

Volume 24  
Part 3

£3.99

# simply veg

NATIONAL VEGETABLE  
**NVs**  
FOUNDED  
1960  
SOCIETY

# etables

the quarterly magazine of the National Vegetable Society  
SUMMER 2018



**From the  
kitchen**

PAGE 10



**Micro Herbs**

PAGE 20



**Seasonal  
jobs**

PAGE 40



**Branches**

PAGE 47

**Something a  
little different?**

**PAGE 17**



This edition of  
Simply Veg. is  
supported by

**Dobies**

[www.dobies.co.uk](http://www.dobies.co.uk)



# Dobies

www.dobies.co.uk

**NEW**  
range for  
2018



**£9.99**  
each

**Buy 2  
get 3rd  
FREE**

**SAVE  
OVER  
33%**

## Dahlia LaBella® Maggiore *Probably the best Dahlias ever!*

**More compact-growing than traditional varieties, with large exhibition-quality blooms in spectacular bright colours!**

They flower sooner in the season too, the branching plants producing blooms all summer - and into the autumn! Flowers July-October. Height 60-70cm (24-28").



Fire Orange bicolour

25 02 68

1 Potted Plant

£9.99



Rose Bicolour Pink bicolour

25 02 74

1 Potted Plant

£9.99



Yellow Vibrant yellow

25 02 64

1 Potted Plant

£9.99



White Dazzling white

25 02 78

1 Potted Plant

£9.99



Deep Rose Rich, rose-pink

25 02 84

1 Potted Plant

£9.99

### Dahlia LaBella® Maggiore ORDER COUPON

Post to: Dobies, Woodview Road, Paignton, Devon TQ4 7NG

Please send me item(s) indicated **JUST ENTER A ZERO PRICE FOR YOUR FREE ITEMS!**

DESCRIPTION	CODE	PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Dahlia Fire Orange	25 02 68	£9.99		
Dahlia Rose Bicolour	25 02 74	£9.99		
Dahlia Vibrant Yellow	25 02 64	£9.99		
Dahlia Dazzling White	25 02 78	£9.99		
Dahlia Deep Rose	25 02 84	£9.99		
Postage & Packing			1	£4.99
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>£</b>		



Signature

I enclose a cheque made payable to SUTTONS for £ or charge my MasterCard/Visa/Maestro Account No. DEBIT MY A/C

Card No

Start date:  /  /  Expiry date:  /  /

Card issue no:  (Maestro cards only) Security code:

Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Address

Postcode

Email address

Telephone number

(in case we need to contact you)

**MEDIA CODE  
ARC18**

From time to time we make our mailing list available to other companies who may have offers of interest to you.  
If you do not wish us to do this, please send your name and address to: Suttons Consumer Products Co. Reg No. 284448

**LIMITED STOCK ORDER NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT! Delivery: July onwards while stocks last!**

**10% DISCOUNT** applicable for all NVS members excluding P&P quoting ARC18

**Call** 0844 967 0303 **or go online** [dobies.co.uk](http://dobies.co.uk)

# simply vegetables

*....58 years  
and still growing*

The Quarterly Magazine of the National Vegetable Society

Volume 24 Part 3 SUMMER 2018

Charity registered 1088979



**National President**  
**Medwyn Williams MBE**  
**AHRHS FNVS**  
**07957 884384**  
e-mail:  
medwyn@  
medwynsofanglesey.co.uk

**National Chairman**  
**Vacant**

## the team



**National Vice Chairman**  
**Grant Cathro FNVS**  
**01382 580394**  
jgrant.cathro@sky.com

Welsh Branch Rep

Vacant



**General Secretary**  
**Fiona Shenfield FNVS**  
**01592 890284**  
fcshome@talktalk.net



**David Metcalfe FNVS**  
Chairman, Northern Branch  
**01282 614429**  
davidforleeks@gmail.com



**Assistant Secretary**  
**Mark Hall BEM FNVS**  
**07768 290122**



**Ian Simpson**  
Scottish Branch Rep  
**01592 890284**  
fcshome@talktalk.net



**Treasurer**  
**Denis Barry Bsc (ED) FNVS**  
**01633 440905**  
denisbarry@btinternet.com



**Bernard Brown**  
Midland Branch Rep



**Membership Registrar**  
Branches  
**Neil Hope FNVS**  
**01932 844183**  
neil\_hope@hotmail.com



**DVD Distribution Executive**  
**Gordon Francis FNVS**  
**01622 710486**  
gordonjfrancis@googlemail.com



**Gareth Cameron FNVS**  
Scottish Branch  
Sponsorship Manager  
**01946 811797**  
garethatthepot@hotmail.co.uk



**Emily Plumb FNVS**  
nvswbmaster@outlook.com



**Geoff Wilson FNVS**  
Secretary Northern Branch  
**(01642) 279528**  
geoffrey.wilson5@ntlworld.com



**Chairman of the Judges Examination Board**  
**Jim Williams FNVS**  
**01875 320644**  
jimtwilliams@yahoo.co.uk



**Arwyn Edwards FNVS**  
Chairman, Welsh Branch  
**01267 253363**  
edwards.arwyn@gmail.com



**Sandra Hall, FNVS**  
Chairman Midland Branch  
**01952 541396**  
noddycrudington@outlook.com

Articles, notices, meetings etc relative to your Branch and DA should be sent to the sub-editors below.



**Scottish Branch**  
Sub-Editor:  
**Fiona Shenfield FNVS**  
**01592 890284**  
e-mail:  
fcshome@talktalk.net



**Northern Branch**  
Sub-Editor:  
**David Allison FNVS**  
**01943 862106**  
e-mail:  
drallison@hotmail.co.uk



**Midland Branch**  
Sub-Editor:  
**June Davies**  
**01531 822750**  
e-mail:  
june.davies03@btinternet.com



**Southern Branch**  
Sub-Editor:  
**Kelvin Mason FNVS**  
**01264 781684**  
e-mail:  
kelvin.mason123@btinternet.com



**Welsh Branch**  
Sub-Editor:  
**Ivor Mace FNVS**  
**01443 775531**  
e-mail:  
ivormace@hotmail.com



**NVS Ireland**  
Editor:  
**Michael Gordon**  
e-mail:  
m\_gordon100@hotmail.com

*and finally, myself...*

**National Magazine Editor**  
**Kelvin Mason FNVS**

Amasca, 7 Fifehead Cottages, Salisbury Lane, Middle Wallop, Stockbridge, Hampshire, SO20 8JN  
Tel: 01264 781684

E-mail: kelvin.mason123@btinternet.com

*...to whom all articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent. October 2018 edition – deadline for submissions to Kelvin: Friday 10th August 2018*





# contents

News from the Trustees by Mark Hall BEM, FNVS .....	6
Kelvin's Comments .....	8
From the Kitchen by Linda & Mary .....	10
The History of the National Vegetable Society Part 4 by J Grant Cathro, FNVS .....	12
Getting Started with Cut Flowers by Derek Brooks FNVS .....	16
Oca by Gary Hitchen .....	17
Micro Herb Growing with AutoPot Watering Systems by Gareth Cameron .....	20
Greenhouse Heating by James Mark Symonds .....	23
Getting Started in the Greenhouse – part 10 by Kelvin Mason FNVS .....	24
Why not try growing figs? by Gerry Edwards FNVS.....	26
Perennial Vegetables, A New Beginning by David Wall FNVS .....	29
National Vegetable Society 2017 Annual General Meeting .....	30
National Vegetable Society Annual Report of the Trustees for 2016/17 .....	31
Mycorrhizae by Kelvin Mason FNVS.....	35
Monkton Leek, Vegetable and Floral Society History by Tom Powell .....	38
Seasonal Jobs by Derek Brooks FNVS .....	40
My Homemade Geodome by Sandra McNicolls .....	46
<b>Scottish Branch</b> .....	47
<b>Northern Branch</b> .....	49
<b>Midlands Branch</b> .....	53
<b>Southern Branch</b> .....	55
<b>Welsh Branch</b> .....	58
<b>Irish Section</b> .....	58

**www.nvsuk.org.uk**

**Published by Crest Publications, 12 Brooklands Court, Kettering Parkway, Kettering Venture Park  
Kettering, Northants, NN15 6FD  
Telephone: 01536 317000 • Email: jayne@crestpublications.com**

The views expressed by the authors/contributors are not necessarily those of the editor, the Society, or its officers.

## MEMBERS IMPORTANT NOTICE

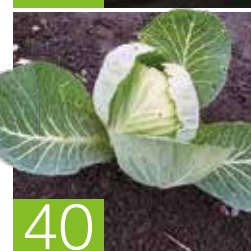
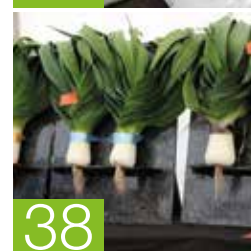
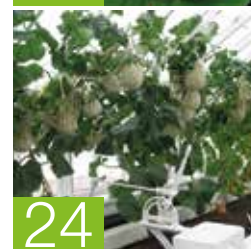
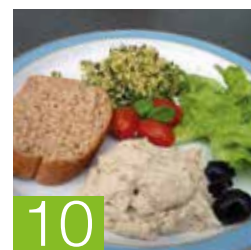
Please note that the law on data protection changed on May 25th 2018. In your previous edition of the SV Magazine, you received a consent form which we requested that you complete and return. This was to be read in conjunction with the NVS Privacy Notice. We have started to receive members consent forms and would like to thank all who have returned them to date. I would like to reiterate the importance of swift return of your consent form, especially by our officers, judges and lecturers, because if we don't receive these back, we must remove your contact details from the Directory, web site and SV magazine. thank you in advance for your assistance. The sooner we do this, the sooner we can release information to local clubs, groups and societies when they request a list of local judges in their area to assist in Judging a show. The NVS does have an annual certificate of cover from the ICO (Information Commission Office), which can protect its members from unauthorised contact by individuals and organisations acting without NVS permission. Action can and will be taken against such activities on behalf of the member if required. The Trustees are always seeking ways of reducing running costs of the Society and improving the services and information provided to its members. One such way is attracting on-line advertising from carefully screened, reputable and relevant companies in the horticultural sector with paid for advertising in NVS media and also support of other activities through sponsorship. Where such companies request reciprocal membership data for the purpose of direct mailing, the NVS will no longer forward your details unless your consent has been given to do so.

A further update regarding the status on the NVS's implementation of new processes will be provided in the next edition of the SV Magazine.

Fiona Shenfield FNVS, General Secretary

## COMPETITION TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Competitions are open to all UK residents aged 18 or over, excluding employees or agents of the associated publishing company and their families. One entry per person. The prizes and giveaways are as specified on the relevant pages. No cash alternatives. Entries must be via post or email as stated (no purchase necessary). Illegible entries and those that do not abide by these terms and conditions will be disqualified. No responsibility is held for entries lost, delayed or damaged in the post, proof of posting is not proof of delivery. Your details will be processed by Crest Publications (publishers of Simply Vegetables magazine on behalf of the NVS) in full accordance with data protection. The decision of the judge is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Winners will be notified by phone, email or post, a list of winners is available on request from Crest Publications, 12 Brooklands Court, Kettering Parkway, Kettering Venture Park, Kettering, Northants, NN15 6FD.







# Kelvin's Thoughts!

By Kelvin Mason

You will have noticed that there are no Chairman's Thoughts again owing to the NVS not having a National Chairman at the time of writing this magazine and on the enclosed agenda for the National AGM we still have a vacancy. We have been without a chairman for about a year now and Grant Cathro (Vice Chairman) admirably filled the role as best he could. Grant made it

clear from the start that he did not wish to become chairman and now wishes to relinquish the role of Vice Chairman owing to health reasons. Although the NVS could "stagger on" for a few years without a chairman it is likely we would lack direction and vision and will be unlikely to move forward to any extent. It is important that we give some urgent consideration to finding both a chairman and vice chairman.

These roles would suit someone who has some time to devote to the society, likes meeting people, has a vision to take the NVS forward and has organisational skills. A recently retired person who now has time to spare and is used to managing people and organisations would be an ideal person. I am told the key to a long life is to keep both the mind and body occupied and to have some goals / aims to work towards which the NVS could provide and your garden would keep you fit!

The lack of a chairman is not unique to the NVS as I am a member of a couple of other organisations, one of which is not horticulture related, who have been without a chairman for two or more years. They both continue to function but are stagnating owing to a lack of leadership. It is getting increasingly difficult to find people to serve on committees both as members and officers and this seems to be a general problem in modern society and it is certainly the case in horticultural / gardening clubs. I am the secretary to the Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies which is made up of gardening clubs in Hampshire. When I first joined the committee about 25 or so years ago there were nearly 200 clubs in the Federation, now there are 144 and the number is slowly declining; and I would suggest that is typical of most other counties. Many of the societies / clubs that have folded has been owing to not being able to fill committee vacancies even though they have a good number of members. Also many of the remaining clubs have an aging membership with many members being over 65 and a lot in their late 70's and 80's. This makes it harder to find members to take on committee roles and to keep the club prospering.

As a horticulturalist I do not have the knowledge to know why people are not coming forward for committee roles these days but could suggest the following:

- Lack of time owing to children, career pressures, etc.
- Other interests such as computers and games, many T.V channels, time spent on social media.
- Society and club membership is not fashionable nowadays, people get their entertainment and gardening information from the internet and YouTube.

Going back to the 1950's and 60's television was only just really taking off and prior to that clubs and societies were a big part of people's interest and lives. Nowadays there are many T.V channels and other forms of entertainment most of which do not even require you to leave the house!

Should we just accept that the membership of the NVS and similar societies will decline and keep the society going for as long as possible or are we to try to fight

the trend and increase membership, which is where a new chairman would be useful. Society in general is changing, the number of shops in town centres are reducing partly owing to internet shopping as well as austerity. People travel more even though fuel costs are increasing, this leaves less time for other hobbies. Food is easily available in supermarkets so there is less need to grow your own than during and after the second world war. The younger generation have other interests, many related to computers or mobile phones and there are more hobbies these days than in the past.

Although my thoughts may seem negative and defeatist I feel they reflect the general situation these days and we need to face up to them to move forward. I have to admit I do not have the answers and my only suggestions would be a recruitment drive which we have done in the past with only minor success. Alternatively setting up a working group to look at the overall situation and to produce some recommendations to present to the Trustees, whether this would be successful I do not know. The trustees created a position of marketing and publicity person but as no one came forward it has recently been removed. If we could find such a person that could give the NVS a voice in the national press, radio and television this would no doubt increase membership and give a higher profile.

I and no doubt the trustees would be happy and interested in hearing from members on how they feel and more importantly what we can do to move the NVS forward and ensure its continuation.

So going back to my initial point do you know anyone who would make a suitable chairman and vice chairman and we also need a new membership registrar. Please give these roles consideration they could give you a good challenge and be very satisfying.

Perhaps we should be radical and look outside of the NVS for a chairman, they do not have to be a gardener / grower to chair the society. They need people skills more than horticultural skills, we could always pay their membership so that they are members and comply with the constitution.

The National Secretary would be very pleased to receive nominations for any of the above positions so that they could be elected at the AGM in Harrogate in September. If you would like details of what is involved, please contact the current incumbent and I am sure they would be pleased to explain the role.

I will keep the letters page in the September edition free for any comments and suggestions to the above and look forward to hearing from you!

---

*Perhaps we should be radical  
and look outside of the  
NVS for a chairman*

---







# News from the Trustees April 2018

Mark Hall BEM, FNVS  
National Assistant Secretary

The Trustees meeting was held on Saturday 21st

April 2018, at, Crewe Business Park.

Grant Cathro chaired the meeting welcoming our president Medwyn Williams along with Geoff Wilson as a new Trustee and Jim Thompson as a stand in for Welsh Branch.

The Society's judge's panel had looked into a request to reduce the number of specimens need in the society's judge's exam they adjudicated that this it is not a feasible option at the moment and that reducing the number of vegetables in any of the classes would be detrimental to our National exam, and possibly make it more difficult for the candidates. It is appreciated that sourcing vegetables at that time of year can be difficult, but requesting vegetables (well in advance) from members can overcome this problem.

Ian Simpson has commenced exploring the possibility of libraries in Scotland purchasing some of our getting started books, details are yet to be confirmed if feasible and positive, this could lead the way for the balance of the UK.

Denis Barry had circulated his reports prior to the meeting and gave thanks to all who helped in submitting accounts for annual audit. We have made a small surplus over the year, the accounts have been approved by the auditors.

Neil Hope had circulated his report prior to the meeting, He thanked Fiona Shenfield for the work she had done on the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which has become Effective from May 2018. Discussion followed on the next steps regarding how we record and store information throughout the Society to comply with GDPR.

Neil also reported that not all Branches have followed up the membership renewals yet. The trend in general is for memberships to fall again this year, this will also have a knock on effect to our Gift aid which Robert Miller has kindly offered to oversee again for 2018/2019. Thank you Robert.

Neil reported that that 171 members used the new 'Direct Debit' facility to renew their membership.

Ian Simpson updated Trustees on progress to date of the judge's guide, it is now awaiting a Proof Reading before going to print.

Trustees agreed that the Judges pointing cards and associated Judges Stationery are now completed and ready to send out in PDF format to all Branches, DA's and Judges with an email address. Please note that we still hold stock, should you wish to order them as usual,

Gareth Cameron had circulated a paper on the Society's sponsorship prior to the meeting of which he expanded upon. It was noted that negotiations on sponsorship with Ian Barber of JBA seed potatoes had been made difficult following some of the adverse comments made on Facebook concerning the Winston seed potatoes. However, Ian Barber will continue with sponsorship for the society. As responsible members, we must all ensure we all support our sponsors.

Kelvin Mason gave general update on *Simply Vegetables* magazine, noted some small typo errors in last magazine. Also noted that the Irish D.A. is not a Branch. Discussion followed on how much money the NVS receives from adverts placed in the magazine, it is difficult to calculate, also noted that postage will be increasing this year. Denis also pointed out that the cost of the *Simply Vegetables* magazines for 2017 was 2K more than 2016 and likely to increase in 2018, putting more pressure on the society funds as a whole, Denis re-iterated his previous suggestions, from January, as to how this financial pressure may be reduced and assist Branches in ensuring they have sufficient funds

a) Reduce *Simply Vegetables* magazine to three copies per year.

– It is not felt that this would be good for our Members.

b) Capitation cannot be reduced at this time.

– Costs to run the Society do not support a reduction on capitation fees.

c) Put magazines on the web site.

– Not being followed as not all members have internet access.

He also pointed out to Trustees to consider the annual running cost of the Web site.

It was discussed that membership fees have not gone up for several years, also noted the idea of centralizing membership administration.

The Trustees agreed that we should further address the costs for the *Simply Vegetable* magazine prior to the end of the year when the existing Crest contract ends. It was agreed that a wider review, including potential alternative companies be explored. Denis Barry offer to head up this process.

Discussion on the costs of running the Branches was debated. This included capitation fees, membership cost, centralizing membership and its associated costs, these were all discussed before trustees agreed that membership fees would

need to be increased if the society was to prosper in the future.

A vote to increase membership fees was proposed as follows

Proposed A Edwards seconded N Hope to increase membership by £3.00 9 in favour

Proposed B Brown seconded S Hall to increase membership by £2.00 3 in favour

Proposed D Metcalfe seconded G Wilson increase membership by £1.00 3 in favour

This recommendation to increase membership by the Trustees would be put before the AGM on the 14th September 2018, as £3 increase for single members (to £20) and £3 increase for joint members (to £22). There would be no increase for junior members, or Education members.

Also discussed was the incentive of a £1.00 deduction if paying by Direct debit but this has yet to be discussed in full.

In Emily Plumb's absence, Fiona Shenfield went through web report that had

been circulated prior to the meeting. It was discussed that we collectively need to ensure that the Web Site is kept up to date and current and that Emily must be advised by each Branch of what information to put on the Web site and what needs removing.

The topic of a new Web site has been an ongoing agenda item for some time now but after much discussion and reviewing the quotations it was proposed that we hold off updating the Web site for 12 months, 15 Trustees where in favour, with 1 abstention.

## Trustees agreed on the following recommendation for the AGM.

- Agreed to remove PR & Marketing position.
- Grant Cathro would be standing down as Vice Chair (sadly due to health reasons).
- Neil Hope also will be standing down as Membership Register (end of tenure).
- Medwyn Williams expressed sincere thanks for the work that Neil had done over the years for the society, a point that was echoed by all Trustees.
- MW would continue as president, Vice presidents would be contacted prior to the AGM to confirm if they are willing to stand.
- It was proposed on behalf of the Trustees that Neil Hope should be offered the position of one of the Societies Vice presidents Neil accepted this position, subject to the AGM approval.

*There would be no increase for junior members. Or Education members...*



## THE NATIONAL VEGETABLE SOCIETY APPLICATION

Mr, Mrs Ms, Miss ..... (name)

Address.....

Postcode .....

Telephone.....

Membership No. if renewal: .....

email: .....

Please accept my application for membership of the National Vegetable Society for the period ending 31st December 2019. I enclose a cheque/postal order/standing order for £ .....

*Payable to The National Vegetable Society*

### New members please complete and return to:

Mr Neil Hope FNVS, 11 Sumner Place, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 1QD

Tel: 01932 844183, Email: neil\_hope@hotmail.com

### If renewal, please send to the relevant Branch

Membership Secretary as listed on the right

### MEMBERSHIP FEES

Juniors (up to 16yrs) ..... £ 5.00 Affiliated Society ..... £19.00

Individuals ..... £17.00 Educational Establishments ..... £15.00

Couples ..... £19.00 Society Medal & Card ..... £ 7.60

*If you are joining after the end of May, there is now an option to pay £23.50 (individuals) or £26.50 (societies and couples) for this year and all of next year (2019).*

*Application and payment can be made via the NVS website [www.nvsuk.org.uk](http://www.nvsuk.org.uk) under the "join the NVS" section, where there is a renewal form for existing members as well.*

## National Vegetable Society DVD Order Form

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY USING CAPITALS AND BLACK INK.**  
**THANK YOU.**

Your Name:.....

