



Cwmcarn Allotment Association *Cymdeithas Rhandiroedd Cwmcarn*

Newsletter Issue 2 - Autumn 2012

Welcome to the Cwmcarn Allotment Association newsletter. This quarterly publication will give you all the news and views from your allotment site.

If you have any pictures or articles, you would like to see on the next newsletter please contact *Voirrey* or *Phil*.

Shed Progress

The build of the new shed and the improvements to the surrounding pathways is due to be completed by the end of October 2012.

If you are able to lend a hand to help prepare the site, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Please let me know if you can help.

Look out for news of the grand opening on the notice board!

'Traf' Harvest Festival

The annual Harvest Festival will be held in the Philanthropic Inn, Pontywaun on Sunday 9th September at 2.30pm. Every year this raises money for worthy charities and the Christmas lights fund. The allotments have always played a big part in the contributions which are auctioned off. I'm sure this year will be no exception, with our tenants being as generous as ever, despite the poor summer we've all had.

Competition

WIN A £10 VOUCHER FOR BLACKWOOD GARDEN CENTRE

Simply answer the following question correctly and send your answer to 'Competition' at 19 Nantcarn Road, Cwmcarn NP11 7EU or Text 07739 728 098 with your name and correct answer. The first name pulled out of a plant pot will win.

Did you know that Blackwood Garden Centre has a gardening club? Join today and you could receive 10% off every £20 or more purchase. Call Blackwood garden Centre on 01495 228 015 with your name, email address and contact number to become a member.

Closing date for entries is Friday 30th November 2012.

What pest is French Marigold said to deter?

A: Whitefly

B: Greenfly

C: Aphids

'Sprouty'

It was a great shock to us all to hear of Russell's (Sprouty) tragic death. Sprouty was a kind, hard working family man, who loved spending time on his allotment, which was so well looked after. He was someone with so many friends, who along with his fellow allotment holders, have spoken of him fondly. He has left many good memories and will be much missed in the village and on the allotments. Our thoughts go out to his family and friends at this sad time.

AGM 2012

The annual general meeting is once again fast approaching. This year's AGM will be held on Saturday the 20th October at 11am in the Cwmcarn Miner's Institute, Newport Road. We've had a great turnout at the AGM in the past few years so please make every effort to attend.

Remember, the AGM is your opportunity to vote in committee members, make any proposals for amendments or new clauses to the rules and constitution.

If you have any changes in mind that you would like to make, please fill out the form attached to this month's newsletter and post it to Voirrey Wade at 19 Nantcarn Road, Cwmcarn, Crosskeys, NP11 7EU.

What summer?

What a wash out this summer has been!

According to the Met Office, rainfall over the UK was almost twice the monthly average during June, and it was the wettest June across the UK since 1910. July was also wetter than normal (148% of average). It was the coolest June since 1991 and the coolest July since 2000.

During both June and July, sunshine amounts were well below average.

How has your allotment fared during this wet, wet summer? Have you had any successes or tips on how to cope with such prolonged wet weather? We'd like to hear your thoughts on what flood defences have worked for you. Have you noticed an improved yield using raised beds? Let us know which varieties fared better than others?

The slugs have had a field day in such damp conditions. Do you have any novel ways of keeping slugs at bay? I've heard porridge oats and coffee grounds sprinkled on the soil are good to keep them away from your precious seedlings – certainly sounds like a good breakfast for them!

Fencing

We have been looking into the replacement of the fence and how to fund it. Many questions have been raised concerning the leasing of the land from the Council, which

is also being looked into and will make a big difference to how the fence will be funded.

Have you been a victim of thefts or vandalism?

Please make sure that thefts from or damage to, any of allotments is reported immediately to both the police and the committee. It will make a huge difference to us obtaining funding, if we can provide evidence of the need for a better, more secure fence, by showing the damage done (not just financial losses) by thefts from allotments, no matter how small. Vandalism on plots also needs to be recorded, so take pictures if you've had crops damaged or trampled on and pass them to the committee, so we can catalogue them. The non-emergency telephone number for the police is 101.

Top Allotment Tips

If the deluge of rain on freshly prepared ground has caught you out this year, as it has us, then avoid leaving bare patches of soil. Cover any freshly dug earth with plastic if you cannot immediately plant onto it. Not only with this stop weeds flourishing but will also warm the soil in time for your seedlings to be planted out when the rain eventually eases. Alternatively, try a few of the green manures available. They are a very easy way of maintaining soil fertility and a

healthy soil structure and are well worth experimenting with.

How well do you know your soil? adding manure and compost can alter the acidity of your soil it is a good investment to do a pH test, even with a cheap kit from a garden centre. Add lime to bring your soil back to a healthy level for your plants. It's best to add lime just before planting your brassicas, as it also controls club root.

Know your soil.

The simplest test is to pick up a handful, and press it into a ball.

- If the ball simply falls apart in your hand, you have a light sandy soil, which will warm up fast but drain fast; easy to work, but it needs organic matter (manure!) to help the soil hold water and nutrients better;
- If the ball holds its shape and sticks together, you have a heavy clay-type soil, which will not drain easily, and is slow to warm up; hard to work, but full of plant nutrients. Make the nutrients available by adding organic matter to increase the air in the soil and help drainage;
- A good soil is somewhere in between these two, with a good balance between sand (helping drainage), and clay (holding nutrients in the soil).

Catalogues

The Kings Seed catalogues have been delivered. If you want an advance copy, please drop me a line and I'd be happy to pass one on. Alternatively, there will be a copy for everyone at the AGM. We will also be ordering potatoes, compost, shallots and onion sets later in the year, so let us know what you need.

Up and Coming Events

Harvest Festival

*Philanthropic Inn, Pontywaun
9th September 2012 at 2.30pm*

Art in the Chapel

*Babell Chapel, Islwyn Street
Cwmfelinfach, Caerphilly
02-Sep-2012 - 14-Sep-2012*

Cwmcarn Allotment Association Annual General Meeting

*Cwmcarn Miner's Institute, Newport
Road, Cwmcarn
13th October 2012 at 11am*

Contact Us:

If you would like to contribute something to the next issue of the newsletter, be it a news article, gardening advice, recipes or just something you'd like to share, please email or speak to Voirrey.

Think green! If you would rather receive future newsletters via email, please email Voirrey with your request.

Allotment Calendar 2013

This year we are aiming to produce the first Cwmcarn Allotment Association Calendar for 2013. This will look great on your kitchen wall or equally at home in your allotment shed. We need your help for the pictures, they ideally need to be of the allotments, the Cwmcarn area, or just generally gardening related, and themed to a particular month. You can only enter your own pictures, not something downloaded from the internet. To enter simply send your pictures to 'Calender', 19 Nantcarn Road, Cwmcarn, Newport NP11 7EU, stating your name and address (so pics can be returned), the title of the picture and the month you feel it represents. The winning 12 will appear in the calendar which will be available from the shed shop in the New Year.



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