or tiny heavy jar) inside the big jar to keep the pressure on so all the veg is in the liquid.

Then, lid on, close securely and Boom! Job done ! Well, actually not quite. You now need to leave it to ferment, check it every couple of days and undo the lid to allow the air bubbles out so it doesn't force the lid off and make a mess of your fridge. People vary how long they leave it before eating it, from a few days or a few weeks, see if you like the taste after a week or so. And the good news is, it will last literally for months - I've just finished eating a batch I made last December.

Good luck Kimchi makers!
Francesca



LIST OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2022/23

Chair	Jeannette Murphy C2
Vice-Chair	Sean Cassidy E15
Rents and Tenants	Janet Francis A7
Admin Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	Richard Goldwater E31A
Site Manager	Claudia Farabegoli D12
Shop	Liz Hanchet E10
Newsletter	Maxine Klein C12
BAF rep	Mary Poulter D41/42

Alice Bowden B11
Lynn Coleman B3/4
Pat Flinter D38
Liz Szewczyk C33
Simon Williams B24/25b
Ian Short C32
David Holt C6
Thomas Lane D36a
John Kyriakides E3