Your Address:.....

Postcode:.....

Telephone No:.....

Membership No:.....

Date:.....

### Post Completed Order to:

Mr G J Francis FNVS, 147 Bull Lane, Eccles,

Aylesford, Kent, ME20 7HW

Tel: 01622 710486

Email: gordonjfrancis@googlemail.com

Cost of DVDs = £5.99 each including postage and packing

**1 DVD = £5.99 2 DVD's = £11.98**

**3 DVD's = £17.98 4 DVD's = £23.98**

**Buy 5 DVDs  
get 6th one free  
= £29.95**

## IMPORTANT!!

## GIFT AID DECLARATION

Name of Charity:

**THE NATIONAL VEGETABLE SOCIETY  
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1088979**

Details of donor:

Title: ..... Forename(s): .....

Surname: .....

Address: .....

Postcode:.....

Telephone:.....

Email: .....

I want the charity to treat (delete as appropriate)

- my annual subscription
- the enclosed donation of £ .....
- all donations I have made since 22nd October 2011, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise.

as Gift Aid donations.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

DVD TITLE	Qty Req'd
On the Allotment With Stella & Peter	
Growing Exhibition Potatoes With Sherie Plumb FNVS	
Growing Exhibition Tomatoes With Charles Maisey FNVS	
Growing Exhibition Shallots With Graeme Watson FNVS	
Growing Potatoes With Alistair Grey FNVS	
Growing Exhibition Carrots With Graeme Watson FNVS	
Growing Exhibition Onions With Jim Williams FNVS	
Growing Exhibition Celery With Trevor Last FNVS	
Growing Exhibition Blanch Leeks With John Soulsby	
Growing Exhibition Pot Leeks With John Soulsby	
An Insight into Vegetable Showing With Trevor Last FNVS	
Compost Making with Mick Poultney and 2011 National Championships	
Growing Exhibition Leeks and Onions with Ivor Mace	
Growing for Showing 2006 With T Last, John Branham & Gareth Cameron	
NVS National Show 2007 Malvern	
National Championships Dundee 2005	
National Championships Pembroke 2006	
Trio of Shows 2005	
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF DVDs Ordered</b>	
<b>Cheque Payable National Vegetable Society Enclosed for AMOUNT</b>	<b>£</b>

## Branch Membership Secretaries.



### MIDLANDS

Trevor Last, FNVS,  
Tel: 01603 868316  
43 Carters Road, Drayton,  
Norwich, Norfolk, NR8 6DY  
e-mail: trevlst@tiscali.co.uk



### NORTHERN

Judith Park  
Tel: 01539 443802  
e-mail: judithpark@hotmail.co.uk  
Three Oaks, Ambleside Rd,  
Windermere, Cumbria LA23 1EU



### SCOTTISH

Fred Stewart FNVS  
Tel: 01224 781309  
Penny Lane, Redmyres,  
Portlethen, Aberdeenshire  
AB12 4RR



### SOUTHERN

Neil Hope, FNVS,  
Tel: 01932 844183  
11 Sumner Place, Addlestone,  
Surrey, KT15 1QD  
e-mail: neil\_hope@hotmail.com



### WELSH

Mrs Mary Thomas, FNVS  
Tel: 01691 780420  
Fron, Llanrhaeadr, Y.M.  
Powys, SY10 0JJ  
e-mail: maryfron2005@yahoo.co.uk





# Kelvin's Comments

At the time of starting to write these comments in early April the weather has been very cold in March and very wet over Easter although the temperature has improved a bit. The soil is still very

cold as the weeds have not even started to germinate yet though some of the perennials have started to grow and I have cut the lawn three times now. I checked the soil temperature on the 8th April and it surprised me when the thermometer indicated that it was 8°C; I would have thought some weeds would have started to germinate by that temperature. Having said that it may only have reached 8°C over the last day or so as it has been a bit warmer. I thought I would do some sowing the next day only for it to rain most of the day!

Whilst judging at a local Spring Show recently the chairman said "that vegetable growing should be made compulsory and people had to grow and cook their own food. This would solve many of the governments problems as it would reduce obesity, improve general health, provide exercise, improve diets, no need for the sugar tax, reduce food imports, reduce the carbon footprint as less food miles and give a happier and healthier lifestyle saving the NHS millions and relieve the pressure on it". He also made the point that the elderly and people without gardens and allotments could grow a small amount of their food on the window sill, raised beds, patios or balconies. Herbs, tomatoes, chillies sprouting seeds can all be grown on a windowsill.

He went on to mention that encouraging children to grow their own and eat what they grow would improve their health and gardening should be compulsory in schools. Although his comments were made slightly tongue in cheek there is a lot of truth in what he said. We have become too reliant on food being available and cheap in the supermarkets. This has led to many people especially youngsters losing touch with nature and how food is produced. Teaching gardening in schools is one way of overcoming this and encouraging more home grown food.

Considering the other end of life, it is important for the elderly to remain active in their later years and gardening is a good way of doing this and you can produce some of your own food in the process. It is also good to be involved in some mental activities such as reading *Simply Vegetables!* and being involved in the organisation of NVS events etc.

Whilst on the health theme the RHS funded some research on back strain with Coventry University and looked at digging. It showed that a good posture and light rhythmic movements causes less back pain and aches and is less tiring. The report said that "good gardening practice involves using a regular, repetitive technique rather than erratic movements". "A good technique was found to have a minimal back bend and large knee bend, whereas a bad posture was characterised by a large forward bending, stretching limbs and uncontrolled motion". It is important not to lift too much at a time, warm up before starting to dig and not do too much in one session.

It is surprising how much can be achieved digging in a steady rhythmic movement. You could always become a no-digger instead!

I was looking at an American Greenhouse magazine on the internet recently and noticed an article about an innovative method of pest control using a dog! The dog a Belgium Shepherd called Chili has been trained to detect pepper weevil so that it can be controlled; it is the only dog in the world that has been trained to do this. The dog checks out all new plants when they are delivered to the nursery and is also used to patrol the greenhouses with her handler in which the peppers grow. Once the crop is cleared at the end of the season the dog goes into the empty greenhouse to see if any weevils remain or are hibernating in there. This could be a new way to help control pests, perhaps you could train your pooch to find slugs and snails!

In the April edition of SV there were some photographs of various winter crops I was growing of which I had high hopes for in the spring. Last year the winter crops did very

well and I had a good harvest, this year they have been a bit of a disaster. The cauliflower which was sown in October ready to harvest in May was premature and were ready for picking in late March but were only the size of tennis balls and some only golf ball size. This was no doubt my fault for trying to be too clever; the plants were growing very slowly up to January so I decided to move them under the LED lights which were set for 16 hour days and also kept the plants warmer. This had the desired effect and by late February the plants were looking very good. Pleased with myself I moved them out from the lights where it was cooler with the intention of hardening them off ready to move them to the tunnel. This also meant they were in shorter days. The combined effect of

cooler temperatures and shorter days initiated the curds too early resulting in the small crop. You learn from experience!

The crops in the polytunnel were growing fine if somewhat slow over winter and I was looking forward to some early salad leaves, oriental brassica, cauliflowers and

cabbage. But the cold weather that came in the early spring again caused the plants to produce flowers and bolt. Although I harvested some crops it was nothing like the yield I was anticipating.

My broad beans are my banker crop (as you show growers say) for the spring and I aim to pick before the blackfly become a problem. I grow them in a cold greenhouse over winter and plant them outside once the soil starts to warm up. With the snow and cold weather, I delayed planting and by the time the soil was warm enough the plants had grown leggy and not fit to plant – the moral of the story never put off anything you can do today until tomorrow!

At the time of writing the last part of these comments (Mid-May) the weather is improving, in fact we had the warmest early May Bank Holiday since records began. The fruit has flowered well and hopefully good pollination will follow. Although slow plants are beginning to move now and seeds sown outside germinating. I am confident most crops will catch up and yields should still be good even if slightly later.

We have covered many subjects in *Simply Vegetables* over the years but have not had an article on storing fruit and vegetables over winter (other than preserving). Do any members have knowledge and experience on this topic and be happy to write an article? If so, please get in touch. With good storage it is possible to store apples and root crops through to May when they can be in short supply.

So what is in this edition of *Simply Vegetables*? In the centre pages are the Agenda for the AGM at Harrogate in September along with the minutes of last





year's AGM and the treasurers report for the last financial year. Linda and Mary continue the From the Kitchen series with some recipes that look delicious and I will certainly try the lasagne. It would be nice to receive some recipes from other members and /or spouses / partners.

Grant Cathro continues the history of shows in the second part of the shows history, it is amazing how the NVS has come on over the years and National Shows improved. This is followed by a plug for the new NVS book produced by the Northern Branch, which although it is not about vegetables I am sure cut flowers is a topic that will interest many members and certainly if they grow flowers for showing in the annual or perennial classes or for other arrangements. It is worth growing some cut flowers just to add a crop to the rotation as many flowers are in different families to vegetables.

When Gareth Cameron said he could get me an article on micro herbs I was very pleased as this is a subject that interests me and I feel will become more important in the future. We need to increase the amount of food we produce and from as small an area as possible which micro herbs will do. You can grow them anywhere it is light enough or even in a dark room if you have lighting.

Gary Hitchen has written an interesting article on how he grows Oca, this is not a widely grown vegetable but is becoming more popular and I am hoping to try them this year if the tubers turn up. Oca may not become a major crop but gives you

something different and adds to the range of plants for your diet.

I continue the series on getting started in the greenhouse moving on to Melons, a fruit I love but am useless in growing! It is not an easy crop to grow and the key is good pollination and ensuring the roots are not too wet. One day I will get the knack and produce good consistent crops yearly!

Continuing the fruit theme with another unusual fruit Gerry Edwards writes about growing figs, these are not a difficult fruit to grow once you follow the right techniques with the correct pruning etc. See Gerry's article to see how it is done.

David Wall has penned articles for *Simply Vegetables* previously so it was pleasing to hear from him recently offering to do some more. He is starting a series on perennial vegetables and covers some very unusual ones and some which are slightly more common. As David says perennial vegetables are easy to grow and do not require a lot of maintenance so are ideal for busy people or the elderly who cannot do as much these days.

Tom Powell has sent in an article about the history of the Monkton Show which is very interesting and well worth a read. It is amazing how long some shows have kept going and are still popular today, it is worth reading not just for the history but the old photograph of the committee.

*Oca may not become a major crop but gives you something different...*

It is also very pleasing to receive another couple of articles from Jim Symonds even though his eye sight is not as good as it was. Jim has covered two diverse topics showing his depth of knowledge and experience. Anyone

who is local to Jim should meet him and learn what they can I am sure he is a font of wisdom.

Derek Brooks continues the seasonal work series with jobs to do from July to September so you have no excuse for not keeping on top of the plot.

Jersey maybe a small island but there always seems to be plenty happening on the vegetable front and all credit to the local D.A. This is the way we need to go if we are to encourage new and younger members. Collette Bissom shows how to get children involved in growing vegetables and possible showing them.

July sees the start of the main show season, well at least here in the South! Please can show secretaries make a note of the winning cultivars and send them to Barry Newman so he can keep an up to date record of what wins consistently and any new cultivars that do well on the show bench.

The show reports from the early shows will be in the October edition so please send these to your branch sub-editor.

That completes my comments for this edition, so happy gardening and showing.



**keder**  
greenhouse

**For The Serious  
Gardener**

Proven to withstand wind speeds of 140mph

**All year round growing**




We are not a poly tunnel or glasshouse company, but designers and manufacturers of the **proven**, next generation growing environments.

**10 Year Guarantee Against UV Degradation**

- Safe superior growing environment, no shadows
- Unique bubble cladding giving excellent heat retention
- Ventilation systems perfect for healthy plant growth
- Resistant against extreme weather conditions
- The strongest and warmest greenhouses for the serious gardener
- Excellent light transmission
- Low Maintenance
- Can be extended
- Available in a wide range of sizes



**Keder Greenhouses Limited**  
Newtown, Offenham, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 8RZ

t: +44 (0) 1386 49094    sales@kedergreenhouse.co.uk  
www.kedergreenhouse.co.uk    @KederGreenhouse

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

## Grow your own saffron

### - the most expensive spice in the world! –

The Saffron Crocus (*Crocus sativus*) is, as the name suggests, the plant from which we collect saffron. Just plant the bulbs in a sunny spot in your garden and unlike their more well-known spring-blooming cousins, once established they put on a display of beautiful and deliciously scented blooms during autumn! They will thrive in a well-drained border but can easily be grown in a container on the patio. Very hardy, they'll multiply rapidly from year to year.

Code: 230206    60 Bulbs for £14.99 – Save 24%

Free P&P USING  
OFFER CODE  
ARD18  
Call  
**0844 967 0303**



**Dobies**  
www.dobies.co.uk



vegetables 9





# From the Kitchen

Linda & Mary



## Make them a little bit more special

Whether entertaining friends for an afternoon tea, ploughman's, a buffet or whatever, your home made preserves can be a part of it, but sometimes made a little bit more special for the occasion.

Try adding a bit of liquor to make a jam a bit more special:

### Strawberries and Pimm's Jam

1.5kg/3½ lb. Strawberries  
1 tbs lemon juice  
1 kg/2.2lb jam sugar  
125ml/4 fl ozs Pimms

Hull the strawberries and put in a preserving pan with the rest of the ingredients. Bring slowly to the boil, stirring occasionally until the sugar has dissolved. Increase the heat and bring to a rolling boil until the setting point has been reached. Test with the wrinkle method (described previously) or use a jam thermometer until a temperature of 105°C has been reached.

Skim off any scum and pour into warmed jars and seal

### Rhubarb and Gin Jam

1kg/2lb 2oz rhubarb  
1kg preserving sugar  
2 tbs lemon juice  
50ml/2 fl ozs good Gin

Peel the rhubarb if necessary and cut into 1–½ inch chunks. Put all the ingredients in the preserving pan and bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally to dissolve the sugar. Increase heat and bring to a rolling boil until setting point is reached

Leave to cool slightly and skim off any scum.

Pour into sterilized jars and seal as described in previous article.

These two are only a couple of suggestions of many that you can make – Blackcurrants/cassis, Gooseberry/elderflower, Damson/Gin,





## Roasted Vegetable Lasagne

1 Aubergine aprox 230gms  
 1 small butternut squash aprox 300 gms a young squash is fine.  
 (You could use sweet potato as an alternative or courgettes)  
 1 sweet pepper  
 1 med onion  
 4 cloves garlic  
 4 tablespoons olive oil  
 125 Gms strong cheddar cheese grated  
 200 mls Crème fraiche  
 aprox 12 sheets wholemeal lasagne

### For the sauce

1 onion finely chopped  
 2 Garlic cloves chopped  
 1 Kg tomatoes skinned and chopped or ½ pt slow roasted tomato puree  
 1 tablespoon Oregano chopped  
 1 tablespoon basil chopped  
 Salt and pepper

Set the oven to 180°C.

Cut the vegetables into chunks peel garlic cloves leave whole.

Put the vegetables into a bowl season with salt and black pepper, pour over the oil and mix well.

Transfer to a roasting tray and roast for 30 minutes until soft.

### Meanwhile make the sauce.

Fry the chopped onion in some oil on low heat until turning brown. Add tomatoes seasoning and herbs, simmer for about 10 minutes until thickened.

### To assemble. Grease the Lasagne dish

Dip the lasagne sheets into a bowl of boiling water for a few seconds.

Lay 3 sheets on the bottom of the dish to cover.

Cover with a third of the vegetables and a third of the sauce.

Repeat ending with lasagne.

Spread the Crème Fraiche over the top.

Finish with the grated cheese.

Bake for 30 minutes at 180°C.



Cranberry/port or any tippie that you fancy

Your home made preserves can make lovely gifts any time of the year but particularly at Christmas. It brings back a true meaning to "gifts" and a whole lot less commercialized. When making your preserves, select a few pretty jars if possible and think ahead about hampers so that you have a selection of same or similar size pots for each hamper. Choose pretty materials or gift wrap paper to cut into circles for the tops or buy ready packs of the many you can now choose from.

I hope that you will enjoy making some of the recipes in the last few issues. Thanks to those of you who have commented on various recipes you tried so far and I would love to hear (with picture if possible) from more of you about your preserving.



## Hummus

400 Gms cooked chick peas

Juice and zest of 1 lemon

2 garlic cloves peeled and crushed

1 cup of walnuts

60ml olive oil

300 ml plain unsweetened

Greek yoghurt

1 tsp ground cumin seed.

1 tsp ground coriander

½ jar of Tahini



Puree the chick peas, walnuts, lemon juice and zest, garlic, cumin, coriander and tahini in a food processor.

Process for a few seconds; slowly add oil while processor is running.

Switch off add yoghurt and salt.

You may wish to add a little more lemon juice at this stage according to your taste.

Process until smooth.

Put in the fridge for an hour or so before serving, it also freezes well.





# The History of the National Vegetable Society Part 4

## The History of Showing Part 2

by J.Grant Cathro FNVS

With the Welsh Branch being formed in 1982 we now had five Branches across the U.K. and 1986 saw the start of the five-year trial circuit round the Branches to allow each Branch to host the National Vegetable Championships. This is how it has remained and each Branch takes their turn to stage the championships on a five-year cycle.

**1986** This was the year that the Welsh Branch staged their first National Vegetable Championships in Swansea. Unfortunately, due to horrendous weather the second day of the Show had to be cancelled. The first video film of a National Show was made (sponsored by two members). This was later screened at some of the NVS social gatherings in various venues up and down the country.

In October, at Stoke Garden Festival, an Inter Branch display was staged by the Branches to further promote the National Vegetable Society. This resulted in a magnificent display of vegetables arranged by teams of volunteers from within each of the Branches. On this occasion Scottish Branch won the trophy with Northern Branch runner up.

**1987** The National Championships held at Shrewsbury were very successful where once again the public were very impressed by the level of expertise which was shown by so many of the growers, even allowing for the problem created by the weather, during the growing season. The greatest satisfaction to show organisers is always

obtained by the highest level of participation undertaken by the exhibitors on these occasions.

**1988** The National Championships at Southport simply had the crowds spellbound by the quality of the vegetables displayed and the expertise by which they had been cultivated and the manner in which they were displayed. The showing standard had been improving year by year.

This was the year of the Glasgow Garden Festival Exhibition and the Inter Branch competition was held within the festival along with many displays of top quality vegetables. Appreciation was given to the Scottish Branch of the Society for their usual high standard in the production of show vegetables. The displays were remarked on as an experience which was proclaimed by all who witnessed the show. One of the finest exhibitions of horticultural interest ever produced and witnessed in Scotland. The National Vegetable Society, as you would appreciate, were right in the middle of this.

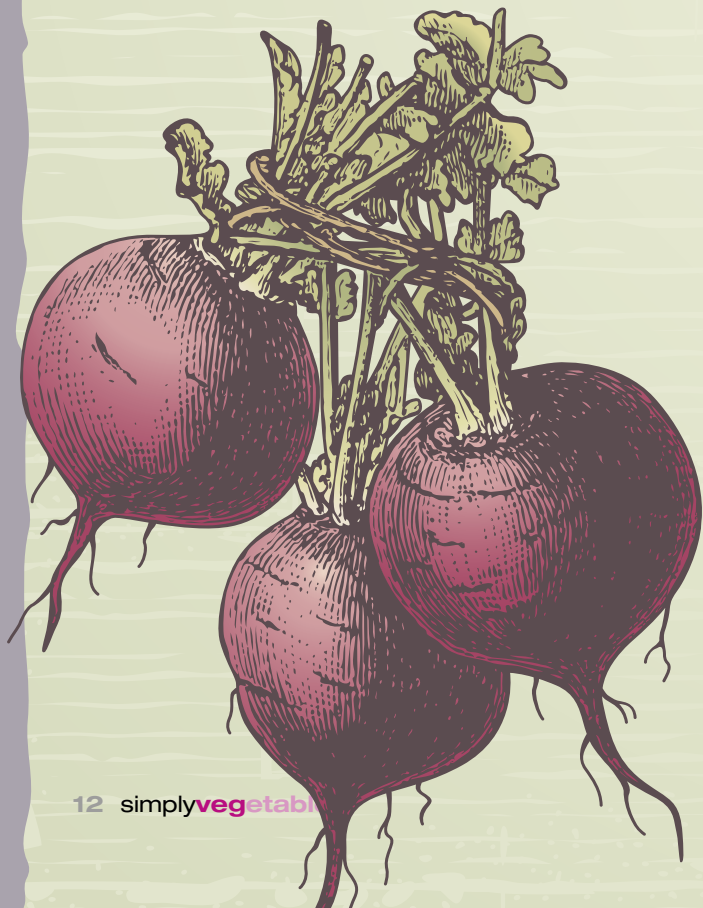
**1989** The Royal Horticultural Society Gardens, Wisley, held the National Vegetable Championships in 1989. They proved to be a tremendous success and the weather was certainly kinder this year. Numerous were the compliments received on the wonderful venue. Congratulations were given to all those, who with dedicated effort, produced and displayed exhibits of supreme quality. On this occasion the experts at Wisley Gardens were astounded by the quality and size of the vegetables. Well done to all those who participated.

**1990** The National Vegetable Championships held at the Ayr Flower Show in 1990 were very successful. Thanks were given to the Ayr Flower Show Committee for their help and support. To the members of the Scottish Branch our thanks were expressed for all the hard work they had put in to ensure the success of the competitive classes. The evening entertainment was a buffet followed by an evening at the Gaiety Theatre in Ayr.

