



MARTIN WAY ALLOTMENT NEWS

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Well my goodness, what a strange [and soggy] start to the summer. Thankfully it doesn't appear to have affected the wonderful show that has been the London Olympics 2012.

Welcome to the August newsletter and thank you once again to our editorial team for some excellent work.

Last month was the MAGA Mad Hatters Tea Party and very well done to all those that turned out, with silly hats in tow turning noses up at the foul weather. And an enormous thank you to all those that arrived with not just hats, but cakes, cupcakes, sandwiches, quiches and biscuits topped with slugs and grasshoppers... No –my mistake, that was just our inimitable Phil Neale's artistic creation "MAGA House of Cards", and thankfully completely edible! An especial thank you to Ashleigh Weinman and David Cotterill for all their hard work organising the event.

We are making (slow) progress with London Borough of Merton towards self-management and now have a standard contract framework that has been agreed in principle and is shared across all self-managed sites ie Martin Way, George Hill and the Paddock. Our next steps will be to agree all final steps and a handover date. We have also made a good start in reviewing the MAGA Constitution and preparing a new structure for our organisation. Thank you to Paul Hockney for all his efforts thus far. Of course a very important step will be to share this new constitution and structure with our members to ratify our recommendations. This will be presented in advance of a General Meeting for which due notice will be given to the membership.

We're now looking forward to the great MAGA Produce & Flower Show, to be held on Saturday 8 September. Prepare your very best fruit and veg and have a go – it's free and you may even win a coveted rosette for the wall of your shed! It's a great afternoon and we're adding some fun for children as well as offering stalls to tenants and members for you to sell your own products. Please drop me a line if you're interested – maga@allotment.me.uk. Look forward to welcoming you to the biggest event of the growing season!

Good growing

Caroline

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MAGA Annual produce Show

Saturday 8th September. Set up from noon to 2 pm. Results announced 4.30ish.

We have reprinted the list of categories at the end of this Newsletter.

MAGA Pumpkinfest

Saturday 3rd November 5-7pm

Abundance Fruit Day

Saturday 15th September 11am-2pm at St. Marks Church garden (behind Wimbledon library)

SHOP NEWS

You will soon be able to order from our brand-new shop catalogue ... prices are very competitive and you can always ask for advice and guidance from a fellow plot holder. NEW in the shop is fleece for greenhouse plant protection and we are now stocking black ground cover which is great for weed control and helps with water retention... [*see your doctor – Ed*]. If you are thinking of making a compost heap, which we recommend, ask for advice in the shop. Or just drop in for a couple of minutes and meet the plot holders who give up their valuable gardening time to keep the shop open. We would love to meet you just for a chat and maybe a cup of tea. We promise no high pressure selling!!!

ON YOUR PLOT

The variable weather in the so-called 'summer' months has certainly tested our gardening expertise! Some crops have not fared well in the very wet conditions and some of us have had total failure of root crops. In the main the potatoes and brassicas seem to be doing well but only when we come to dig the main crop potatoes will we really know. Don't forget that you can show off your best veg at the PRODUCE SHOW to be held on Saturday 8th September.

In this edition we focus on jobs to do during the three months September to November but first just a few reminders for August:-

Cut back your herbs; if you have ground elder this is a good time to spray with weed killer; and if you want new potatoes at Christmas this is the time to plant them in pots or grow bags and you can enjoy 'new' potatoes on Xmas Day!!!

September.