This was also the year of the Gateshead Garden Festival where Northern Branch were responsible for organising the displays. Once again there was an Inter Branch competition along with many wonderful displays staged by the National Vegetable Society Members. This was a sight to behold and many members of the public were amazed at the quality and standard that was achieved. As had been the case at Stoke and Glasgow four excellent collections of vegetables were on view.

**1991** The National Vegetable Championships were hosted at Llanelli Flower Show in 1991. At the Championships themselves the standard of the exhibits were, as usual, the best that one could have hoped to see. It was lovely to be part of the comradeship between growers that has become an integral part of such events. An excellent Welsh evening was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone when the Borough of Llanelli entertained everyone at a civic reception.

**1992** Bridgemere Garden World, Cheshire, was the venue for the National Vegetable Society Championships in 1992. The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held during the show. These were both successful and enjoyable. It was pleasing





to see an increase, of about fifty, in the number of entries over the previous year. Standards seem to increase each year and the Society can always be proud of their displays. It is amazing what can be achieved by a combination of dedication and help from members of the Society. A splendid social evening was organised by the Midland Branch.

This was the year that the Ebbe Vale Garden Festival took place with exhibitors turning up from all corners of the United Kingdom. There were gasps of sheer amazement from the crowd when they saw the four collections staged by four of our five Branches - unfortunately on this occasion the Southern Branch were unable to attend. Once again the quality was absolutely superb, which, of course, the exhibitors of the Society were becoming well known for.

**1993** At the Southport Show the National Championships were successful and proved to be a happy meeting place for members from far and wide. The Welsh Branch organised an excellent display of potatoes for which they were awarded a well deserved Gold Medal card. After the Annual General Meeting the Northern Branch hosted an enjoyable dinner in the evening.

**1994** The 1994 National Vegetable Society Championships were held at the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens, Wisley, Surrey. Once again the Royal Horticultural Society afforded us excellent facilities and hospitality. The show was a resounding success and the standard of exhibits higher than ever. It was encouraging to see many members present at the Annual General Meeting which took place on the afternoon of the first day. Those present much appreciated the buffet arranged by members of the Southern Branch.

**1995** The National Vegetable Society Championships at Dundee were second to none in excellence. Congratulations were expressed to all exhibitors in both the Championships and in the Inter Branch competition. The tent was a most impressive sight. All members owe a big "thank you" to the Scottish Branch and Dundee City Council. This was the first time the Championships were held in Dundee within Camperdown Park which has a magnificent setting. We greatly appreciate the Civic reception Dundee City Council gave for all members. To advertise the National Vegetable Society and the show many interesting features were created by the Parks Department through out the City.

**1996** Hosted by Pembroke Council and other sponsors the National Vegetable Society Championships were held in Pembroke Castle. The Annual General Meeting took place in the Pembroke Town Hall. It was a good Championships and many exhibitors staged exhibits of top quality. The Royal Welsh Regimental Band was in attendance which proved to be quite a spectacle. Both the Commanding Officer and the Mayor of Pembroke presented the trophies to the winning exhibitors. The evening celebration took place at the Cleddeu Bridge Hotel where a wonderful evening of celebration was enjoyed.

**1997** Malvern Autumn Show, now in its second year, proved to be a winner for the 1997 National Championships. These Championships were a great success despite

fears that the late September date would affect entries. In fact, the situation was quite to the contrary as the numbers and quality of the entries were exceptional. Thousands attended the show and were amazed when entering the showing areas, especially the vegetable sections, at the standard and quality of the exhibits.

**1998** The events of the National Vegetable Society Championships and Annual General Meeting were held at Harrogate Autumn Show and was organised by the Northern Branch of the Society assisted by the West Yorkshire District Association. Once again there was a closely fought Inter Branch Competition with the five Branches competing. Thanks go to the Northern Branch for the dinner in the evening. Unfortunately some after show social events have limited numbers (as is still the case to-day) but that didn't stop the one hundred and twenty invited guests having a memorable evening.

**1999** In 1999 the National Vegetable Society Championships were held at Tunbridge Wells along with the Annual General Meeting. The entries were excellent. A superb demonstration of the quality and standards to which we aspire, they illustrated, for all who are interested, what can be achieved by experience, skill and dedication. It was good to see so many fine exhibits from all the many areas where our Society is active.

**2000** The year 2000 was a very special year for the National Vegetable Society. It was the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Society as well as the celebration of the Millennium. The National Vegetable Society Championships were staged in Dundee once again and supported by the Dundee City Council. The magnificent Camperdown Park was the venue. As this was a very special year it had been decided by the NVS Executive that, at the Millennium Championships, a commemorative silver salver would be awarded to all the trophy winners as a memento. It was also the year that the Society Millennium Bowl was introduced for competition.

As is the case on these special occasions an Inter Branch Competition was held. In the evening there was entertainment and a meal provided in a marquee within the show grounds. There was a lot of merriment to end a great day. These Championships were deemed a great success by all who attended.

**2001** The National Championships held in 2001 were staged within the grounds of Margran Park at the Orangey and hosted by the Welsh Branch. It was such a beautiful setting, the show benches filled to capacity with excellent vegetables thus making a great competition. It was nice to see the big collections staged at the door of the Orangey as one entered - this was quite a sight. After much discussion, within the Executive, it was decided to add a suitable engraved plaque to each trophy as a memento for the winners to keep. Entertainment was laid on along with a buffet at Blancos - a great night was had by all who attended.

**2002** Once again the National Vegetable Society Championships returned to the Malvern Autumn Show in 2002. As with all our shows a hard working team combined to stage a successful National Vegetable Championships within the





Malvern Autumn Show and likewise, no show can operate without the dedicated exhibitors travelling long distances to compete. Part of the sponsorship for this show was provided by Armillatox. We are grateful for this help.

**2003** The North of England Horticultural Society gave assistance to the Northern Branch in hosting the National Vegetable Society Championships at Harrogate in 2003. An Inter Branch Competition was also staged with the Five Branches competing. It is very rewarding to find many exhibitors travelled far and wide to stage some of the finest vegetables that you are likely to see anywhere in the world. Such is the reputation and skill of the exhibitors within the Society.

**2004** The 2004 National Vegetable Society Championships were held at Tunbridge Wells generously hosted by Hawkenbury Allotment Holders Association. It was the turn of Southern Branch to organise the Championships. Their committee are to be thanked and congratulated for all their hard work which led to a very successful show. To the exhibitors you did the Society proud and greatly impressed the residents of Tunbridge Wells who had not seen so many quality vegetables since the 1999 championships.

A new class was introduced this year - known as the Millennium Class sponsored by Nutri Mate. It is to be a Collection of five kinds of vegetables.

**2005** Our National Vegetable Society Championships for 2005 were hosted by Dundee City Council along with the Dundee Flower & food Festival. This show is always held in Camperdown Park, one of the parks within the City of Dundee. This was the third time that the Dundee City Council had hosted the Championships. They are to be thanked for this. It was a glorious sight to see so many entries and to hear all the comments from the public who were, in many cases, amazed to see the size and quality of the exhibits, many never having seen anything of the kind before. On the social side the Lord Provost of the City of Dundee gave a civic reception on the Friday night and on the Saturday night Scottish Country Dancing was held in one of the Marquees.

**2006** The National Vegetable Championship for 2006 were hosted by the Welsh Branch at Golden Grove School, Pembroke and the Annual General Meeting was held in the Primary School Hall. The main sponsors were Pembroke town council and Wilkinson Hardware Stores Ltd. There had been a marquee erected to accommodate the exhibits and this was well filled by a vast number of fabulous vegetables which took some time to judge. It was an overwhelming spectacle to greet the public when they entered the tent. The numerous collections were down one side and along the bottom of the tent which was very impressive. There was a social gathering in the evening which was held in Pembroke Rugby Club.

**2007** It was once again the turn of the Midland Branch to hold the National Vegetable Society Championships at Malvern Autumn Show. The vegetable marquee was full to capacity, in fact, there was no space available once all the exhibits were in place. We were staging our vegetables beside the vegetable exhibits of the Malvern Show, all be it in different areas of the marquee but still under the one roof. What a spectacle this was for the public to see all the vegetables laid in the various classes. The Midland Branch had decided this year to go viral and to publish the results on the web the minute the results of each class were known. As you can imagine this move was greatly appreciated by the Society members up and down the country and this was the first time this had been done.

The Evening social was held in Welland not far from the Show ground

at the Pheasant Inn. A very enjoyable evening was had by all.

**2008** One of the highlights of the year 2008 was the National Vegetable Championships at Harrogate. There were ninety five members (4% of the total membership) who staged 249 exhibits at the highest level making it a superb spectacle and one to be proud of. From records found this was one of the highest staging at a National Vegetable Championships. As usual there was a buffet organised at night by the Branch Committee.

**2009** The National Vegetable Society Championships were held at the Dorset County Showground in 2009. They were hosted by the Dorset Agricultural Society providing us with a wonderful venue, superb marquee and facilities and a very warm Dorset welcome. Each of the classes were sponsored and the Southern Branch Committee thanked all of the sponsors for all the help given to make this Show the success that it was. It was a long way to travel for many people to help support this show. It is pleasing to say quite a number did travel and they are to be thanked for their support. Anyone who has ever run a National Championship will be aware it takes a lot of work over many months to bring the championships to a successful conclusion. There was an evening of entertainment and a buffet in a local hotel.

**2010** A Golden Anniversary is a remarkable achievement and for the National Vegetable Society to reach this mile stone was wonderful occasion. Held at Camperdown Park, Dundee, the Scottish Branch hosted this auspicious occasion. It was a dream come true for the Scottish Branch to be given the honour of organising this Championships in the 50th year of our founding. What an event. What a weekend. The Championships were well supported by members from all over the United Kingdom, the standard of exhibits were of the usual highest quality. It was also good to see a number of new faces taking some of the prizes and getting their names engraved on the various trophies.

There was an Inter Branch Competition but with a difference this year. Instead of it being a collection of six vegetables which it had been from its inception, it was to be an International Display of Vegetables. It was good to see a team had come from Jersey to compete in this class. The display which they erected and staged was magnificent. As a result of their dedication and superb effort they won the Inter Branch Trophy. Two new potato classes were introduced NVS, Amour and NVS Sherine, these classes were sponsored by JBA Seed Potatoes. As well as prize money the winners of these classes won an NVS plaque. In the evening there was a visit to the City of Dundee's council offices to a civic reception hosted by the Lord Provost of Dundee where various speeches were made followed by a buffet supper.

The National Vegetable Championships seemed to be improving every year and this was / is undoubtedly down to the superb skills of the organisers and every exhibitor. Let us remember, without the organisers and exhibitors, there would be no show at all. We always have to remember that the National Vegetable Championships is the shop window for the Society.

To be continued...







# gro-well

*The Home of Quality Gardening Products at a Cost Effective Price*



**Vegetable  
heaven**



**Flowering  
success**



**Perfect  
lawn**

*A family business with over 30 years  
experience of supplying a full range of:*

Crop Protection • Lawncare • Growing Media  
Pest & Disease Control • Seeds • Garden Sundries  
Weed Control • Fertilisers • Pots & Containers

**To place an order or  
make an enquiry:**



**[www.gro-welldirect.co.uk](http://www.gro-welldirect.co.uk)**



**Tel: 01773 742847**



**Shop: Cherry Tree Cottage Farm,  
210 Peasehill Road, Ripley, Derby DE5 3JQ**

Gro-Well is the trading name of Codnor Horticultural (Wholesale) Supplies Ltd • Email: [info@gro-welldirect.co.uk](mailto:info@gro-welldirect.co.uk)

## Quality Garden Equipment and Accessories Since 1954

**The  
Garden  
Netting  
Experts**

**Buy  
Online  
& Save  
10%**

**Fruit & Vegetable  
Cages & Netting**

**William  
James & Co**

Est. 1954



**Polytunnels**

**Raised Beds & Planters**



**Garden Tools  
& Accessories**



William James & Co, Gore Cross Business Park, Corbin Way, Bridport, Dorset DT6 3UX

**Call: 0800 1032800 or Email: [sales@wmjames.co.uk](mailto:sales@wmjames.co.uk)**

**Buy online 24/7 at [www.wmjames.co.uk](http://www.wmjames.co.uk)**



# Getting Started with Cut Flowers

by Derek Brooks FNVS, edited by David Allison FNVS

This 76 page A4 guide to growing cut flowers from your allotment or growing space by Derek Brooks, edited by David Alison provides an introduction to this fascinating hobby. Packed with information and colour photographs.

## Introduction

This is not a book about floral arrangement although this subject is mentioned occasionally in the text. It is an attempt to encourage anyone who likes flowers to grow their own, either in the garden or greenhouse or on the allotment to put in vases to decorate the home. Cut flowers are expensive to buy so you can save money by growing your own.

Also, I know that many people who read this book have an allotment and flowers are very important on allotments to attract beneficial insects that we need to pollinate our crops. For example, I grow sweet peas on the same structure of canes as my runner beans for this purpose. Half of my allotment is devoted to flowers.

I have included the flowers that I think are most useful for these two purposes, those mainly used being given the most space. It is not a complete list by any means and you can probably think of several that I haven't mentioned.

Although the book is mainly about flowers, in the chapter about shrubs I have included a few that are grown for their foliage and some that are grown for their berries as well as flowers. Berries of course provide welcome food for birds.

In chapters 6 and 7 I have included the suppliers of seeds from which some of the flowers can be grown. However, there are several well-known perennials for which the seeds are not readily available. There are scores of firms, though too numerous to mention here, that sell the plants. I suggest you look at the R.H.S. plant finder which will tell you where you can buy these plants, or you may find them in garden centres.

The seed suppliers I have quoted for each variety are correct at the time of writing, but varieties change. New varieties are introduced each year and other varieties are deleted. Therefore, if you are reading this book in a few years' time you will have to check if the supplier I have quoted still lists the particular variety.

**Derek.**

## A message from the Editor

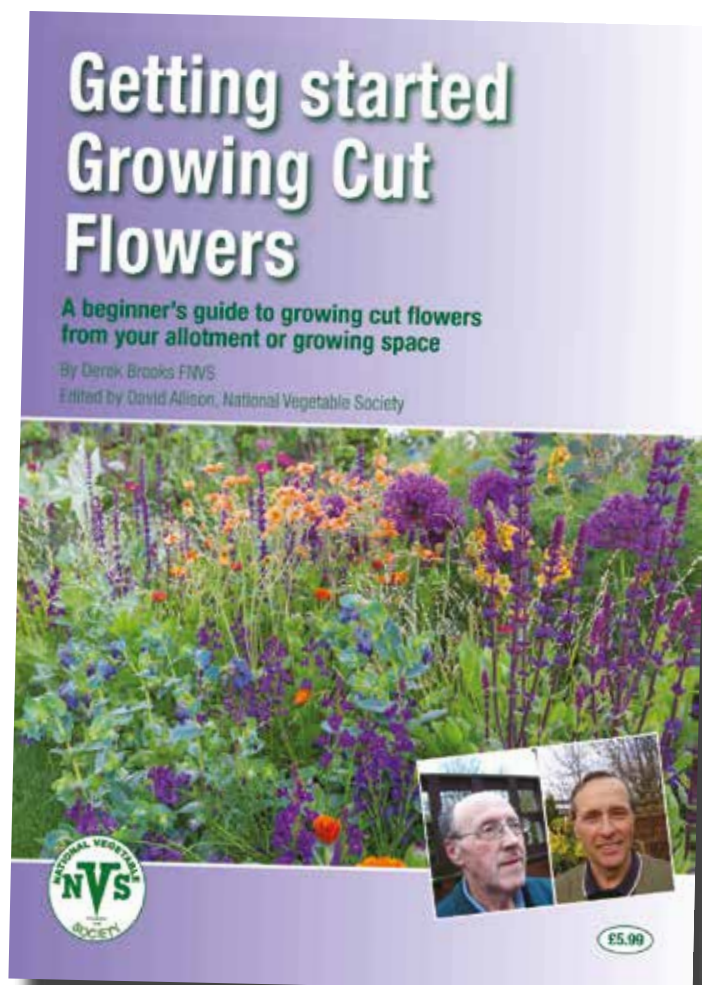
Welcome to this, the fifth title in the series of "Getting Started" series of publications, of which Derek the Author has penned three. Derek Brooks gardens in Worsley, Greater Manchester. He has had his garden for fifty-nine years and an allotment for twenty years. He has two greenhouses, and as well as flowers, he grows pot plants and a whole range of vegetables. He exhibits much of his produce at horticultural shows and has won many prizes, trophies and medals. He writes in the quarterly bulletins of the National Vegetable Society, and monthly in the Garden News. He also writes his garden diary on [gardenfriends.proboards.com](http://gardenfriends.proboards.com). In 1984 he won the title of "Garden News Mastermind of Gardening", and is a Fellow of the National Vegetable Society.

As well as providing useful information on growing a variety of plants for cut flowers and foliage in this publication, there are many specialist societies who, if you need more specialist information, would be pleased to make you a member, indeed of you intend showing your blooms at specialist society shows, you usually have to be a member of that society to enter. Information on how to join is available on their websites.

Do enjoy this excellent reference book, which I hope will encourage many of you to grow flowers for cutting or exhibition on your growing space, in addition to the fruit and vegetables we all enjoy growing and eating.

The National Vegetable Society, as publisher, and myself in particular, are indebted to Derek for his skill, time, and endless enthusiasm, in providing most of the material for this book. Thank you, Derek, top man.

**David R Allison FNVS, Editor.**



CHAPTER 1	Chrysanthemums
CHAPTER 2	Dahlias
CHAPTER 3	Roses
CHAPTER 4	Carnations and Pinks
CHAPTER 5	Sweet Peas
CHAPTER 6	Annuals
CHAPTER 7	Perennials and Biennials
CHAPTER 8	Bulbs
CHAPTER 9	Shrubs

The articles are written in a very easy to understand format, and intended primarily for members to exhibit initially at local shows, which is where most exhibitors dip their toes into the showing game, some subsequently becoming experts in their particular fields, others becoming qualified Judges. Its just one more aspect of our hobby which some find totally absorbing, growing and showing cut flowers, for the exhibition tables, or just for a vase in the home.

**To purchase please contact David Allison, 18 Sandholme Drive, Burley in Wharfedale, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, LS29 7RQ. Cost £5.99 plus £2.00 P&P. Cheques payable to "The National Vegetable Society"**



# Oca

by Gary Hitchen

## Introduction

This article is aimed at those of you who fancy trying something a little different. I have been growing Oca for 4 years now with mixed results and whilst I am by no means an expert grower to say the least, I have written this to share my experiences with other members. Hopefully you can benefit from what I have learned if you do decide to give it a go. Oca is a worthwhile crop that is easy to grow and look after, which tastes delicious.

The scientific name for the plant is *Oxalis Tuberosa* and it originates in South America. Oca also goes by the name of New Zealand Yam because apparently it is widely available there, on sale in supermarkets.

My observations and comments are based on growing Oca on our plot in the north of England, near Stockport. We are shaded on all sides by mature trees, meaning we have reasonable but not great light levels, however we are pretty well sheltered from wind. The soil is sticky clay over sandstone with plenty of rocks mixed in so almost all of our crops are grown in either beds or large containers.

## Getting started

The first hurdle to overcome if you want to grow Oca is, and there is no easy way to put this, the tubers are very expensive. Expect to pay somewhere in the region of £1 each, generally in packs of half a dozen or so. It might help to think of the first year as a novelty crop where you can try them out for taste and take it from there. The good news is, once you have a successful season they are very easy to replant from your own harvest and this way, they bulk up fast.

For the first couple of years, I trialled tubers from a few different suppliers and by far and away the best came from Marshalls. They weren't the cheapest available but as the saying goes; you get what you pay for. The cheapest ones I bought came from another

well-known seed company but turned out to be a false economy because when they turned up they were tiny, a couple of them were already rotten and most of them didn't grow at all.

I have found the best method is to start the plants off by putting single tubers in 11cm pots during March in an unheated greenhouse, whenever the weather starts to warm up a bit. If you don't have greenhouse space, keeping them in a cold frame is fine but you will need to provide extra protection if there is a hard frost. Like potatoes, they have a rose end and you may see the eyes sprouting dependent on when you are potting them up. I haven't tried chitting the tubers since they have grown well enough for me without the need to do this.

I've already said the tubers are expensive, so there is a temptation to molly coddle them now with scrupulously clean pots and nice new seed compost. There is no need for this, any growing medium will do the job. I have used old compost recycled from pots that grew the previous year's greenhouse crops with perfectly good results and equally well, just using homemade garden compost is more than sufficient.

I've tried setting out the tubers directly in their final position later in the season and whilst some of them fared reasonably well, there was a higher rate of misses when compared to the pot method and those that did grow had lower yields. Misses are annoying and also expensive unless you are growing your own tubers. I don't know for certain but I suspect the lower yields from those that do grow might be because of a shorter growing season.

*Misses are annoying and also expensive unless you are growing your own tubers.*



Ready for planting out

## Planting out

The usual rules for hardening off plants started under cover apply to these. Beware late frosts and be prepared to cover them if needs be – as you will be able to tell from just looking at the shoots, the stems are

very fleshy and frost completely flattens them. Under normal circumstances for our part of the country this usually means planting out late April or early May. One year I was over-ambitious and just one night of frost

removed all the top growth. Whilst they recovered in a couple of weeks with new shoots, I wouldn't recommend going out too soon because it removes any benefit of starting them early.

Prepare the ground by removing weeds and raking in some general purpose fertiliser at normal recommended rates – I use either blood, fish and bone which provides an organic option, or growmore otherwise. By planting out time they should have shoots 3 or 4 inches tall. I have had my best results by practically burying the whole plant, just leaving the uppermost leaves and shoot tips above the soil surface.

Oca grow happiest in open ground and I space mine a foot apart in each direction. It looks a bit sparse at first especially if you are burying almost all of the plant but when I've tried them closer together I just ended up with fewer smaller tubers so I assume they must have been competing with each other. Make sure there is a reasonable gap between the Oca and any other crops alongside, because they will carpet the area for a couple of feet around their allotted bed.

I have grown them in large containers (by which I mean 65Ltr tubs) but you are signing yourself up to a watering marathon if you try this. Even for those gardeners who



Potting up in spring





Freshly mulched with garden compost

don't have much space so can only grow in pots and also who don't mind the constant watering these need, I would suggest there are better crops to spend your effort on which will produce greater rewards. I'm not averse to pot growing, in fact I grow all my potatoes in these tubs every year and I'm happy with the results, but Oca demands more water (yes, even more than the potatoes) for a smaller yield.

The other planting location I have trialled is in the greenhouse border. If you want a

---

*Oca are easy plants  
to look after.*

---

trifid in your greenhouse swamping everything else in there and intend to eat the leaves by the hundredweight, with no tubers at the end of the season, then this is the route for you. Admittedly, I may have got tubers if I hadn't hacked the thing back to save the rest of the plants, but even if they had formed, they grow just fine outside so there is no need to sacrifice the precious indoor space.

### Care and Maintenance

Oca are easy plants to look after. Once the shoots grow to about 6 or 8 inches tall, I apply a top dressing of bonemeal and mulch with a decent layer of home made compost. They're usually ready for this about 6 weeks after planting out. If like mine, your compost includes weed seeds, there is no need to panic about keeping the ground clear like

you would with some other crops – the Oca are going to behave like a weed suppressing blanket.

You can tell from the pictures that I have inadvertently self-selected two different varieties now that I'm replanting my own tubers. I have yellow and red skinned Oca which curiously grow with the opposite colour stems to their tubers. The ones on the right clearly have a longer growing habit. I've tried earthing up as the stems continue to grow, but this didn't give me any benefit at all when it came to harvest time. Now I just let them sprawl over the ground – some shoots root where they touch and give the plants that extra bit of energy.

The only other thing I do by way of maintenance is battle to keep the slugs in check. For me this means the same treatment as everything else I grow, which is a combination of all the measures available because I am absolutely plagued by the damn things; nematodes, beer traps and pellets are the main weapons used. In fairness, Oca are not a particular target of slugs so if you are lucky enough to have only a small population you might not need to do anything.

### Harvest

The first harvest starts as soon as the shoots are growing away strongly – the leaves can be picked and added to salads all summer long. They are succulent and have a lemon flavour, providing a welcome tasty addition to the usual repertoire of mixed leaves and herbs.

From midsummer onwards, pretty yellow flowers will appear which are also edible with a lemony flavour, although not as strong as that of the leaves. The flowers, unlike the leaves, aren't going to be in sufficient quantity



Growing strong in summer





Oca Flower

to be regarded as a crop in their own right but they do brighten up the salads.

The main crop comes at the end of the summer. All I have read suggests that the tubers are formed late in the season and having lifted a couple of plants early “just to see”, this certainly seems to be the case. What I do now is treat them like you would with your dahlias – leave them alone as long as you can until the first frost takes the tops off, then lift and store the whole crop in one go.

The most effective way to store the tubers is with the soil shaken off, dried and then put in cardboard boxes – I use old shoe boxes for this purpose. I have put them in containers covered with old compost as you would with more traditional root veg. This worked well, but feels a bit over the top for the Oca because they don't dry out anyway. Last year I put them into a recycled polystyrene crate but I won't be doing this again, since we had a much higher loss rate to mould over the course of the winter. This might be because the polystyrene doesn't allow them to breathe like the cardboard does. However you choose to store them, they need to be in a frost free shed or garage.

Oca tubers are similar in size and texture to Jerusalem artichokes and can be used in much the same way. Oca don't have the well-known side effect that comes from the artichokes, which is a plus. They have a citrus flavour which we find pleasant. To prepare them for cooking, we give them a good scrub and remove any blemishes, but we don't peel them. They are easy to roast in a dish with some oil and seasoning – 200°C for 20 minutes, turning once halfway through is all that is required.



Lifting the tubers



Drying in the wheelbarrow



Scrubbed and ready for the oven



# Micro Herb Growing with AutoPot Watering Systems

Gareth Cameron persuaded AutoPot to pen the article below for *Simply Vegetables* which both Gareth and I think is very relevant in this day and age as we need to be able to produce as much food as possible from as small an area as possible and micro growing is such a technique. I often grow sprouting seeds over the summer period to add to salads and sandwiches and would encourage all members to give it a go. It is ideal for older and infirm people as there is no heavy work and can be carried out in the kitchen so you do not even have to go outdoors!



Germinated Seeds Under Cropmaster LED

Micro herbs are proving a simple revelation to kitchen-gardeners everywhere. These minute miracle morsels make a vast range of flavours available in just a few weeks growing time. They require minimal space, are simple to grow and are mess-free, thus perfect for indoor gardening. The never-ending culinary pursuit of that which is innovative and unique has further enhanced the appeal of micro herbs and the flavours they yield. Cultivating

and cooking with herbs that are often otherwise unobtainable to commercial and retail customers is certainly a driving force behind this emerging horticultural trend.

However, in many respects there's nothing modern about micro herbs. It's unlikely you'd regard cress or mustard grown by the kids for a school project as cutting edge and yet micro herbs are little more than this. In essence they are the seedlings of edible







Biodegradable Paper Confetti Substrate



Various microherbs

plants which otherwise would be left to harvest in their maturity. What is perhaps new about the current vogue for micro herbs is the relative availability of seeds for plants that are scarcely, if ever, seen on these

shores, and much less in our stores. Equally surprising is the way in which more familiar plants are given a new lease of life when used in their micro form. Flavour is present in its most concentrated form, powerful and clear even when used sparingly.

Growing sufficient quantities of micro herbs to occasionally serve household needs is a simple affair. Seeds, a hobby level propagation kit, a suitable substrate and a sunny-when-needed spot is pretty much all that is required. But even the mildly curious or ambitious gardener wants to explore beyond this. Consistent results, higher yields, greater variety and that old chestnut 'experimentation' are all excellent excuses for further tinkering.

Growing with the help of a watering system is one way in which serious and seriously curious gardeners can take micro herb cultivation to the next level. Watering systems allow you to measure and vary the plants irrigation and nutrition with intriguing and impressive results.

AutoPot Global Ltd are a UK manufacturer of watering systems who are currently developing a means by which garden-chefs and commercial customers alike can produce micro herbs on a grand scale. The product AutoPot aspire to create is an integrated racking system including heating, irrigation and lighting which can quickly and efficiently take seeds from germination to propagation and on to harvesting. The product development process that AutoPot have been following has involved an illuminating

*Flavour is present in its most concentrated form, powerful and clear...*

series of micro herb growing trials. It's fair to say that AutoPot have explored all aspects of micro herb growth, from substrates to lighting via feeding and propagation techniques.

The choice of substrate is an integral question when utilising an automated irrigation system. AutoPot have utilised biodegradable paper confetti for its ease of use and ecological virtues. The confetti, when soaked in water,



MicroHerbs Roots Hanging Method  
Amaranth Red Frill Mustard



MicroHerbs Roots Hanging Method  
AQUAvalve Red Frill Mustard



expands to retain and release moisture in a controlled way.

The paper substrate was first used in punnets with seeds sown directly onto the soaked confetti. The punnets, with holes in their bases for moisture induction, sat upon root control sheeting which, in turn, lay atop coco coir matting. The coco matting served as a wick for water and nutrients and was placed in large garden trays irrigated by AutoPot AQUAvalves. A solution of half strength General Hydroponics 3 Part Flora Series, with an EC of 1.2-1.4 fed the trays. Heat mats under the trays provided around 28 degrees centigrade during germination, throughout which the seeds were blacked out. AutoPot found that by soaking the paper substrate in warm water the germination process could be reduced by up to 24 hours as the heat mats had less to do in bringing the substrate up to temperature. Use of temperature control equipment from Global Air Supplies aided the trial by enhancing the level of accuracy with which temperature could be applied. Once the seeds had germinated the heat mats were turned down to 21 degrees centigrade and the covers were removed to allow LED light in. Seedlings were kept under propagation lids until they had established a canopy to protect their root zone. LED lights from four different manufacturers were trialled simultaneously under the same conditions. Units from Crop Master, Heliospectra, SANlight and SunBlaster all exhibited great innovation in their design and, as a source of light, represented a highly efficient means of accelerating growth.

This first growing technique proved

effective but not nearly as potent as cultivating micro herbs with roots hanging in suspension. Punnets, coco matting and root control were taken out of the equation. Instead the same absorbent biodegradable paper, in its sheet form rather than as confetti, was laid on four-legged, slotted racks. Seeds were sown directly onto the soaked sheets. The slotted racks were then arranged in the same large, AQUAvalve irrigated garden trays as before. Small wicks of the paper substrate hung down into the trays and drew up moisture and nutrients. The same growing process from germination to propagation was followed under the range of LED lights.

This time growth occurred explosively and in a much more even pattern across each test bed. The success of this arrangement is such that it now appears to be locked-in as the prime candidate for application in the integrated racking system. However, tests continue with further substrate concepts in the pipeline and further evaluation of LEDs. The aim here is continual development of techniques in order to offer continual improvement and innovation.

One of the key benefits of having a system you can control is knowing how plants respond to different growing approaches. The specific benefits of the AutoPot systems employed in this trial are simplicity and efficiency. Few hobby-growers or commercial producers of micro herbs would want a complex irrigation system that relies on large quantities of water, power and maintenance. In this respect AutoPot Watering Systems provide a highly efficient solution. Gravity-fed and only activated when the plants have expended all the water and feed available AutoPot systems do not require electricity or timers. Whilst LED lighting does draw power it is a highly efficient technology that is developing to deliver exponentially increased power for continually decreasing input. For AutoPot the key aim is to make something that is universally applicable; a watering system that can provide micro herbs on a commercial scale by using tech

---

*This technology is all very well, but what about the herbs?*

---

that is present in their simplest consumer-end equipment.

This technology is all very well, but what about the herbs? As predicted, the different varieties of micro herbs germinated and developed at different

rates. AutoPot trialled a range of varieties including Red Frilled Mustard, Red Ruby and Crimson King Basil, Amaranth, Radishes and Broccoli. Quickest to harvest were the earthy, sweet grass inflected Amaranth and crisp, spicy Radish plants at five to ten days. In their wake were summery, health enhancing Broccoli and pungent Mustard at around ten days. Requiring more time but worth every minute for their sweet, aromatic flavour were the Basils.

Readiness for harvest is generally judged by plant height, leaf growth and flavour. Once micro herbs are 5-10cm high with a couple of true leaves they should be sufficiently developed for eating. If in doubt a quick taste test should decide matters. The herbs can be snipped away with scissors but it is worth remembering that this may expose the roots of other herbs nearby to lighting (if used) and deprive adjacent stalks of support. It's not necessary to harvest all at once, bear in mind that a little goes a very long way and that these little delicacies will store for a many days in the refrigerator within a simple plastic air tight container.

One of the great things about micro herb growing, on whatever scale, is it's crossover appeal to the equally popular pastime of cooking. It is a quick, visible and demonstrative means of proving the connections between growing, eating and living. It brings plant cultivation to a greater section of the public and into homes where everyone can engage with horticulture everyday.

Follow the progress of AutoPot Watering Systems micro herbs growing trials on Facebook @AutoPotSystems



*Pot, pickle, press  
and preserve...*

*...try saying  
that quickly!*



HS FRENCH FLINT  
THE GLASS CONTAINER SPECIALISTS

The Gallery, Springalls Wharf, 25a Bermondsey  
Wall West, London SE16 4TH

020 7237 1750 WWW.FRENCHFLINT.COM



# Greenhouse Heating

by James Mark Symonds

The siting of your structure is important it should be clear of high trees, other buildings such as houses and tall fences or hedges. For the winter growing conditions the greenhouse should run east to west as this leads to 24% more light during the winter reaching the plants inside. The short rays from the sun warms the soil, inside structure and any water in the greenhouse; and the long rays do not pass back out through the glass so are trapped inside and warm the air. A North/South greenhouse admits less than half of the available sunlight and reflects the rest. This is very important in the Northern parts of the U.K.

From this it can be seen that sunlight is important in keeping the inside temperature higher for long periods in the 24-hour cycle and can reduce your overall heating bill. Whether we use gas, electric, oil, paraffin, solid fuel or with modern technology solar panels the basic fact is to retain as much heat as possible to encourage the growth of our cuttings, seedlings and crops.

Now facts relating to this are the size of the area to be heated, the temperature required relative to the outside ambient conditions and the overall size of the structure (height and width). Also the type of structure is it all glass or has it a brick or wood base wall. Other factors to consider are the position, is it windy which will draw out the heat, or in a frost pocket which will be colder than higher areas. These together with the length of time the structure needs heating will all affect the cost of heating over the winter period.

We can also partition off part of the greenhouse and heat this to a higher temperature for rooting cuttings and starting off seeds. Some growers are now realising that there are different methods and new technologies which are worth trying. Using lights and polythene techniques, even wind mill technology are being tried. But as ex-allotment holders will know how difficult it is using paraffin, Calor gas, or coal fired equipment, you need a 24/7 commitment in case something goes wrong.

Regarding the area of glass to be kept at growing temperature we should remember the U value of glass (the resistance of heat loss factor) which is 1 BTU per square foot per degree difference between internal and external temperatures. Therefore, taking a 6 foot by 8 foot (1.8m \* 2.4m) greenhouse of approximately 190 square foot of glass uses 190 BTU's of energy. This can be converted into Watts as 3.412 BTU's = 1 Watt so the above figure converts to 55 Watts per degree difference to the outside temperature. This of course will differ from area to area, so we try to maintain the required temperature rather than let it fall. It costs less in the dissipation of this heat which can be controlled by some temporary double glazing; but it should be remembered that



this cuts down on the transmission of light into the greenhouse.

The use of a good thermostat is essential whatever method of heating we use is critical. The cost of heating is difficult to calculate unless it is paraffin, calor gas or coal as we see the bills for these when we purchase them.

There is a new very small boiler for garden use now which uses and burns anything and is good for allotments; fisherman use them to keep warm. The fuel can be quick growing willow chips and this is a form of biomass heating. These biomass boilers will burn any pruning's and other woody growth or broken pallets etc. so are worth considering but have the same disadvantages as other solid fuel heating if they go out.

Even using such methods as energy heat pumps and pump the heat from down in the ground could be used but would it be cost effective and after all it is just a hobby!

A few thoughts from Jim to close the article:

- Here's a thought could we put the greenhouse on a turn table as we know that certain plants follow the sun and therefore the structure would also follow the sun giving better light.
- If willow bark is scalded and soak in hot water, then left to cool the liquid can be used as a rooting agent.
- When you've got money to burn the fires gone out!
- When you chose a friend close one eye, to keep a friend close both!
- The meek shall inherit the earth, but not the mineral rights.
- The new broom sweeps clean, but the old one knows the corners!

## Caption Competition

We're looking for printable but amusing captions, which will be included in the next issue of the magazine.

Please send your entries to Crest Publications by email or in the post, along with your name and contact details.

Email: [jodie@crestpublications.com](mailto:jodie@crestpublications.com)

Post: 12 Brooklands Court, Kettering Venture Park, Kettering, NN15 6FD

Closing date: 6th August 2018







# Getting Started in the Greenhouse – part 10

by Kelvin Mason FNVS

## Melons

I am possible the last person who should be writing about growing

melons as over the years of growing them I have never had a decent crop and have only harvested two or three of an edible size! Hopefully you can learn from my experience and achieve some decent crops. They have a reputation for being a difficult crop to grow and live up to that reputation.

Although they are closely related to the cucumber which is fairly easy to grow in a greenhouse or polytunnel the melon (*Cucumis melo*) is temperamental and prone to root and stem diseases. My best ever melon was grown in a polytunnel and seemed to thrive in the humid atmosphere.

Melons are indigenous to the middle east area as far over to Afghanistan and also sub-Saharan Africa. There is evidence that they were an important crop in China 2000 years ago, and were grown by the Romans. It is thought to have first come to the U.K in 1570. The old gardeners are said to have stated that it needs a lot of skill to produce good crops of melons – I knew I lacked something!

There are three main types of melons:

Musk Melon also called Nutmeg melon and Netted melon owing to the skin pattern

Cantaloupe Melons named after a papal estate near Rome, these have a rough or scaly skin but never netted and usually have orange flesh, the French 'Charentais' being an example. A green fleshed example would be 'Ogen' bred in Israel and is fairly common in the seed catalogues.

Winter Melons have a smooth hard skin and green flesh, an example being the

Honeydew cultivars.

The well-known watermelon is not directly related to the melons above. Instead of being in the *Cucumis* genus it is in the *Citrullus* genus, although this is in the Cucurbitaceae family so is distantly related. *Citrullus lanatus* the watermelon originated in subtropical areas on Africa and was a useful source of water for the locals who needed to travel across the Kalahari Desert. Watermelons need a warm climate to grow and produce a good crop so may need a warm greenhouse (heated) to be sure to get a reasonable crop.

In the rest of the article I will look at growing the Cantaloupe melon as these can be grown in an unheated greenhouse in the U.K.

The melon is said to like a hot arid atmosphere with a minimum temperature of 16°C and prefers 20°C or above. They will tolerate some humidity during the early summer but prefer a dryer atmosphere when the fruit is ripening. As it needs high temperatures and is not a heavy cropper melons are not grown commercially in the U.K. not even in greenhouses. It is cheaper to import them from warmer climates.

As a home gardener it is possible to grow melons in a greenhouse or polytunnel; they have been grown in frames but they need to be in a warm site even in the southern U.K.

Seed is usually sown in March / April although they can be sown earlier if kept heated until April for an early crop. Like cucumbers sow the seed on its side or even end 1.5cm deep in 7.5cm pots /modules. Use a John Innes, peat free or a peat

compost depending on your preference. A temperature of 18 to 21°C is required for germination which is usually very quick.

Once they have germinated keep the plants growing vigorously as they are prone to root and stem rots if stressed.

The plants can be potted up into 15cm pots to grow on especially if the greenhouse border soil is not warm enough for planting. Do not allow the plants to become root bound as this stresses them and makes the stem become stiff, produce smaller leaves and reduces the fruit yield. It is important to plant into a warm soil and in the late 1800's and early 1900's would have been planted into a hotbed made up of fresh manure and leaves and allowed to compost and

heat up. If planting directly into the border soil this is usually done in early to mid-May and late May in the North. The soil should be a good fertile loam or rotted grass turf with some manure added.

*It is cheaper to import them from warmer climates.*

The plants are usually planted on a mound 30 to 40cm high as this helps to reduce root rots. Melons have also been grown on straw bales that have partly rotted to produce some heat, they are planted into a mound of loamy soil on top of the bale. They can be grown in large pots (25 to 30cm) and two to a growbag.

Planting takes place when the melons are 15 to 20 cm high and they will need training up a split bamboo cane while they are in the pots. Plant with the rootball slightly proud of the soil at 75cm apart and if possible when the soil is 18 to 20°C. Place a cane, string or other support next to the plant and tie the plant to it. Ensure the air temperature is 18 to 23°C and lightly water the plant in. Keep the greenhouse humid and only ventilate when the temperature goes above 27°C.

Once the plants are established start regular watering with the aim to keep the soil moist but not wet especially while the plant is making vigorous growth. Train the stem up the cane or support and once it reaches 60cm pinch out the growing point to encourage the production of laterals which will produce the flowers and fruit. Pinch out the laterals two leaves beyond the flowers and pinch out the sub-laterals after five leaves.

One of the main differences between cucumbers and melons is that melons need pollinating; this is where I tend to miss out as pollination is best done at mid-day when I am often not at home. The temperature is often high at mid-day to early afternoon which seems to encourage better fruit set. Take a male flower (no swelling behind) and gently push it into the centre of the female flower (with the swelling behind the petals). Pollinate five to six flower per plant and repeat on a





couple of occasions to ensure fruit develop on each plant. Some growers only allow one fruit per plant and this may be worth considering in the northern parts of the U.K to ensure you get some fruit.

Top dress around each plant with well-rotted compost / good loamy soil mix to encourage surface rooting and it helps to direct excess water away from the stem. Liquid feed weekly with a potash feed (tomato feed is fine) at half strength as too much nutrient can scorch the roots. Keep tying in the new growth and remove unwanted stems. Aim for an average of 3 to 6 fruits per plant, if more develop remove them as too many fruit will result in small under developed melons. Support the fruit with nets or criss-crossed string (or even old tights are said to work!) to take the weight which would pull the plant down.

Once the fruit starts to change colour in mid to late summer, this is a sign it is ripening and watering should be reduced a little and the humidity lowered by giving more ventilation. Pick the fruit when fully ripe, they have ripe sweet smell and you can push your thumb nail into the skin.

### Growing in Frames

If a greenhouse or polytunnel is not available melons can be grown in frames, I have to admit never having any success with melons in frames but my frame is quite shaded and I have only tried it a couple of times. Before planting in the frame remove some of the soil and replace this with either some well-rotted

manure / compost or a good fertile loamy soil. Mound it slightly in the centre of the frame as this helps drainage around the plant and helps to prevent stem rot.

Plant one melon to each frame (assuming a frame is approx. 1.5 \* 1.2 in size, the standard frame light size) in late May early June, possible later in the north of the U.K. Water in and allow it to establish before commencing regular watering. When the plant has grown to 15cm in length remove the growing tip to encourage laterals to grow. Again allow 5 to 6 laterals to grow with one fruit per lateral, pinch out 2 leaves after the flower and any sub-laterals after five leaves.

Pollinate and grow as for greenhouse melons, ventilate if the temperature in the frame goes above 27°C but try to keep warm to maximise the plant growth. If it is a warm summer the lights can be opened which will allow the bees in to do the pollination for you. Once the flowers have been pollinated and a small fruit formed; place this on a tile, slate, small board or straw to keep it clean, prevent it rotting and to ripen evenly. If lifted above the soil it helps to prevent slugs gaining access.