- Keep harvesting crops to stop them going to seed
 - Cut off the foliage on maincrop potatoes about 3 weeks before harvesting [but leave a stub so you can see where they are! When you've dug them out leave them on top of the ground for around 3 hours to dry out
 - Pumpkins should have any leaves that are shading the fruit removed. Slip a tile or a piece of wood under each fruit to keep them off the earth and help
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- the skins harden. *[Don't forget the Pumpkinfest on 3rd November – Ed]*
- Start your Autumn clean-up and if you are using the dump please try and put your rubbish as far back as possible. Thank you.
 - Cover your brassicas with nets as the birds will be looking for a meal. In my experience the birds have been helping themselves all summer!!
 - Order your Autumn onion sets and garlic bulbs...some people like to plant in September
 - Order your fruit plants...strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and currant bushes
 - Tidy up the existing strawberry bed
 - Pick blackberries, but please don't trespass on other people's plots. Note: blackberries freeze very well
 - Sow green manures such as mustard or clover. You may find the seeds in the shop.
 - Do as you promised yourself and create a compost heap. The shop sells the 'ingredients' to speed up the composting process.

October

- Finish harvesting the beans and cut the foliage to ground level. Leave the roots, which will slowly release nitrogen into the ground
- Prepare the bean trench for 2013...dig the trench 8-10 inches deep and fill with well rotted manure and/or kitchen waste.
- Harvest squash and pumpkin...remember Pumpkinfest on 3rd November
- Plant Autumn onions and garlic
- Cut back asparagus foliage once it has done its work of feeding the plants and has turned brown
- You can still order your soft fruit plants and currant bushes
- Divide rhubarb clumps with a spade and replant the best looking pieces
- If you want to grow a tree-fruit this is a good time to look at the catalogues and place an order - or you can visit a nursery and buy for immediate planting. Remember to dig a big enough hole, spread out the roots and support the tree with a stake
- If you have a greenhouse this is a good time to clean and disinfect it

November

- Lift parsnips after the first frost, which will sweeten their flavour
 - Now is a good time to prepare a perennial bed veg bed, which can be planted with rhubarb and/or asparagus crowns
 - Continue to plant Autumn onions and garlic
 - Spread manure across the plot to rot down over winter
 - Build the raised beds you have been promising yourself all year
 - Stake any top heavy brassicas and keep them netted to stop the pigeons feasting!!
 - Plant blackcurrant bushes and raspberry canes
 - Prune your apple and pear trees but not plum trees [only prune these in summer]
 - If you have a greenhouse you may want to insulate it with bubble wrap
 - Whatever you choose to do in this period of the year do wrap up and enjoy.
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TOMATO BLIGHT

The site has been devastated by tomato blight this year and many of us have lost our crops. If you are lucky enough to still have tomato plants look out for dark brown/blackish round patches often surrounded by a pale yellow halo on the leaves. Once the disease is well established dark markings may appear on the green fruit and mature fruits quickly develop a dryish brown patch which may appear a few days after picking.

The fungus survives the winter on infected potato tubers or in tomato seeds. Do not put infected tops/fruits on a compost heap or in the waste disposal bay unless it is bagged and sealed. DON'T grow on the same piece of land next year.

DOWN IN THE DUMPS

When you are taking green waste to the disposal bay please try to get the waste as far back as possible. At the west side dump there's a lovingly constructed ramp to help get your wheelbarrow to the top of the pile. Vertigo sufferers please take a fork with you and fork the waste material as far back as possible. MAGA gets six free pickups a year but if the content of the green bay encroaches near to the road we have to call out LBM crew and pay for an additional pick up. Thank you in anticipation....

ABUNDANCE DAY-WIMBLEDON

This is a project to encourage people to pick fruit and to eat it. There are many fruit trees around Wimbledon in gardens and public places, but every year a lot of fruit goes to waste. Our aim is to help people harvest the fruit and use this wonderful free food. If you have spare fruit and want to donate contact Joyce 020 8946 3750 or e-mail abundancewimbledon@gmail.com. Abundance Day is Saturday 15th September at St. Marks Church garden (behind Wimbledon library). 11am-2pm.