Powdery Mildew

## Cultivars

*Sweetheart* – an old cultivar said to give a good crop of small melons even in poor summers.  
*Emir F1* – I am told it was bred for northern climates and therefore is suitable for the U.K. and has a good disease resistance.

*Ogen AGM* – produces small green skinned, yellow fleshed fruit with a good taste.

*Irina F1* – said to be early with fruits up to 1kg and resistant to fusarium and powdery mildew.

*Jade Lady F1* – a honeydew type with fruits from 1.5 to 2.5kg with a high sugar content and resistant to fusarium.

*Red Star F1* – a watermelon which D.T.Brown say is easy to grow and yields up to 5kg of fruit per plant. The melons are red fleshed hence its name.

## Cucamelons

These are a recent addition to the seed catalogues and seem to have become fairly popular going on the number of people who say they are growing them. I am told they are very popular in the bars and restaurants at some of the expensive hotels (I would not know as I never visit such places!). The fruits are small, approx. 1cm diameter and 2cm long with the taste of cucumber with a hint of citrus according to D.T.Brown. They seem a bit tasteless to me having grown them twice but may be worth a try if you like snacking. According to one report I read they taste like a mixture of cucumber and lime. Each plant will produce a large number of fruit starting in late July through to late September; they will start cropping earlier if sown early.

Cucamelons (*Melothria scabra*) is native to Mexico and central south America and will grow up to 2.5metres, it tends to be slow growing at first but will increase with speed once it is established. They are said to be drought and fairly pest and disease resistant. The fruit are claimed to a healthy snack containing various vitamins, fibre, also low in calories and fat.

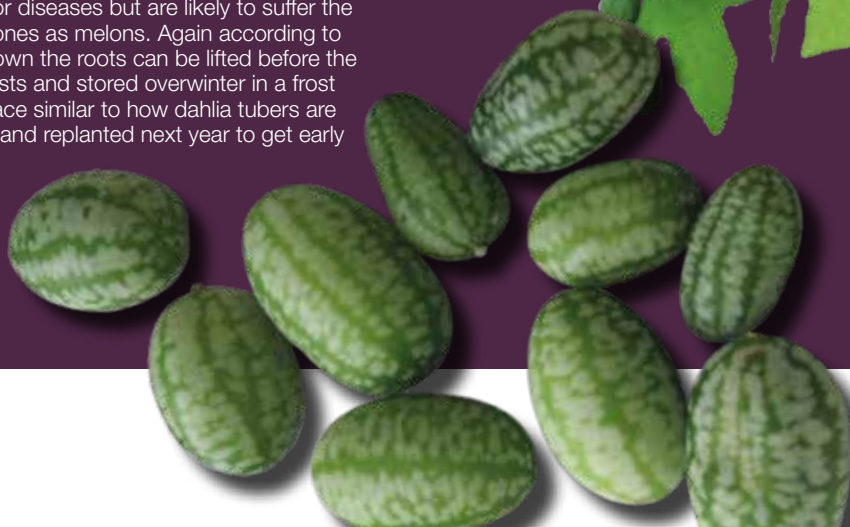
The plants are very rampant and will fill a small greenhouse if not controlled, they will trail if you have the space or climb if trained up canes or other supports. They will grow in greenhouses and polytunnels and I think they would be O.K grown as a trailing plant in

frames. In fact, one seed supplier states on their website the cucamelons can be grown outside during the summer in the U.K. and to save space in the greenhouse this may be worth a try.

Sow the seed as for melons in late March / early April to as late as May, once they have germinated train the young plants up a cane or they will all tangle together. Plant out as for melons, although allow at least a metre between plants. They can be grown on as for melons but seem to tolerate lower temperature better and do not need pollinating. They will fruit from July to September and should be picked when they are the size of a small grape; if left too long they go soft and have a bitter flavour.

They can be grown outdoors and I got a reasonable crop from two plants in containers outside my greenhouse last year.

From my experience they are not prone to pests or diseases but are likely to suffer the same ones as melons. Again according to D.T.Brown the roots can be lifted before the first frosts and stored overwinter in a frost free place similar to how dahlia tubers are stored and replanted next year to get early fruit.







# Why not try growing figs?

by Gerry Edwards FNVS

Contrary to popular belief figs will grow very well in this country and have so for hundreds of years. Although

they originate from warmer parts of the world such as Persia and Syria (where they were recorded as long ago as 2900 BC) they can be very long lived in this country even if, on occasion, they may be cut back severely by frosts. It is said that fig trees growing at Lambeth Palace were planted in the mid-16th Century despite being cut to the ground on several occasions by frost. There used to be a very successful fig garden at Tarring, near Worthing which is reputed to have been established in the mid eighteenth Century but in recent years it has been destroyed by developers, despite several attempts to preserve it as a deserved heritage feature.

Incidentally figs are classified into four groups overall of which the Common or Adriatic fig is the one that is of interest to us as it develops its fruit without pollination and does not rely on the services of the fig wasp (which will only survive in warmer climates) to pollinate it. So now you know - a useful piece of trivia!

Figs are ideal for growing at home

because, in my opinion, they are one of those fruits which can only be best enjoyed when picked ripe from the tree - as soon as they are picked they start to lose their flavour and this is often not appreciated by those who purchase their figs from the supermarket. To be honest eating a fig that is warm from the sun and freshly picked is almost like enjoying heaven (or something similar!) - utterly delicious in all respects and they do you good at the same time as they contain iron, calcium and Vitamins A and C. However, do not get carried away by eating too many as unpleasant side effects can occur!

Figs can be cultivated outdoors or under heated glass and it is possible to achieve two crops in a year if the latter method of cultivation is followed. Although figs will grow outdoors very well they are best grown in a warm position but be prepared to cover them if cold weather is forecast. In the colder areas of the country it is essential to grow the hardiest varieties if growing outdoors as it is very likely that they will be cut back by the cold weather unless fully protected. Such protection may either mean moving a potted tree under cover

where it is kept above freezing or the tree is wrapped in straw or similar.

Figs can be grown in pots or in the open ground and will do best in a warm, well drained position but will need



plenty of water in the summer. Figs naturally tend to grow large before they fruit well but, in the garden, they can be persuaded into fruiting at a very early stage by restricting their roots, planting them in a poorish soil and not feeding them. Root restriction is easy when growing in a pot but can be easily achieved in the ground by digging a hole and

---

*In the colder areas of the country it is essential to grow the hardiest varieties...*

---







*Ficus carica*

then lining it with paving slabs. The fig is then planted in the resulting hole and should soon be forced into fruiting. This root restriction must be continued, or the tree will cease to fruit in quantity. You have been warned!

Figs are usually grown as bushes, but fans are perhaps the ultimate way of growing them. Such a fan will certainly be a good-looking addition to a fruit garden or allotment and if trained against the wall of your house or shed it will add an air of distinction and when fruiting well it is a sight to behold. In the fig fruiting season, you will become very popular with friends, family and neighbours!

Above all figs are very easy to grow and perhaps need the least attention of any fruiting crop other than to keep them well watered if growing in a pot, giving them protection in cold weather and eating the resulting fruits! However, if you want to ensure that you have a regular and successful crop it is important to understand the fruiting pattern of figs in this country. The first and usually most successful crop begins its life as baby fruits produced in late summer at or around the tips of the young shoots. These baby fruits are very small - often smaller than peas - but if they are not affected by cold weather they will develop and ripen the following summer. If these baby fruits are not protected against cold weather, they will simply fall off.

It is highly possible that in the warmest areas of the country that never suffer from frosts or cold winds or where they are grown in very sheltered conditions figs need no further protection. However, I would not personally take the risk, particularly with

young trees, and lose all my crop. Baby fruits are again produced in the spring and these are unlikely to ripen if the fig is grown in the open as our summers are simply not long and warm enough. If this is the case these should be removed at the end of the summer to ensure that the tree puts all its resources in the overwintering fruits. If, on the other hand, you are growing your figs under glass and with some heat in late summer and early autumn you will be able to ripen these figs as well giving you a second crop. However, a word of warning - in my experience the first

crop will usually produce the finest fruits as all the tree's energy has been put into them. The second crop, whilst good, will not produce the same quality fruits.

Figs are generally very easy to maintain provided they are grown with a good root restriction. Pruning is mainly formative and then to keep them at whatever size is required. In early summer after the new shoots have grown out the growing point should be cut off when they have made four or five leaves. It is important that this pruning is done now as it will allow the shoots to ripen and then allow the baby fruits to form. If pruning takes place after this, you will either prune the crop off or cut away the shoots where the baby fruits will form.

A further prune can take place in late winter or early spring when all dangers of frost have passed. At this time all wood that is dead, diseased or damaged should be cut out and branches thinned out if necessary to produce a well-balanced tree. This is particularly important where figs are growing in pots as wind can cause pots to topple over if the branch structure is unbalanced. You should always aim to create a shrubby habit to a fig growing in a pot as this will make a more stable and attractive feature.

The experts will tell you to repot figs growing in pots every two years or so, but I do not subscribe to this! Why making gardening even harder and time consuming? Yes, attention should be paid to the pot you are growing your figs in - if you are growing in a very small pot and the tree has become quite big then you should consider a slightly larger pot and if roots are quite obviously being forced up out of the top of the pot or they break the pot you will need a slightly larger pot. However, in my experience figs can remain in their pots for up to five years if they are watered regularly and not allowed to grow into massive plants!

Figs are ready for picking as soon as they turn a little soft and start to hang downwards. Slight splitting of the fruits indicates absolute ripeness and occasionally a few drops of liquid exuded from the eye of the fruit will confirm this. As I noted earlier it is best to eat the fruits as soon as they are picked as they will quickly lose their flavour - in my



*Ficus carica*





Ficus in pots

experience picking from the tree and immediately eating them cannot be bettered!

So, what about varieties? It is essential to grow only the hardiest in colder situations and where absolute protection cannot be guaranteed. However, if you live in a warmer part of the country or can offer protection during colder weather by way of a greenhouse or a warm position there are several varieties which can be considered and reasonably easily acquired.

White Marseilles is one of the earliest figs to ripen and this will produce ripe fruits during August. The fruits are slightly rounder than most varieties and are large with a pale yellowish skin and have a transparent white flesh that is juicy and sweet. The tree is fairly hardy and can be grown outdoors but will need some protection during the colder months. It is an excellent variety for growing in pots and can be very decorative due to the colour of the fruits.

Brown Turkey is early as well but a little later than White Marseilles. It is probably the widest known and grown fig due to its exceptional hardy qualities. It is an easy

*It is perhaps the safest fig to grow in the colder parts of the country...*

variety to grow and is a very good cropper. The fruits are large, pear shaped, purplish brown in colour and have a deep red flesh that is very sweet and rich. It is another fig ideal for growing in pots and it is a moderate grower. It is

perhaps the safest fig to grow in the colder parts of the country but, nevertheless, it is a quality fig well worth growing anywhere.

Brunswick will ripen in late August and is another popular fig. It is; however, a fairly vigorous growing tree and it is essential that the roots are well restricted if a good crop is to be obtained. Like Brown Turkey it is very hardy which will allow it to be grown in colder areas although protection will be required to overwinter the young crop. The fruits are very large - the largest of any of the figs suitable for growing in this country - are pale green with a brownish flush and have an orange red flesh that has a good flavour, but which is only at its best when perfectly ripe.

White Ischia is a good August/September fig which is compact in growth and ideal for growing in pots. However, it is not hardy and must be given full protection in colder weather. The fruits are relatively small, are greenish white in colour with a reddish flesh that is very sweet and rich. This fig is well worth growing if protection is available as in my opinion the flavour is well worth the effort!

My final selection is a fig that must be grown in warmth, but which will repay this by producing fruits of exquisite quality and flavour. Bourjasotte Grise produces its crop late in the season, is ideal for growing in pots and is one of the most delicious figs and compares very well to those grown in more southerly climates. The fruits are fairly large and roundish, reddish purple in colour with a heavy bloom and has a reddish-brown flesh that is very sweet and rich. If you have a greenhouse that is warm in winter, you must try this fig - when you eat it you will dream of the Mediterranean!

Go on have a go at growing figs - but do not eat too many at one time!

# Virus in New Stock

by Jim Symonds

Some stocks of vegetables can become infected by virus (leeks, etc.), flowers, trees and shrubs can also be infected so we try to find virus free stock to prevent any weakening virus from infecting our new stock. Stock may become infected during the early stages of any new cultivar.

Some treatment with chemicals is possible, in my time "malachite Green" was tried in laboratory condition but not garden use. Heat treatment is used; I know with Chrysanthemums they use a hot and cold method. Also heating the air to 30°C to 40°C for four to six weeks (expensive) and precise treatment is critical. Meristem tip culture has been successful and is now fairly widely used for a number of plants including Dahlia, Rhubarb, carnation, Chrysanth, orchids, fruit and other plants. The addition of a chemical (Phoroglucinol) is used commercially but is not suitable for amateurs like me, so being a gardener I tried a mixture of wallpaper paste and added fungicide, brown sugar, seaweed extract and nutrient. I added this to a small sterilised bottle and then a small portion of leek meristem tip which I supported on cigarette paper and kept this in a warm area for four to six weeks. Some roots emerged but nothing moved when I transferred it to a stronger growing medium, but maybe I was in too big a hurry back in the 1980's. Now there are bio-chemical companies who will provide a service to free plants from virus.

We should also remember that virus free stock once in cultivation and subjected to all manner of weather conditions and sap sucking insects will be infected again. So if a new cultivar is very successful then old cultivars should be discarded, especially leeks, onions, chrysanth, Dahlias which carry virus and this leads to much genetic material being lost.

Being a Geordie leek man I tried recently to ask about a local leek cultivar called Tudhoe but could not obtain any information. I know thirty years is a long time but this plant was the best I've grown as it had thin flags, straight barrel and no virus. This loss must be true of many cultivars of other flowers and vegetables, once they are lost they are lost forever and so is the genetic material.

**REMIN**  
SOIL AND COMPOST REMINERALISER  
**volcanic rock dust**

*"Like giving a HUGE VITAMIN PILL to my garden"*

volcanicrockdust REMIN\_rockdust

**Tel: 01330 820914**  
jennifer@reminscotland.com  
**www.reminscotland.com**



# Perennial Vegetables, A New Beginning

by David Wall FNVS



Owing to immigrants wanting to access foods that they were used to before arriving in the UK, the expansion of world knowledge and plant breeding techniques; perennial vegetables are here to stay and are ever expanding in variety. Where formerly we had Jerusalem artichokes, asparagus and a few other odd things that could only be found in specialist nurseries around the world, now we have more than a few UK naturalised kales, collards, leeks, etc. Potato onions and perennial leeks are now very definitely back and there are lots of different tubers originating in places like Peru and shoots and leaves from countries like Japan and China etc. The lists of short and long term perennials are now truly enormous and ever growing. The UK already now has a breeding and development group for Oca and as other cultures are learned about, experienced and absorbed, we are now eating things like hostas, day lilies and dahlias without thought.

The only things holding this expansion back are really the awareness of traditional vegetable growers, and particularly supply, as there are few UK specialist suppliers and they are currently having to expand their plant stocks. However, as a quality vegetable specialist organisation, we need to be curious and know about these things. So, I will be bringing many of these to you in a series of articles and I hope that many of you will embrace at least a few items, both for your own use and because you are likely to come across them in the future; and although most don't seem to lend themselves to the show bench, as things develop they could certainly at least turn up at shows under 'any other vegetable' etc.

One of the main enemies of perennials is our habit of growing seasonally and tailoring this around an annual plan. You wouldn't be as severe with fruit - most of which is perennial. You might prune, divide, or tidy up dead leaves etc, but you would not just rip everything out and start again! The same can be said of many vegetables. If, instead of clearing out to avoid disease etc, we leave things in the ground, they will do their best to regenerate. This may be by seed, but is also often by spreading naturally by root. When I had to care for my wife, I needed to make my gardening a lot easier, so I researched perennial vegetables and adopted labour saving techniques. This, coupled with later enforced neglect because of caring duties, meant that I started to grow a few things, but then had to leave my garden alone, untidied! Now I have a Jersey Walking Stick Cabbage "tree" with several branches and a height of about eight feet, and a more sprawling Asturian Tree Cabbage. Both are five years old and still very vigorous. I also have many leeks, shallots, bunching onions, garlic and

elephant garlic, together with things like globe and Jerusalem artichokes, sea kale, sea beet, rockets, parsleys and other things and I am expanding the breadth of varieties this year.

You don't have to grow anywhere near everything of course. I choose not to grow potatoes, because I don't eat many of them, or carrots and some onions, because they are so cheap to buy. I also now only have a smallish town house garden, so I don't have endless room and can't grow asparagus and everything else that I might wish for. So, as always, only grow what you like to eat, or like to grow. But there are several "staples" that can be the base of your kitchen garden without very much work. The brassica family is now proven to produce anti cancer properties and loads of beneficial vitamins and minerals, so I suggest that we start here: Apart from nine-star perennial broccoli, all of the perennial kales, cabbages and collards produce loose leaves and these need different cooking methods to the much softer leafed headed cabbages that we grow as annuals. So, cook these as "collards" generally for longer than cabbages. I suggest sautéing onions, garlic and perhaps bacon, then adding the chopped brassica leaves (stripped from the leaf main rib) with a little stock and poaching until you are happy with the result. Or research other cooking methods and try kale chips and pesto etc. I have also made sauerkraut with them. Eating them raw in green smoothies gives even greater benefits. This family will keep you going with something fresh virtually all year. Some varieties will produce seed heads and I eat these as tender broccoli sprouting stems. The growing shoots of some varieties can be used like asparagus and of course you can also eat the leaves of Nine Star.

The perennial leafy brassicas tend to come as either very tall growing and needing strong and tall support, or mound producing, spreading over several feet in diameter. Named varieties now available in UK in the tall type are at least; Purple Tree Collard, Jersey Walking Stick, Tall Kale, Spis Bladene (Danish Tree Kale), Portuguese Tree Kale and Taunton Deane. The main low growing types are: Daubenton (both plain and variegated varieties,) and Ewiger kohl. And all of the wild cabbages (and naturalised "escapes") scattered around, mostly by the coast appear to be low growing, certainly, they don't have additional support. My Asturian Tree Cabbage is a tall type, but because I mis-planted it without sufficient, or high enough support, it typically folded over and re-rooted itself, - lower growing and self supporting, but not quite a mound. These perennials are all big plants and you won't need to grow every variety. Nine Star Perennial Broccoli appears to be the only heading perennial

variety now available, producing small white cauliflower type heads in late spring/summer, although some named commercial varieties will go through into at least a second year, there have been and still may be others and a great deal of breeding is going on. Seeds of some perennial kale varieties are available from several seed companies, but this family are all generally best propagated by the use of cuttings in late winter, or early spring. Cuttings are also taken to over-winter, in case the main plant is lost to frost, so the best time to get new plants is probably in early spring. Cuttings can be taken by cutting (or pulling off with a heel) a good, strong, new shoot growth. (Be careful to check that it is not just a seed bearing shoot, possible in some varieties like the Jersey Walking Stick and more likely in late spring or summer.) Trim the shoot to just beneath a leaf node, or trim the heel a little and plant it in a mixture of potting medium and grit. Some bottom heat and rooting gel helps, but is not really necessary. It is said that to keep them perennial, all flower heads should be removed from brassicas to prevent them setting seed, so as I said earlier, try eating any that are produced - they are lovely! All varieties are subject to the normal pests such as cabbage butterflies and clubroot etc and because you are only likely to buy the odd one or two of these they can be easily lost in the early stages to pigeons etc, so take particular care of your plants.

Because the Americans are far more used to tall kales and collards than we are, there is a tremendous wealth of Youtube videos on them. Just type in "Purple Tree Collards," or "growingyourgreens.com" etc. The most useful book that I have found on perennial vegetables is, "How to Grow Perennial Vegetables" by Martin Crawford, from [www.greenbooks.co.uk](http://www.greenbooks.co.uk) but although it is a 2012 book, he is already out of date with the varieties now available. The best and widest source of plants of most of these and other perennials that I have found is The Backyard Larder: [plants@backyardlarder.co.uk](mailto:plants@backyardlarder.co.uk) but you can generally find other suppliers by typing in the name of the variety you are looking for. The next article in this series will be on perennial alliums, which will include potato onions, which are just taking off in a huge way, and perennial leeks etc. I am most grateful to Alison Tindale of The Backyard Larder for her help in these articles. Please contact me if you wish to join, or help to start a permaculture group to share information, techniques, plants and recipes etc, particularly an NVS group.

**David Wall FNVS:**  
[dorsetnvs@hotmail.com](mailto:dorsetnvs@hotmail.com)



# National Vegetable Society

## 2017 Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 23rd September 2017 from 3.20 pm to 4.00 pm in the Perry Suite. The Three Counties Showground Malvern.

Approximately 120 members were present.

### 1. Welcome

John Branham (Chair) opened the AGM and welcomed our president along with everyone else present. The names of fellow members who had sadly passed away over the past 12 months was read out. This was followed by a minute's silence.

Branch	Name	Comments
Southern	Jenny Hennessey (nee Worsfold)	Member of the Strategic Working Group.
Southern	Alan Buller	Long-time Southern Branch Judge (and Son of Silver & Gold medallist, Ray Buller)
Welsh	Keith Roberts	Previously Welsh Branch Secretary, Chairman & National Chairman
Scottish	Robert Hannant	Long standing Scottish Branch member and @ age 96, oldest member of the North of Scotland DA
Scottish	George Cumming Snr	Scottish Branch member, was still showing shallots at 95.
Scottish	Robert Lind	Scottish Branch Committee member, Judge and also awarded the NVS Silver medal in 2011
Scottish	Tommy Hardwick	Scottish Branch member
Scottish	Doc DA Perry	Was Scottish Branch member (membership no. 1)
Scottish	Mrs Kelly McCallum	Scottish Branch member
Scottish	Leonard Linton	Scottish Branch Member from Fife (just passed away on Saturday)
Midlands	Norman Blackley	A member since the 1960s, passed his judges exam in 1970s

John address the AGM with his speech (See attached)

### 2. Apologies for Absence.

Ann Whiffen (Wales)

### 3. President's address.

Medwyn Williams addressed the AGM (See attached)

### 4. Election of positions.

To consider the election of the following positions

Positions were read out by the secretary and accepted by the AGM with no objections.

Position	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
President	Medwyn Williams FNVS	A. Edwards FNVS	G. Cathro FNVS
Vice Presidents	En Bloc W T A Burrows FNVS I Garland FNVS M H Evans FNVS G P McSkimming FNVS G Cathro FNVS W. Thornton FNVS	I. Mace FNVS	B. Brown FNVS
National Treasurer	Denis Barry FNVS	G. Cathro FNVS	I. Simpson
Assistant Secretary	Mark Hall FNVS	I. Simpson	F. Shenfield FNVS
National Editor	Kelvin Mason FNVS	I. Clemens FNVS	S. Hall FNVS
Webmaster	Emily Plumb FNVS	B. Newman FNVS	I. Clemens FNVS
Chairman	Vacant		
PR & Marketing	Vacant		

Grant Cathro has agreed to take on the role of chairing the trustees meetings on a temporary basis within his present office of vice chair. He then gave a short speech. (See attached)

Medwyn Williams presented John Branham with a small gift as outgoing chair.

### 5. Minutes of the 2016 AGM.

These minutes were published in July 2017 Simply vegetables magazine.

Proposed Nick Anderson (Midlands) Seconded Ivor Mace (Wales) minutes accepted with no objections.

### 6. Matters Arising.

The where no matters arising.

### 7. To receive the Annual Report of the Trustees for 2016/17.

Fiona Shenfield deliver the Annual Report of Trustees. See attached report.

### 8. To receive the Annual Report and Accounts for 2016

Dennis Barry Pointed out that the audited accounts had been published in the July simply vegetables magazine. He thanks the branch chairs for their help along with Robert Miller and our independent Examiner.

### 9. To consider the Election of an Independent Examiner

Agreed that the independent examiner Cutler & Co. Chartered Certified accountants Leeds, be accepted

### 10. Any other business.

Grant Cathro asked the AGM if we should reprint society's the achieve book "The first 21 years" there was little interest shown in reprinting this book.

With no further business members were thanked for attending and the meeting was closed.

The presentation of trophies and awards followed the AGM.

Copies of attached reports can be obtained from the assistant secretary

Minutes by MARK HALL. BEM.FNVS. September 2017





# The National Vegetable Society

## Annual Report of the Trustees for 2016/17

### Governance

The Trustees and Branch representatives of the Society have met on 4 occasions in the past 12 months at a central venue in Crewe. Covering various topic including

- Society communications,
- financial performance,
- website, marketing and promotions at national events and shows,
- Directory & Data Base
- Judges & exhibitors Guide
- membership levels, direct debit
- membership data base

Further to 2016's AGM and throughout the year, the composition of the Executive Officers remained stable, however, as you are aware, John Branham, who took on the role as Chairman for 2016/17 has decided to stand down and we currently do not have any nominations to stand as chair for 2017/18 going forward.

You will have also seen from the Agenda that we remain with a vacant position for the role in media relations. The Trustees will review this role and its potential requirement going forward,

### Communication

Our quarterly Simply Vegetables magazine (edited by Kelvin Mason) and the NVS website (maintained by web manager Emily Plumb) continue to remain our flagship communication vehicles.

The NVS website continues to be well maintained and, Emily has done a superb job in maintaining the website, whilst we consider alternative new arrangements.

We are confident that with continued focus and investment, both the SV Magazine & the NVS Web will continue to provide a modern image and improved service going forward.

Please remember that we do rely to a large extent on regular articles and news items submitted by the membership so please ensure that you do your bit to help keep both the SV and web site current, correct and up to date.

### NVS Membership

Our Membership Registrar, Neil Hope and the four Branch Secretaries reported a decline in overall membership over last year, the current membership stands at 2272, and a decline of 6.3% over this date in 2016. (All branches experienced a slight decline)

There have not been any new Membership Initiatives via our major Sponsors in the past year, although we do continue to attract a few new Memberships via their Catalogues or Magazines.

We do continue to attract new Memberships via our presence at Shows and the Web-site, but we continue to experience each year that approximately 14% of our overall membership don't renew their Membership on an Annual basis at year-end.

To help encourage on-going renewals & in response to membership requests, we are this year, offering an annual Membership Renewal process via a Direct Debit process, which we have outsourced to a Specialist Bureau to action this on our behalf. The relevant Direct Debit Mandate forms will be included together with the usual Renewal Forms in the forthcoming (Autumn) Issue of our quarterly Magazine 'Simply Vegetables' in October. These should be returned to the relevant Branch Membership Secretaries in the normal way, we are providing options of a small number of various repayment dates to reflect the historical dates on which renewals have been received in the past. There are strict Banking rules regarding the implementation and administration of Direct Debit, which as a Society we will be fully complying with.

By providing a Direct Debit Facility we also anticipate in reducing the workload of our Branch Membership Secretaries in the future, so we encourage our Members to use this facility for their 2018 and onward membership renewals. For your information, any existing Standing Orders are not affected, and the additional option of renewing via the NVS Website remains in place.

Also in preparation for streamlining Membership Administration with a potential new single Membership Database, from October onwards the existing membership numbers will be expanded to 5 digits, with a

Branch specific prefix applied to continue to enable Specific Branch identification and associated financial accounting to continue as at present.

We are also grateful for members who provide us with their e-mail addresses (and keep this information up to date) this speeds up communication and reduces costs and administration accordingly.

Our Gift Aid Claim for 2016 was processed in February 2017 and this resulted in an overall claim of approximately £4,422 being received, all of which was transferred back to the relevant Branches. Our thanks go to the Northern Branch Treasurer Robert Miller who has continued to process and submit this annual claim on behalf of the Society. Thanks also go to our members who sign the relevant Gift Aid form and allow us to continue to make this Gift Aid claim from HMRC.

### Society Awards 2017

This year, we have awarded x13 Fellowship awards, 4 Silver Awards, 7 Gold medals and x1 Martin Robinson award

Congratulations to all of the recipients of these NVS awards, they are all well deserved.

I'm glad to say that we have a number of recipients in attendance today and the awards will be presented at the end of the AGM. For those unable to attend today, we have arranged local presentations.

The recipients are listed within this report however I shall share the details as part of the awards presentation later on.

### NVS Fellowships –

Branch	Name	Attending the AGM / award ceremony
Midlands	Mr Michael Ross	No
Northern	Mr Robert Mason	Yes
Northern	Mrs Sandra McNicholls	No
Northern	Mr Geoffrey Wilson	No
Northern	Mr Brian Potter	No
Northern	Mrs Janet Abel	Yes
Scottish	Mr Alan Yates	No
Southern	Mr Ian Clemens	Yes
Southern	Mr Kelvin Mason	Yes
Welsh	Mr Andrew Jones	Yes
Welsh	Mrs Anne Whiffen	Yes
Welsh	Mr Rob Holmes	Yes
Welsh	Ms Sue McCall	Yes

### Silver Medallist –

Midlands	Mr Robert (Bob) Oliver	Yes
Northern	Mr Keith Abel	Yes
Northern	Mr Kevin Knowles	No
Midlands	Mr Michael Davies	Yes

### Gold Medallists –

Midlands	Mrs Sandra Hall	Yes
Northern	Mr Geoffrey Butterworth	Yes
Scottish	Mr Neil Drummond	No
Scottish	Mr Leslie (Les) Craib	No
Southern	Mr John Trim	No
Welsh	Mr Emlyn Thomas	Yes
Welsh	Mr Ivor Mace	Yes

### Martin Robinson Award –

Midlands	Newent Onion Show	Yes	Yes
----------	-------------------	-----	-----

NB This award will be received by Mr Michael Davies



## NVS Judges

The Trustees are very grateful to the team of members that set, facilitate and mark the Judge's examination each year, led by Jim Williams (Chairman of the Judges Examination Board) and assisted by Malcolm Evans and Ivor Mace.

Of the 19 members who sat the exam in October 2016, 15 passed;

We wish them well in their respective areas and would encourage more members to come forward, learn more and become involved in this challenging but rewarding occupation.

The Judges exam is held once a year in October, (2017 is October 7th) and comprises of both a practical and theory exam. To aid in preparation, the details regarding the exam were sent out to each branch by Jim Williams on 5th September. Please note that due to the examination preparation having been carried out in January this year, the Judges exam will be as per the 2nd amendment Judges guide (Mar 2015)

## Highlights in 2016/17

The 2016 National Championships held at Carmarthen last year and hosted by the Welsh Branch were very successful.

We are grateful to the Welsh Branch's show team for making it such a great event and social evening.

## Publications

Last year, the "Getting Started" Recipe book was launched and the "Getting Started on the Show bench Book" was updated and re-printed.

The Recipe book has been selling well, especially where some Branches have baked some of the cake recipes and provided tasters for the public to "try before you buy".

It was decided that we would not, however produce any new book titles in 2017. Potential new topics will be considered again next year.

The NVS Judges Guide received a revamp. Now titled the *Judges & Exhibitors Guide*, this new edition took many hours of work and analysis with help from a number of our top growers and judges and has since been published.

In 2017, I commenced with the update of the NVS Directory. During this process, I initiated the creation of our first directory database which helped flag up anomalies and provided us with a baseline for ease of future updates as well as providing a useful tool for each Branch Secretary. The Directory format was also reviewed and changed to provide unique Branch sections for ease of printing. The directory was published on the web site in July with a plan to maintain it throughout the year (probably updated on the web site 4 times per year). I would like to thank all those who helped conduct checks to help improve accuracy, especially our membership Secretaries who worked hard in the background on my many queries.

## Sponsorship

Sponsorship is now under the leadership of Gareth Cameron who works tirelessly for the Society to work with our sponsors, potential sponsors and partners and to come up with new ideas and agreements in how we better work together in the interest of growing vegetables. Thankyou Gareth.

## Focus areas for the future

We do however need to ensure that we continue invest to support the NVS's charitable objectives which are;

a) To advance the education of the public in the cultivation and improvement of vegetables.

b) To advance the knowledge of and further public interest in vegetables by the publication of information, by exhibition, by stimulating research and experiment and by awarding prizes open to public competition.

So please ensure that you and your local Branches and DA's consider and take action to support this regularly.

And finally, the NVS has had another eventful 12 months culminating in some with some high quality Branch and National shows and we look forward to further successes over the next year as we work to further stabilise, standardise & hopefully grow and focus on new ideas to take us forward. We do require a new chairman and would appreciate some serious thought being given to this matter.

We look forward to our 2018 National Championships, which will be held at Harrogate on Sept 14th / 15th / 16th.

**Fiona Shenfield FNVS**

**National Secretary, September 2017.**

National Vegetable Society  
Registered Charity No. 19088979

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

4.00pm, Friday 14th September 2018

The Great Yorkshire Show Ground, Harrogate

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for Absence
3. President's Address
4. To consider the election of the following positions ;

Position	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
President	Medwyn Williams FNVS	Grant Cathro	Arwyn Edwards
Vice President (existing)	En Bloc W T A Burrows FNVS W. Thornton FNVS I Garland FNVS M H Evans FNVS G P McSkimming FNVS G Cathro FNVS	David Metcalf	Arwyn Edwards
Vice President (new)	N. Hope FNVS	Grant Cathro	Medwyn Williams
Chairman	NOTE 1		
Vice Chairman	NOTE 1 & 2		
Membership Registrar	NOTE 1		
General Secretary	Fiona Shenfield FNVS	Grant Cathro	Mark Hall

*NOTE 1 At time of SV submission (May 11th), no nominees had been received.*

*NOTE 2 Grant Cathro advised that he is standing down as Vice Chairman a year early for health reasons.*

5. Minutes of the 2017 AGM (held in Malvern)
6. Matters Arising
7. Annual Report of the Trustees for 2017/2018 - Secretary's Report
8. Annual Report and Accounts for 2017 -Treasurer's Report
9. To consider the election of the Independent Examiner  
Existing Accountants ; Cutler & Co. Chartered Certified accountants, Leeds).
10. Recommendation to increase Memberships Fees to support Branches;  
Individual Membership currently £17, increase to £20  
Joint membership/Societies currently £19, increase to £22  
(Education & Junior Members to remain as is)
11. Any Other Business (to be submitted in writing to the National Secretary by 17th August 2018)

**2018 National Championships Judges awards  
& Trophy Presentations and NVS Awards  
presentations will follow the AGM.**



# THE NATIONAL VEGETABLE SOCIETY

## 2016 Balance Sheet Summary

	2017	2016
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Sound Equipment at cost	1	1
Depreciation		
Trophies	211	211
<b>Total Net Fixed Assets</b>	212	212
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Stocks of books and merchandise etc.	19193	21512
Prepayment	771	746
Bank Balances:		
In Board of Trustees and Branches		
Current Accounts	77536	76783
Deposit Accounts	30236	30020
Investment Accounts		
Deposit Account for National Champs contingency		
Building Society Holderness Acc		
In District Associations	87198	84508
Cash in hand		
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	214934	213569
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Subscriptions and Fundraising in advance	-16167.30	-19747.00
Creditors falling due within one year	-1500.00	-1500.00
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	197266	192322
	197266	
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>197478.00</b>	<b>192534</b>
<b>RESERVES</b>		
General		104087
Designated - National Championships	5000	5000
Restricted	85747	
Holderness		542
District Associations		82904
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	197478	192533

These accounts were approved by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

Chairman	Hon Treasurer
Date	Date

### Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017(continued)

<b>5. Governance</b>		
	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Postage	170	#N/A!
Printing, stationery and publicity	95	#N/A!
Room Hire	1241	1169
Travel	4635	3644
Insurance	746	#N/A!
Examiners fee	1500	1750
	8387	#N/A!



## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st December 2017

	General Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2017	
Incoming Resources			2017	2016
Incoming Resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income	79165	776	79941	92332
Activities for generating funds	5851	31177	37028	32487
Bank Interest	185	75	260	421
Incoming Resources from charitable activities				
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>85201</b>	<b>32028</b>	<b>117229</b>	<b>125240</b>
Resources Expended				
Cost of generating funds				
Fundraising trading: cost of goods sold and other costs	4645	7283	11928	8476
Charitable Activities	70067	21903	91970	99335
Governance	8387		8387	8008
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>83099</b>	<b>29186</b>	<b>112285</b>	<b>115819</b>
Net incoming resources		2842	4944	9442
Total funds brought forward				
Nat Exec and Branches	104087		104087	93117
Holderness				542
District Associations		82905	82905	844533
Championship Reserve				5000
Totals	111189	86289	197478	192534
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>111189</b>	<b>86289</b>	<b>197478</b>	<b>192534</b>





# Mycorrhizae

by Kelvin Mason

Members will recall that a couple of years ago Mick Poultney wrote an article about mycorrhizae in *Simply Vegetables*, my aim with this article is to update you on the information now available on these valuable fungi. Since Mick wrote his article there has been a lot of research and more information is becoming available and will continue to do so over the coming years. New books have recently been published and new research papers are coming out at regular intervals.

Just briefly for new members or those who do not remember Mick's article I will give a brief outline of about mycorrhizae and the history of our knowledge on them. Mycorrhizae were first discovered in 1885 by a German scientist called Albert Frank when he compared the growth of Pine trees in different growing media. Our knowledge did not really move on for the next 100 years, although scientists were aware of them they did not fully understand what they did, how they grow and their relationship with the host plants. In fact, some people regarded them as possible diseases apart from the edible types. But it is now known that there are more good types than bad, examples of the good are mycorrhizae, the bio-pesticides like *Trichoderma* that can be used to control some diseases and *Verticillium lecanii* which will control some pests like whitefly. Fungi also help to decompose plant waste to make compost and organic matter.

It is only in the last few years that it was known that between 80% to 95% of plants form a symbiotic relationship with mycorrhizae fungi and this includes many vegetables and fruits. The fungi provide the plants with some water and nutrients the plants cannot access and in return the plants give the fungi carbohydrates. It is also believed that some mycorrhizae give the plant a resistance to some root diseases and also drought, as well as improved yields. One of the nutrient mycorrhizae help the plant to take up is phosphate which means less phosphate fertiliser is required.

Some well-maintained soils will already contain mycorrhizae but many soils will not, if the top soil has been neglected or badly treated the mycorrhizae may have been killed. Soils on building sites, old industrial areas or if large amounts of fungicides have been applied will have low or no mycorrhizae present.

It is said that a teaspoon of good soil can contain several meters of fungal hyphae that are invisible to the naked eye, some of these will be mycorrhizae. Because they are so small the fungal hyphae can grow into spaces that plant roots cannot and therefore access water and nutrients the plant cannot.

Mycorrhizae fungi are symbiotic and mutualistic as they derive their carbon from the plant in exchange for nutrient and water. They are

also capable of breaking down organic matter obtaining substances useful to the plant and helping in the decomposition process.

Having said earlier that mycorrhizae are microscopic some species produce fruiting bodies like mushrooms (morels) and truffles; these produce spores which help them to spread. The mycelium can spread over large areas and it is reputed that there is one in the USA (Oregon's Blue Mountains) that covers 2384 acres (965 hectares) and is estimated to be over 2400 years old. This is likely to be in uncultivated soil possible in a forest which has allowed the mycelium to spread so well. Mycorrhizae fungi have been around for over 450 million years and it is believed they helped plants to evolve from the sea to land.

Plants that require a mycorrhizae relationship will not thrive without it, but will struggle and possibly die without reaching maturity or only produce a small crop. There are some plants that are facultative, that is they can grow without the mycorrhizae but grow better with it especially if stressed. Plants that have a mycorrhizae relationship

can withstand drought better as over 50 times more water can be available to the plants and the fungus can store some of it. The plants can withstand other environmental stresses better such as a shortage of nutrients, as the mycorrhizae give better access to phosphate, nitrogen, iron, copper and zinc.

Mycorrhizae fungi can also give some defence against root diseases as it creates a barrier around the roots which prevents the disease

getting access to the plants roots and infecting them. Also the mycorrhizae compete with the disease fungus for nutrients and water so this inhibits their growth and survival. The following diseases can be reduced by the use of mycorrhizae *Fusarium*, *Rhizoctinia*, *Pythium* and *Phytophthora* as well as the stem disease *Verticillium*, these are all well-known diseases of certain crops. It is said that that mycorrhiza gives the plant some defence against some foliar diseases but I am not sure how this works.

There is some evidence that mycorrhizae infected plants can resist attack from some parasitic nematodes (eelworms) and further research is being carried out to find the extent of resistance.

Because the plants produce more biomass they have increased numbers of flowers and fruits and higher yielding vegetable crops.

Mycorrhizae also improve the soil structure by helping to form crumbs and a more open structure. As the hyphae grow through the soil they bind soil particles together to form crumbs which improves the structure especially clay soils. They also produce sticky exudates that bind small soil particles into water stable aggregates (crumbs) that will withstand normal rain showers; this is useful on silt and clay soils.

---

*Some well-maintained  
soils will already contain  
mycorrhizae*

---



**empathy**  
the bioorganic garden

**rootgrow™**  
mycorrhizal fungi  
"Every plants  
lifelong partner"



If you are growing vegetables this season, given the choice, would you grow your vegetables with chemicals or would you use the natural power of pure biology? The choice is yours.

Find out more at [www.rootgrow.co.uk](http://www.rootgrow.co.uk)  
 01795 411527 | [orders@plantworksuk.co.uk](mailto:orders@plantworksuk.co.uk)

Manufactured under the Licence granted by the Royal Horticultural Society  
Registered Charity No 222879/50382262



Supplying mycorrhizal fungi since 1998

## Endo Mycorrhizal Transplanter

Suitable for seeds, plugs and containerised plants

Used by championship vegetable growers



Buy online at  
[www.bioorganicgarden.co.uk](http://www.bioorganicgarden.co.uk)  
 Or call our helpline **01428 685762**

## TNC Mycorr<sup>Max</sup> Mycorrhizal inoculant

Beneficial fungi, bacteria and biological stimulants to promote strong and healthy growth

- Bigger yields
- Increase drought tolerance
- Promotes vigorous growth
- Boosts immune defences
- Contains Trichoderma & beneficial bacteria



**01706 358 855**

[nigel@thenutrientcompany.com](mailto:nigel@thenutrientcompany.com)



The Nutrient Company rooted in purity

[www.thenutrientcompany.com](http://www.thenutrientcompany.com)



As more is discovered about mycorrhizae it is getting slightly confusing knowing how many types there are, but put simply there are two main types:

Endomycorrhizal – these penetrate the plants cell wall but do not fully enter the cells, these are the most common in vegetables, grasses, flowers some shrubs and some trees.

Ectomycorrhizal – these do not penetrate the cell walls and are more widely seen in conifers, oaks and some other deciduous trees.

The endomycorrhizal types are sub-divided into three main groups:

Arbuscular – this is the most common type and it is believed there are about 230 species that form relationships with over 400,000 different plants including liverworts and mosses.

Ericoid – these form a mutualistic symbiotic relationship with plants in the Ericaceous family such as Rhododendrons, heathers, Pieris, Pernettya, etc. and fruit wise the genus Vaccinium which includes the Blueberries and cranberries. These are all plants that grow in acid soils and the mycorrhizae helps them to thrive when other plants cannot.

Orchid – this group form a relationship with the many species of orchid without which many orchids would not grow. The relationship starts when the orchid seed germinates.