BEE NEWS

After a very wet, and cool, late Spring and early Summer we have finally had some good, hot, sunny weather so our bees have had a lot of catching up to do! The nectar flow started much later than last year so there will be much less honey this season. Many of us will be leaving more honey on the hives for the bees to eat over winter, in case we have another early cold spell at the end of the year. However the bees themselves are faring well and seem healthy, with large colonies as they start to prepare themselves for the winter. Next month we take a small sample of bees from each of our hives for a "disease check" under microscopes, so we can know if they need treatment or not. Hugh, Peppei and myself have all attended a specialist microscopy course and have helped out at these checks, which are really interesting, and I know Hugh will be assisting at the forthcoming disease check, for which many thanks!

As always, please do leave some Brassicas to flower if possible, as the bees

love these yellow flowers.
Enjoy your growing.....Alison.

POETRY CORNER

Our resident Poet is clearly suffering ill effects after his trip back in time for the May issue. He thinks we rejected one of his odes. He clearly has no idea how desperate we are for copy! Just to be clear – it wasn't us Patrick.

SAME WEEK

Same week
as I was accepted
and published
internationally
alongside
Sara Paretsky
Alice Walker
Lemony Snicket
Ursula K. Le Guin,
Barbara Kingsolver
and others
I was rejected
by the august
editors of the local
allotments mag
Merton MAGA!
on the grounds that
'it seems to be a list
rather than a poem'

I then thought
'funny old world'

pmcmanus
r043

FROM PLOT TO PLATE

MAGA Frittata (serves 4) – one for the spud season

You will need a 20cm round cake pan

Ingredients:
20g unsalted butter, plus extra to grease
20ml olive oil
1 leek thinly sliced
400g potatoes-cooked and sliced
2 garlic cloves,crushed (optional)
8 eggs
150ml double cream
40g grated mature cheddar cheese

Your home-made chutney to serve.

Method:

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees F and lightly grease the cake pan

Melt the butter with the olive oil in a large frying pan over a medium-low heat

Add the thinly sliced leek and garlic and cook for 5 minutes until soft but not browned

Meanwhile whisk the eggs, cream and cheese in a jug and season with salt and pepper

Fill the prepared pan with the leek mixture and layers of potato slices, then pour the egg mixture over

Bake for 25-30 minutes until slightly browned and set

Cool slightly, then turn out onto a board, cut into pizza style slices and serve with chutney

Why not send us your favourite recipe? e-mail ivor@redshadow.plus.com

CATEGORIES FOR MAGA PRODUCE SHOW

FLOWERS & HERBS

Class 1 Mixed flower arrangement in a vase (vase not taller than 20cm)

Class 2 One scented rose to be judged on perfume only

Class 3 A single bloom / flower spike

Class 4 A gentleman's buttonhole / lady's spray

Class 5 Tied bunch of 5 different herbs

VEGETABLES & FRUIT

Class 6 Selection of vegetables (min 5 different types) within 12" square (to be provided)

Class 7 Longest runner bean

Class 8 Biggest marrow (judged on both weight & size)

Class 9 Biggest onion (judged on both weight & size)

Class 10 Five tomatoes

Class 11 Heaviest pumpkin (weighed on plot)

Class 12 Funniest vegetable

Class 13 Selection of home grown fruits on a plate (min 3 different types)

Class 14 Five apples on a plate

Class 15 Selection of mixed berries

HOME PRODUCE

Class 16 Jam, jelly, marmalade or fruit curd

Class 17 Chutney/pickles/relishes

Class 18 Cake (to include at least one home-grown ingredient)

Class 19 Home-made or home-brewed alcoholic or soft drinks

PHOTOGRAPHY

Class 20 Plant portrait

Class 21 The weather

Class 22 Views of the allotment

Class 23 Allotment wildlife

Class 24 Dusk-to dawn

CHILDREN'S (under 16 yrs only)

Class 25 Photograph of my plot

Class 26 Tallest sunflower (judged on plot)

Class 27 Best scarecrow (under 8 yrs)

Class 28 Best arrangement of garden flowers in a jam jar (8-16 yrs)

Class 29 Three decorated cup cakes (under 8 yrs)

Class 30 Decorated stone (8-16 yrs)