There are two other endomycorrhizal types, the Arbutoid which forms a relationship with the shrub Arbutus which is where its name comes from. The other type is the monotropoid and these form a relationship with some deciduous trees.

*The other type is the monotropoid and these form a relationship with some deciduous trees.*

Going back to the ectomycorrhizal type these evolved approx. 250 million years ago and are the younger of the two main types. There are reputed to be several thousand species but they only form relationships with about 5% of plants. Many of the ectomycorrhizal fungi produce mushrooms near to their host plants and a lot of these are edible. They tend to grow on soils that are acidic (low pH) and their relationship is mainly with trees including pines, birch, myrtle, beech and up to 25,000 other species mainly conifers.

Interestingly from a vegetable growing point of view there are a few families that do not appear to have a relationship with mycorrhiza. These include the Brassicaceae (cabbage family including cauliflowers, broccoli, calabrese, Brussels sprouts etc.) and the Chenopodiaceae which include the beetroot and spinach; so it is not worth treating these plants with mycorrhizae fungus.

Moving onto the use of mycorrhizae they have been available since the 1990's but more are available now and more will be out over the next few years, certainly there are more on sale in the USA than over here. As more is learnt about them their use will increase and they will become as common in use as fertilisers are today. In fact, the use of mycorrhizae will reduce the amount of fertiliser required as they make some nutrients more available to the plants. It is reported that arbuscular mycorrhizae can make up to four times more phosphate available to the plant and provide up to 80% of the plant's needs.

There is also some evidence that mycorrhizae can encourage the plant to produce more hormones which helps with plant growth.

#### The following plants have been shown to form a relationship with: Arbuscular Mycorrhizae

Basil	fennel	pepper
Beans	leek	potato
Carrot	melon	pumpkin
Celery	onion	sage
Chives	parsley	tomato
Sweet corn	parsnip	courgettes
Cucumber	pea	
Fruits include:		
Apple	cranberry	pear
Apricot	currants	raspberry
Blackberry	gooseberry	strawberry
Blueberry	grape	
Cherry	peach	

**At present in the U.K there is a limited supply of products containing mycorrhizae fungi but these should increase over the next few years, the following is from work carried out in the USA and it shows the affect various species of mycorrhizae have on some vegetable plants. When they are available for sale in the U.K they will be sold under a trade name but it is likely the species in the pack will be listed on the pack or instructions.**

#### Asparagus

Inoculating the plants with Glomus R10 and Rhizophagus intraradices gave bigger plants with more shoots and a better survival rate. Using Diversispora versiformis increased the levels of phosphorus and other nutrients taken up; and Gigaspora marginata and Claroideoglomus etunicatum gave increased growth and nutrient uptake.

#### Basil

Seedlings inoculated with mycorrhizae gave a 400% increase in plant size after they were transplanted. It is reported that basil has a relationship with up to 15 different species of mycorrhizae fungi.

#### Sweet Corn

Two mycorrhizae increased the root growth of sweet corn these are Funneliformis mosseae and Rhizophagus fasciculatus and this resulted in bigger plants and better drought resistance.

#### Cucumber

Again two fungi were tried with cucumber these being Funneliformis mosseae and Rhizophagus intraradices and this gave better phosphorous uptake.

#### Aubergine

Claroideoglomus etunicatum delayed infection from Verticillium wilt and yielded more and bigger fruit.

#### Grapes

Inoculation with Rhizophagus fasciculatus, Funneliformis mosseae and Glomus macrocarpum increased the yields, height and nutrient uptake of the plants as well as giving better drought resistance.

#### Lettuce

Lettuce are colonised by Funneliformis mosseae, Glomus deserticola and Rhizophagus fasciculatus this resulted in the plants taking up more nitrogen and improve phosphorus uptake.

#### Onion

Mycorrhizae gave better uptake of phosphorus.

#### Peppers

Rhizophagus fasciculatus gave the best results when trialled with peppers giving increased growth and possible better phosphorus uptake.

#### Potato

In its place of origin, the Andes in South America, eight species of mycorrhizae colonise potatoes; the three most common are Funneliformis mosseae, Rhizophagus irregularis and a species of Claroideoglomus. Inoculation gives an increase in the number and size of tubers which can be up to 50% on some soils. It is suggested that different mycorrhizae species be tested on different cultivars of potato as they may react differently some giving great effect than others.

#### Strawberry

Rhizophagus intraradices gave healthier plants with more runners and plant growth.

#### Tomato

The use of mycorrhizae gave bigger plants in height and weight, also the use of Funneliformis mosseae appears to reduce the effects from nematodes or at least allowed the plants to survive better.

My apologies for using the Latin names but when they become available in the U.K it is the only way to be sure you are getting the right fungi. If the wrong ones are used, they will not harm your plants but will not improve them either.

# Monkton Leek, Vegetable and Floral Society History

by Tom Powell



Monkton Leek, Vegetable & Floral Society Committee 1864

Early horticultural shows began to become popular in the first half of the 19th Century. As gardeners wished to measure their achievements against other enthusiasts Horticultural Shows came to the fore, both locally and nationally. In the 1830's the 'Gardeners' Magazine reported that Horticultural Societies doubled in number. In the first half of the 19th Century size was almost the only criteria for judging vegetables. There were significant sociological aspects of shows, many of the best vegetables exhibited came from individual cottage gardens but the best floral and fruit exhibits were won by professional gardeners employed by wealthy families. Amongst the working class in the North East of England there was an emphasis upon showing leeks, an interest apparently developed through the influx of Welsh miners into the region's Collieries. With the formation of the Royal Horticultural Society in 1861 formal rules were set for judging the quality of vegetables at the Horticultural Shows.

Although it has not been possible to trace the origins of the Monkton Leek, Vegetable and Floral Society back to the early part of the 19th Century the Society was in existence in 1863 as evidenced by a photograph of the Committee in 1864. At this time Monkton was an isolated rural community to the south of Jarrow. During the early years the Society's Annual Shows were held at the Robin Hood public house at Hedworth due to the lack of facilities in Monkton. The Society later moved to the Lord Nelson public house in Monkton following its rebuilding in the 1930's, where the Annual Show was held in a large marquee to the rear of the property. These arrangements have continued into the 21st Century. At the beginning of the Second World War the show was organised in the local school as it was felt that the marquee would draw the attention of enemy aircraft who were seeking to bomb the nearby Monkton Coke Works. After the war the annual show returned to the grounds of the Lord Nelson Inn.

During the 1890's the Monkton Leek, Vegetable and Floral Society coexisted with other Horticultural Societies in Jarrow. On 17th August 1894 The District and Horticultural Society Gala and Fair was held at the Palmer sports ground at Monkton. On 18th September 1996 the newly formed Jarrow, Hebburn, Monkton and Hedworth Leek and Vegetable Society held its first Annual Show in the Co-op Hall in the Market Square in Jarrow. Over the years these societies have not stood the test of time.

The Society has received a number of cups from local benefactors over the years. Following the end of the First World War in 1918 the Society received a silver trophy from Colonel C. Innes Hopkins of Ryton village. This was to be presented to the member of the Society who won the Leek Section of the show. In 1923 Mr. W. Muir, a blacksmith in Palmer's shipyard, who lived in Wood Terrace, Monkton village, won the cup for the third time. As a result the cup was retained by him. In 1964 the cup was returned to the Society by Alan Muir, the







Flowers 2017



Leeks 2017



Vegetables 2017

grandson of W. Muir and is now presented to the member who attains the most points in the show. In 1936 Colonel Robert Chapman of Westoe Village, South Shields provided a silver trophy to the Society which has been presented to the winner of the Leek section of the Show to the present day.

The show was strongly supported during the interwar years. Whilst the Society continued in existence the Annual Show did not take place during the latter war years. Following the end of the Second World War the Society sought to put the Annual Show on a firm footing. Whole families exhibited at the show including husbands, wives and children. In addition to the normal leek, vegetable and floral classes there were Agricultural Sections including five ears of Corn, of Barley, Wheat and Oats respectively; two field turnips and six eggs. Stan Hall a local farmer, milk producer and auctioneer auctioned off the vegetables on the Monday evening on the closure of the show. Following the austerity of the war years most families had access to land where they grew vegetables for the table. With increasing prosperity there was a growth in horticultural shows in all the pubs and Working Men's Clubs in the area. The first prize for Leeks in the Working Mens' Clubs were of considerable value. In 1960 the Society made efforts to raise funds to offset the competition from other shows. Jack Stonehouse proposed that a 'Tote Double' be run on a weekly basis where Society members had to sell a number of tickets, proceeds of which were to go to the financing of the Annual Show. This proved a huge success and membership of the Society flourished rising from forty-two members to a ceiling of seventy-two members. This latter number was determined by the size

of the marquee and the number of exhibits. During the 1960's into the 1970's the Show flourished and became one of, if not, the premier Society Show in the North East of England. This was in no small measure due to the horticultural abilities of George 'Pip' Stonehouse who was a renowned Leek, Vegetable and Floral exhibitor, having won the National Pot Leek Society, The Evening Chronicle Shows and many other open shows. The Society's Annual Show drew in a considerable number of visitors and on many occasions the village was gridlocked with traffic. "Pip's" reputation attracted other quality growers to the Society. This in itself led to a BBC Documentary programme "The Land of the Giant Leeks" being made about the village and the Society's Annual Show.

Whilst in recent years almost all the horticultural shows in the local pubs and clubs have disappeared the Monkton Leek, Vegetable and Floral Society has continued to prosper. It has currently some fifty members. At the Annual Show the quality of produce shown still reflects the high standards set in earlier years. The Society and the Annual Show is still very much community based, supporting local charities along with extended events like the Annual Band Fest held in the marquee prior to the Annual Society Show. The Monkton Festival now incorporates the Band Fest and the Society Show and is supported by the local CAF.

Throughout its existence the Show has been well supported by all of the local villagers, including many of the tenant

farmers. Two of the original Committee members have been identified on the photograph of 1864. Mr Wallace, who held the Tenancy of Grange Farm at the time, has been identified as the third figure from the left. Caleb Moses has been identified as the figure on the extreme right and was the publican/ blacksmith at the original Lord Nelson Inn. Local family names proliferate down through the years.

The recent purchase of the silver cup at Anderson and Garlands Auctioneers has proven to be the missing link in the Society's history over the past one hundred years. The cup was presented to Monkton Leek, Vegetable and Floral Society by Edmund Richardson in 1924. The Richardson family lived in The Grange, a Georgian house situated in the centre of Monkton Village in the 1870s. The Richardson's were chemical manufacturers in Jarrow and owned the Springwell Paper Mill next to the River Don. Edmund Richardson was later to live in Monkton Lodge, near to the Paper Mill.

Three cups have been presented to the winner of the Leek Section of the Society's Annual Show over the past one hundred years namely:

Colonel C. Innes Hopkins 1918-1923

Edmund Richardson 1924- 1935

Colonel Robert Chapman 1936- to the present day

It can only be presumed that the Edmund Richardson Cup was retained by W F Hedley in 1935 following his third win in the Leek Section, as occurred with the Innes Hopkins Cup in 1923. Such is the local support for and interest in the Monkton Leek, Vegetable and Floral Society that two brothers, Steven and Alan Hogg, bought the cup on behalf of the Society, even though they are not members themselves. The tradition of local benefactors to the Society continues into the 21st century.



Vegetables 2017

*Throughout its existence the Show has been well supported by all of the local villagers...*

## The Cup

Presented by Edmund Richardson Esq. to Monkton Leek, Vegetable and Floral Society 1924.

Won By:

1924 F. Hamilton	1930 J.P. Timney
1925 F. Harris	1931 J. Gregory
1926 W.F. Hedley	1932 J. Gregory
1927 W.F. Hedley	1933 A. McInnes
1928 J. Smith	1934 J. Smith
1929 J. Smith Jnr	1935 W.F. Hedley





# Seasonal Jobs

by Derek Brooks FNVS

**July 2018**

All the seeds I mentioned for sowing the last two months in the previous *Simply Vegetables* can still be sown. I sow cabbages,

cauliflowers and broccoli for winter use the same way as for the summer varieties. I put 3 or 4 seeds in a 3 inch (7.5 cm.) pot and reduce them to one when they germinate. When these pots are full of roots I pot the plants on into 5 inch (12.5 cm.) pots. This helps to combat clubroot because the roots have a larger volume of compost to occupy before they reach the soil. I have said this before but it is worth repeating.

The most widely grown cabbages for winter use are January King (D, S, Sh, B, F), Savoy King (R, Sh, B, F) and Tundra (D, M, Sh, B, F), and for spring cabbages, Spring Hero, (D, Sh, b, F), Wheeler's Imperial (D, S, Sh), and Durham Early (R, Sh, B). For winter cauliflowers, go for Aalsmeer (D, R, Sh, F),

or Triumphant (D, Sh, B, F). For sprouting broccoli, the most popular varieties are Early purple sprouting (M, R, F.), Rudolf (D, S, M, Sh, F) and Claret (M, Sh, Me, B, F). For the key to these suppliers, please see the end of the article.

If you sow root crops now such as turnips, swedes and beetroot they will not grow as big as if they had been sown earlier but should reach golf ball size before winter.

You may have some brassicas ready for planting from earlier sowings, and also leeks and lettuce. If you have cauliflowers showing curds, bend some leaves over them to keep the sun off them which makes them discoloured.

Continue to dig up early potatoes when you need them. I advised you last month to spray potatoes against blight. You should still look for the tell tale signs though. It begins with brown patches on the leaves and the spores get washed down to the soil when it rains and affects the potatoes making them unusable. If, in spite of spraying you see these tell tale signs, cut down the haulms

and get rid of them but don't put them on the compost. The potatoes won't grow any bigger after the haulms have been cut off so dig them up in case any spores have reached the soil and before the potatoes are affected.

You should have several other crops ready for harvesting. You will therefore have some vacant ground and you should make use of it by sowing or planting catch crops. I don't have a special bed for salad crops as I do for most other crops. I grow them in any such vacant ground, anywhere there is room.

In the fruit garden, you can plant strawberries. I strongly advise you to buy them from a reputable supplier. They are prone to virus disease and reputable suppliers should only sell virus free plants. If you have strawberries fruiting, cover them with a net to keep the birds off, if not done last month You can prune gooseberries and red and white currants this month. Cut back this years side shoots to 4 or 5 leaves from the base. Plums and cherries can be pruned if not done in June. Just cut out any diseased, damaged or crowded branches.



Sweet peas growing up canes on cordon system





Show perfection peas, sweet corn French beans and courgettes

If you live in the south you can prune cordon or espalier apples and pears. In the North they are usually left till August. Cut back any long shoots above the third leaf and lateral side shoots to the first leaf. Another job in the fruit garden is to remove blackcurrant and raspberry canes that have fruited.

In the greenhouse keep feeding tomatoes with a feed that is specifically formulated for them because they have a high potash content which helps to ripen the fruit. Cucumbers can also be fed with the same product. They will both be growing strongly now so make sure they are tied to their supports and keep removing side shoots from cordon grown tomatoes.

Many plants outside are growing quickly as well and need regular staking and tying. I put the canes in the ground before planting for chrysanthus, dahlias and the taller annuals but they still need regular tying to the canes. Other plants I stake and tie when they need doing, such as sweet corn, broad beans, dwarf French beans and gladioli. Dwarf beans don't grow tall, of course, but I still stake them to keep the pods off the ground. They only need 3 ft. (0.9 metre) canes. I have told you before that I grow sweet peas on the same structure of 8 ft. (2.4 metre) canes as runner beans. I also grow tall peas (Show perfection) on a similar structure. These are both grown on the cordon system which means a single stem tied to a cane and side shoots removed (like tomatoes), These need tying at least twice a week or they will bend over. I use twist ties or sweet pea rings for these. These plants need tendrils removing as they grow as well.



Lavatera Silver Cup



Lychnis chalcidonica (Maltese cross)



Courgettes Orelia



Watering will be an important job at this time of year when we get spells of dry weather. This applies to plants outside as well as in greenhouses and polytunnels.. Always water early morning or in the evening if you can and direct the water to the roots of the plants where it is needed.

I have just mentioned feeding greenhouse crops but outdoor plants, if they have been planted for a month or two will benefit from a feed. I will have raked in Growmore or fish, blood and bone before planting but now, I always use liquid fertilisers because they are quicker acting. They just need a general

fertiliser at this stage and I usually use Maxicrop.

As I said last month you must keep your eyes open for pests as they can attack any time and multiply rapidly. If there aren't many you can use the finger and thumb method but if this is not practical you will have to spray. Whichever product you use make sure you follow the instructions. In the greenhouse, whitefly can be a problem on tomatoes and cucumbers. A good method of control is to use yellow sticky traps among the plants. When you go in, give the plants a shake and the whitefly fly up and, hopefully, stick to the traps.

In the flower garden, many annuals will be flowering by now. To help them keep the display going you need to keep removing flowers as they fade. If you allow them to go to seed they think they have done their job for the year so they stop producing more flowers.

#### Key to suppliers

D (Dobies ), S (Suttons), M (Marshall's ), Sh (Shelleys ), R (Robinsons ), Me (Medwyns ), B (D.T. Brown), F (Fothergills ).

## August 2018

Much of what I said last month still applies, particularly the crops I said you could sow, such as brassicas for winter and spring use. You can, if you wish, sow seeds of salad crops such as lettuce and corn salad for overwintering in the greenhouse border or polytunnel. You can sow them direct, provided you have prepared the soil and raked it fine, or sow them in cell trays, thin the seedlings to one per cell, and plant them out when they are bigger plants.

If you want large leeks like you see on the show bench they are sown early in the year. You can sow some now, though, for overwintering. They won't be anywhere near as big but will still be useful in the kitchen. There are varieties of leeks that are only of "baby" proportions anyway such as Zermatt (M.), Porbrite (B.), and Atal (D.,S). The most widely available lettuce for overwintering is "Vaila winter gem" (D, S, B, F) but there is also "Marvel of four seasons" (Sh, B) and Brighton (D). For corn salad, there is "large leaved" (D. S. ), Vit (

Sh, B. ) and Valentin (B, F. )

You may still have brassicas ready for planting from earlier sowings and possibly lettuce.

You should harvest the last of the first early potatoes and start the second earlies and the main crops towards the end of the month. You should have plenty of other crops ready for harvesting, too many to mention but try to try to harvest them when they are at their best, young and tender, particularly beans. If you leave them too long, they become stringy. Courgettes should be picked when about 6 inches (15 cm.) long and cauliflowers before the curd begins to open. I mentioned before about bending some leaves over the curds to keep off the sun so continue to do this. Root crops should be harvested when they are big enough, turnips and beetroot should be about cricket ball size. They become tough if they get too big. With sweet corn, peel back some of the outer sheath to reveal the cobs inside.



Colourful annuals on allotment





*Crocosmia Lucifer*

They should be deep yellow. The silks at the end of the cobs turn brown which a tell tale sign that they may be ready.

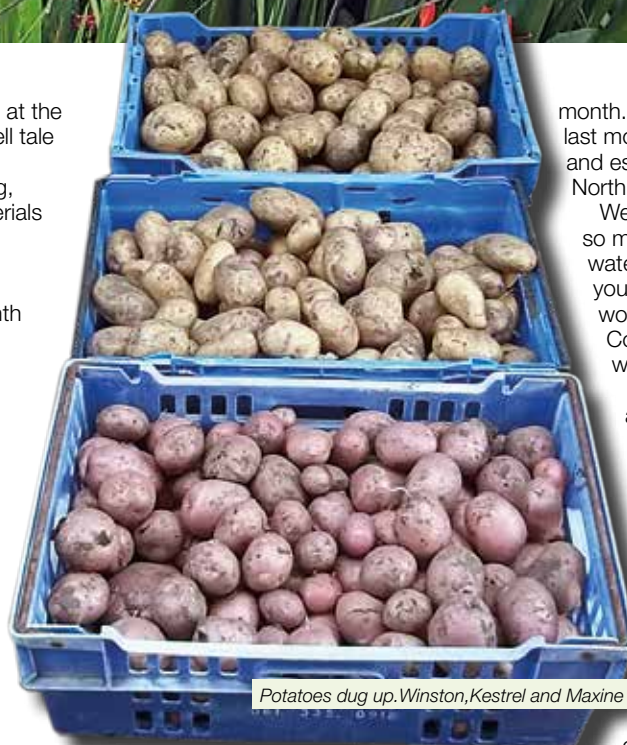
If you have leeks and celery growing, they will need blanching. Various materials can be used for this but I use builders damp proof material cut into different sizes.

I mentioned feeding plants last month saying that they just need a general (or balanced ) feed. These fertilisers contain equal proportions of the three main plant foods, nitrogen (N), phosphate (P) and potash (K). However, now that plants are further advanced, and some approaching maturity they need different feeds. Feeding and fertilisers can be a complex subject but I am trying to simplify it for beginners. Leafy crops such as cabbages need one which is higher in nitrogen. Potash is for flower and fruit production so feeds that are high in this element are for those type of crops such as beans and peas and also for flowers such as dahlias and chrysanths.

Onions need nitrogen to swell the bulbs but later on, extra potash to help ripen them. Packs of fertilisers should say the proportions of each plant food on the container. I use Chempak feeds a lot. Number 2 is high in nitrogen, number 3 is balanced and number 4 is high in potash. Others that are high in potash and which I also use are phostrogen and maxicrop tomato special.

You will still need to feed tomatoes each week and continue to remove side shoots on cordon grown plants. If they have reached the top of the greenhouse, pinch out the top of the plants to stop them growing any taller. It is more important to ripen the fruits that we already have than produce more that will never ripen.

In the fruit garden you can still plant strawberries if not done last



*Potatoes dug up. Winston, Kestrel and Maxine*

month. You can still do the pruning I mentioned last month if not done then, in particular cordon and espalier apples and pears if you live in the North.

We could get dry weather again this month so make sure your plants don't go short of water. If you have had no rain for a while, your water butts may be getting empty. This would be a good time to clean them out. Completely empty them and swill them out with the hosepipe before re-filling them.

Plants still need tying to their supports as they grow this month, particularly peas and sweet peas that are grown on the cordon system and side shoots removing.

Dahlias and chrysanths should be growing well and if the plants were stopped in the spring as I suggested, they should be carrying several laterals (sometimes called breaks) which will eventually produce the flowers. These will all need tying to the cane. I usually just wind a string round them to support them. The more of these laterals there are, the smaller will be the flowers. Exhibitors who want large flowers reduce these breaks to 2 or 3 per

plant in the case of chrysanths. In the case of dahlias it depends on the classification which can be anything from giants to miniatures.. If you are happy with smaller flowers you don't need to reduce them. Some of your plants may be almost ready for flowering and producing buds. Both dahlias and chrysanths produce a central bud with other buds surrounding it. In the case of spray chrysanths you can let all the buds flower but for large flowered chrysanths and dahlias you need to remove the surrounding buds and just leave the central bud to flower.

For the key to suppliers, please see the July notes.



## September 2018

The sowing season is nearly over but you can, if you wish, sow a bit more lettuce, radish and corn salad for winter use. I suggested the varieties last month.

If you have winter brassicas not yet planted, you need to get them in as soon as you can while the ground is still reasonably warm to help them establish.

Other subjects for planting this month are garlic and onion sets. I mentioned planting garlic in the spring but there are varieties for autumn planting as well. They are planted in drills about 6 inches (15 cm.) apart. I mentioned two varieties last year for autumn planting. There are also Elephant garlic (D, S, M, R, Me, B, F.), Red Duke (M, R, Me, B.), Provence Wight (M, B, F.) and Purple Wight (R, Me). Onion sets can be planted the same distance apart as garlic. I don't plant them on the onion bed, though. I plant them where there is room on the brassica bed because next year this will be the root crop bed. This is the only bed that doesn't get manured in winter. If these onions were in the onion bed I wouldn't be able to manure it. Other varieties, apart from those I mentioned last year are Radar (M, B, F.), Red Cross (M.) and Shakespear (M).

The remaining potatoes should be dug up and stored till needed. They must, of course, be kept in the dark and I keep mine in large trays in the dis-used coal shed where it is dark. They can also be kept in hessian or paper sacks (not plastic). Make sure they are sound and not damaged in any way. I often stick my fork through some when digging them up. If this has happened, these

should be used first and not stored. They should be looked at occasionally to make sure they are still sound. If they are in trays, this is easier done than if they are in sacks.

As I mentioned last month many other crops should be ready for harvesting. Please see the notes I wrote last month about harvesting the different crops. After harvesting crops, fork over the ground, and remove weeds then plant other crops as I have suggested before or consider sowing a green manure crop for digging in, in the spring.

You should also have plenty of material for composting at this time of year. I described my method of composting at this time last year but whatever method you use, see that it is properly organised. I often see compost

areas on our allotments containing things that will never rot down. Garden compost is a very valuable source of goodness for the soil so see that it is made properly.

You can now cut down the foliage on asparagus plants to tidy them up.

In the fruit garden, blackberries can be pruned. Just cut out any shoots that have fruited. It will soon be time for planting fruit bushes and top fruit. They will be widely available in garden centres but you get a better choice by ordering from a specialist supplier but you need to order them now so send for some catalogues or look on line. You can, in the meantime, be preparing the ground by digging it over, removing any weeds and digging in some garden compost



*Cabbages ready for harvesting*



*Runner beans doing well*





Giant dahlia Bryn Terfel



Spray chrysanth Southway sunkissed



Some of my root crops

or rotted manure.

In the greenhouse, you need to feed tomatoes a bit longer to help ripen the fruit. Pinch out the top of the plants if not done before. Shading material needs removing now because plants need all the light they can get at this time of year.

You should have plenty of flowers to brighten your garden or allotment or to cut for the house.

You should keep them all securely tied, and reduce the number of breaks on dahlias and chrysanths if you want large flowers and disbud them, as I described last month

(except spray chrysanths). With other flowers, keep removing faded flowers to prolong the display.

You also need to keep feeding both flowers and vegetables. I wrote, at length about feeding last month so please refer to those notes again.

Now for a job that I always look forward to—choosing seeds. This is the month when most of the seed companies send out their main catalogues for next year. Some companies send out catalogues in the spring as well but I always order them from this main catalogue. I always make a list of

the seeds I have left from this year and see that they are not past their recommended sowing date before deciding which others I need. Most seeds will keep two or three years if kept dry, except parsnips which need to be fresh each year. I order some seeds from about eight different companies but the majority are from one company because I send in a bulk order from people on our allotments and we get a good discount. Perhaps this is something you need to consider if you don't already do it.

For the key to suppliers, please see the July notes.

# STANDWELL

Extra long handled tools to avoid back strain

Innovative design for safer and easier working



standwelltools.co.uk  
07779 169792



## Keeping Organised

Having your tools handy means you can spend more time gardening!

### Smaller tools:

- Hang a bike basket or shoe organiser on the wall
- Fill a clay pot with sand to stand hand tools into

### Larger tools:

- Handy hooks or peg boards on the wall
- Hang a pallet on the wall, using hooks on the wooden slats
- Large barrels

### Other useful tips:

- Keep spare tool parts in lidded spice jars so they don't get lost
- Repurpose unwanted furniture such as chests of drawers or filing cabinets



Glaser Wheelhoes, Collinear Hoes, Oscillating Hoes, Broad Forks, Soil Blockers, EarthWay & Saalet Seeders, Korean Ho-Mi - and more!  
unique garden tools which really make a difference . . .

www.blackberrylane.co.uk - order online

Tel. 07792 592068 for catalogue



# My Homemade Geodome

by Sandra McNicolls

I've been growing and showing for a few years now mainly at local shows and I'm always looking for new ways to do things. I like a challenge and I've been looking at ways that I can grow my cucumbers to get them nice and straight. I decided to make a geodome after I started volunteering with a local organisation and I visited their hydroponic geodome, which includes Tilapia fish feeding the plants.

If you don't know what a geodome is, it's a dome made up of triangles that can be used as a greenhouse (think Eden Project on a very small scale). This seemed an ideal shape of greenhouse to grow cucumbers in. There are plenty of bars for the cucumber plants to attach to and the fruits can hang down easily and freely. I knew I wouldn't be able to produce one on that sort of scale but I thought I could scale it down and make one that is suitable for my plot.

My first task was to work out how many of the aluminium poles I would need to make a decent sized dome. Once I had done that I needed to collect as many of these poles as I could find. I did consider buying them but the cheapest I could find was £80 which defeated the object of building something for next to nothing. Also, I didn't know if it would definitely work and I didn't want to waste £80. In the end, it only cost me £12 to buy the bolts as I already had the cover after buying a new one for one of my polytunnels and there was a lot to spare.

I needed 95 poles in total of which I already had around half of them. This is when I started asking around our allotment site. I knew that a few people there had previously bought those small green cover greenhouses that tend to blow over. One of the ladies I spoke to said that she had a few of these poles in her shed and that I could help myself. We both bin shed to her shed and in there was a large bin full of the poles I needed. I was overjoyed, I had been trying to collect these poles for more than a year as I was determined to do it without buying them. I purchased the M5 x 30mm bolts from the local hardware shop. Now I could begin at last:

## STEP 1



Cut 30 to 70cm and 65 to 75cm with a pipe cutter. Don't worry if the ends aren't quite straight as this doesn't matter

## STEP 2



Hammer the ends flat, about 2cm and bend slightly in. It's fine if you hammer too hard and the side of the pole splits. It's going to be bolted together

## STEP 3



Drill M5 sized holes into the flat ends. We are now ready for the build

## STEP 4



Connect 10 x 75cm poles into a hexagon and connect 20 x 75cm poles diagonally together with m5 x 20mm bolts

## STEP 5



Repeat step 4 for a second row but using 2 x 70cm ones diagonally alternately with 2 x 75cm ones. You will have 10 x 70cm and 10 x 75cm poles connected diagonally

## STEP 6



The third row is constructed the same as the second but the circumference is smaller as the 70cm poles brings it in

## STEP 7



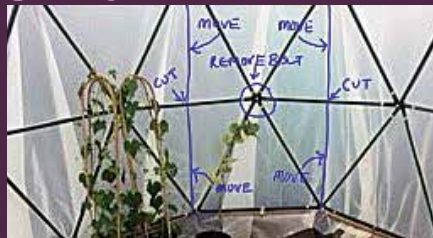
The top row brings it all together with 5 x 75cm poles and one final central bolt

## STEP 8



Bolt a wood trim all around the edge of the dome poles and the place on breeze blocks. Cover the poles with heat spot tape

## STEP 9



Remove 4 diagonal 75cm poles from the first and second row and connect back together vertically to create a doorway. Cover with polythene, trapping it between the frame and the blocks. Bolt it down through the wood trim and the blocks. Your very own home made geodome!!!!





# Scottish Branch

## Chairman's Thoughts

I hope everyone is having a good growing year. Although I have been busy I have cut down drastically on what I am growing this year. I have now come to the inescapable conclusion that Father Time is catching up therefore I have decided to re-do the plot, cutting back on the number of long root barrels and a few other things. However, although there are no parsnips or long carrots at all this year – don't worry – I'll be back! I think as you get older your targets start to change from always trying to win to just enjoying growing – I'm certainly thinking that way now. As part of next year's plans I have built a brand new structure for pot leeks. There's a challenge! Pot leeks have always fascinated me and I look forward to giving them a real go next year.

I have also been busy with various talks to Societies and Clubs. Earlier in the year we had a great night at Inverness with NOSDA where Gavin Thomson of Premier Hydroponics gave a brilliant talk on Hydroponics and Alternative Growing. In addition to the talk Gavin had his car and mine loaded with demo products and various goods to allow the members to see what he was talking about in action. The grow room at Premier is now in full flow and in addition

to "normal" veg we have onions, long leeks and pot leeks growing again in various different systems. The Scottish Branch and the NVS owe Gavin a huge debt of gratitude for his tremendous support and his enthusiasm is unbelievable. So if you are in the vicinity of Broxburn anytime pop in and have a look and a chat with Premier. I am still firmly of the belief that these methods can play a big part in our vegetable growing. Yes I know it's a change from our traditional methods but it has me convinced that I now use quite a few different alternative methods. I also firmly believe that we need to work more closely with our commercial friends and partners. Perhaps as a first start we should be looking at commercial membership of the NVS??

As I write this in mid-May I can hear Linda sorting and packing as we are off to the Norwegian Fjords in a few days' time. How things change - when I first started growing and exhibiting holidays were only in October - never during the growing year. Now? well the choice of a holiday or the plot is an easy one to make. The veg can be looked after by some good friends - or left for a while using alternative methods. So it's off on holiday!

## Dundee & East D.A. Schedule of Talks

Dundee & East DA are happy to announce that further to their Committee Meeting held at Craigie Hall Allotments on Thursday 3rd May, the schedule of talks for 2018/2019 have now been planned and arranged.

For 2018, the DA has produced a wide and varied selection of talks including growing leeks, Show results and preparation of Spring bulbs. The details are listed in the

"dates for the diary" section. Talks in 2019 will include Spring flowers and Bedding plants, growing tomatoes & cucumbers and growing in containers. Please note that the 2019 dates & details will be included in your next SV edition to give you plenty of time to plan. All are most welcome.

**Les Craib, Dundee & East Chairman**

## Scottish Branch - 200 Club

As reported in our Spring edition, we are so chuffed to see our 200 club continuing in high numbers of members. As advised, 50% of revenues go towards the branch funds and 50% going towards prize money. Thank you so much for your support. This makes a big difference in helping us run the Branch and support our various events throughout the year.

By becoming a 200 club member, your number(s) is entered into our monthly prize draw, 10 months of the year (Jan to Oct inclusive). 200 club membership costs only £5 per year.

Our latest draw results are noted below, congratulations!

By the time you read this edition, we will have also drawn May and June's too, but our SV deadline for this edition was May 11th. You can check out the results on our website if you can't wait till next quarter.

Month	First Prize	Second Prize
Feb	Margaret Provan	Mark Winder
Mar	Norman McBean	J.Hastie
Apr	Les Craib	Fiona Shenfield

It's never too late to become a Scottish Branch 200 club member (and you don't have to be a Scottish Branch member to join) and you can do so by filling in your entry form and sending it to Gareth Cameron or if you don't have one, please just give Gareth a shout and he will help you out. (Gareth's contact details for your information mail: 2 Dyke Nook, Yeathouse Road, Frizington, Cumbria CA26 3QL, Telephone: (01946) 811797 or email: [garethattheplot@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:garethattheplot@hotmail.co.uk)

### Scottish Branch - Dates for the Diary 2018

<b>July 8th</b>	Scottish Branch Annual Garden visit - Brooklands Garden, Dumfries and Galloway.
<b>Aug 31st to Sept 2nd</b>	Scottish Branch Championships@ Camperdown Park, Dundee
<b>Sept 14th to 16th</b>	National Championships @ Harrogate (NVS AGM on the 14th)
<b>October 4th</b>	Dundee & East DA – Talk - F. Shenfield slides of Scottish branch & National Championships (Craigie Road Allotment Society Hall, Dundee – Thursday @ 7.30pm)
<b>October 6th</b>	Diary Placeholder – Judges exam (tentative – based on interest)
<b>October 6th</b>	Scottish Branch Committee Meeting (Auchterarder @ 1.00pm)
<b>October 30th</b>	North of Scotland D.A. (NoSDA) – "Growing & Showing Perennials" with John Ross
<b>November 1st</b>	Dundee & East D.A. – Talk – Neil Muirhead – Growing Leeks (Craigie Road Allotment Society Hall, Dundee – Thursday @ 7.30pm)
<b>November 17th</b>	Scottish Branch Annual Seminar, Pentlands Science Park, Registration 10.00am
<b>November 27th</b>	North of Scotland D.A. (NoSDA) – Pesticides and Husbandry with Andy Steven of Agrovista
<b>December 6th</b>	Dundee & East D.A. – Talk – Hazel Elder – Preparation & Planting Spring Bulbs (Craigie Road Allotment Society Hall, Dundee – Thursday @ 7.30pm)



# Scottish Branch AGM

The Scottish Branch held its A.G.M. on Saturday, 10th March in the Aytoun Hall, Auchterarder. Ian Stocks mentioned the recent passing of one of our previous Committee Members, Bobby Jones, we miss him.

I'm happy to report that we continue to maintain a stable well supported Branch. Ian Stocks continues as Chairman, with Fiona Shenfield as Secretary and Linda Stocks as Treasurer.

Linda reported on the accounts, confirming all had been submitted on time and thanked the hard working DA's for their timely submissions. Fred Stewart has also continued with the busy role of Membership Secretary

As previously reported, Frank Taylor, our Show Manager, had decided to stand down after the 2017 Branch Championships in Kelso.. Ian Stocks thanked Frank for all his hard work and the way he did it and reflected that Frank had lifted the Scottish Branch Championships' organisation and administration.

Ian advised the Committee that he was delighted to announce that David Nelson had volunteered to pick up the baton from Frank. Ian stock's proposal was seconded by Neil Muirhead, Show Secretary, who was happy to get started with this new partnership with David.

Neil confirmed he was working on the show schedule for this year (Scottish Branch Members will now have a copy in this Magazine edition). Gareth Cameron confirmed that he will also be maintaining the role of Sponsorship Manager and was working hard with our potential sponsors for this year. Thanks again to Gareth for his hard work and to all our sponsors and partners (Companies, Couples and Individuals).

We always encourage members to attend

our meetings and also join the Committee and I'm delighted to announce that we now have two new Committee members, namely Jimmy Raeburn. & John Martin (you may know John as Hoss Martin). Thanks for joining the Committee gents.

Our hard working Committee members continue to work together as a strong cohesive team and everyone does their bit to help which makes a huge difference to the running of the Branch and helping out in various activities throughout the year. I can honestly say that every meeting is a fully packed agenda which is worked through along with plenty of humour.

Sadly we missed our Honorary Vice President, Peter Guthrie at the AGM due to health reasons....we are thinking of you Peter.

The Scottish Branch Office Bearers for 2018/2019 are noted below for your information.

Scottish Branch President	Jim Williams
Honorary Vice President	Peter Guthrie
Chairman	Ian Stocks
Vice Chairman	Allan Manning
Treasurer	Linda Stocks
Secretary	Fiona Shenfield
Membership Secretary	Fred Stewart
Show Manager	David Nelson
Show Secretary	Neil Muirhead
Sponsorship Manager	Gareth Cameron
Newsletter Sub-Editor	Fiona Shenfield

The two Scottish Branch Trustee representatives have also remained the same. Thanks go to Ian Simpson and

Gareth Cameron for agreeing to continue to represent the Scottish Branch. Ian & Gareth travel to Crewe for the Trustees meetings four times a year representing the Scottish Branch along with myself, Fiona Shenfield, as General Secretary. It's a long day but worth it as the Trustees are making progress. Ian Stocks gave his appreciation for Fiona's hard work both at Branch level and National level.

Les Craib and David Nelson confirmed that they were happy to continue to represent the Scottish Branch at the Dundee Food & Flower Festival Meetings.

In addition to the above updates, for your info., Grant Cathro had resigned in January as a Scottish Branch member. Grant was a long standing member of the Scottish Branch and had held numerous roles during his time as a Scottish Branch member including Branch Secretary, Membership Secretary & Show Secretary. Grant was thanked on behalf of the Committee. We wish Grant well as a new Northern Branch member.

The Scottish Branch continues to work hard to try and improve each year.

In addition to the office bearers listed above, the balance of the Scottish Branch Committee members, including our two new members are; Ian Archibald, George Bartling, Dave Burns, Margaret Burns, Les Craib, George Cumming, John Currie, Neil Drummond, Bill Duff, Doug Gerrard, Alistair Gray, Mary Gray, Peter Guthrie, George Harrison, William Loudon, Ian MacPhee, Allan Manning, John Martin, George McSkimming, Melvin Miller, Dave Nelson, Arthur Provan, Jimmy Raeburn, Ian Simpson, Jean Thomson & Alan Yates.

Here's to another busy year, thanks everyone.

**Fiona Shenfield**

## Scottish Branch Annual Garden Visit – 8th July

This year's garden visit is on Sunday 8th July and will be to Brooklands Garden, Crocketford, Dumfries & Galloway (DG2 8QH).

The eight acres of gardens at Brooklands, near Crocketford, forms a double act of two quite different styles: a woodland garden of trees and shrubs and a walled garden.

The large old walled garden, is situated to the north-east of the house, is an interesting, irregular shape, enclosed by a 10 feet high wall which is curved at the east end. Richly planted with a wide variety of perennials, including many unusual species, soft fruit and vegetables. Mature woodland garden full of rhododendrons and carpeted with snowdrops in February and daffodils in spring.

The plan is to start at 10.30am

Lunch has been arranged locally, at the Galloway Arms Hotel, Crocketford (DG2 8RA)

After lunch we will be visiting the gardens of two of our top growers, namely Joe Proudlock & Eric Craik. This will provide you with plenty of time to see the various methods used by Joe and Eric in growing many different vegetables.

The Scottish Branch Annual Garden Visit is a great day out where you can relax, visit a large country garden, have a nice lunch and a good chat and then enjoy yourself visiting other member's gardens. There's always plenty to see and to pick up ideas, hints and tips. So please make an effort to come along – no need to register - just come along on the day and have fun. We look forward to seeing you.

A full report from the garden visit will be in the Autumn edition of your SV Magazine.

**Fiona Shenfield**





# North of Scotland District Association - NoSDA

As I write this we are experiencing massive fluctuations in temperatures up here in the North, last week it was minus 3 degrees and on Sunday the poly tunnel was up way over 28 degrees C. So like everybody else the season is already proving challenging.

Since our last report we had a tremendous talk in February on composting from our own "compost king" David Munro. This was full of useful information and humour. We also welcomed some guests from the local allotments with the promise of getting new members. In March we welcomed Mrs Helen Fitch who gave us an insight into drying our garden produce. Helen was ably accompanied by her "glamorous" assistant who doubles as our secretary (Peter Fitch). It was fascinating to see what Helen could store as dehydrated fruit and veg. In April we had the pleasure of Gavin Thompson from Premier Hydroponics who gave an all-encompassing talk which was greatly appreciated by all. Gavin was accompanied by Scottish Branch Chairman Ian Stocks and Branch Treasurer Linda Stocks. We were convinced that they must have travelled up North by "Tardis" given the amount of display items that was displayed.

We would like to thank all our speakers and the Scottish Branch for their continued support again as this is the life blood of our DA.

With this in mind we have a full programme coming up starting with our summer visit on 14th July to Ardrross Castle Garden, Alness to look at the walled garden and the Italian garden, followed by a visit to

David Munro's plot in Alness which will feature not only quality veg but perennial and cut flowers.

This will then be followed on the 15th of September by our DA show which will be held by the kind permission of our sponsors at Dobbies Garden Centre Inverness.

Our Winter Syllabus has been set for 2018/2019

Tuesday 30 October 2018 - "Growing & Showing Perennials" with John Ross

Tuesday 27 November 2018 -Pesticides and Husbandry with Andy Steven of Agrovista

Tuesday 29 January 2019 – AGM. John Mackay's usual presentation of local shows

Tuesday 26 February 2019 - "Growing Brassicas and other Veg" commercially with Gordon Rhynd of Woodside Farm, Kinloss

Tuesday 26 March 2019 – "Exhibiting and Judging" with John Mackay

Saturday 27 April 2019 – "Tomatoes and Cucumbers" with Neil Muirhead

Anyone wishing information on the above please do not hesitate to contact any one of our DA member or myself direct on [hossmartin@btinternet.com](mailto:hossmartin@btinternet.com)

Wishing everyone a successful growing season and hope to see all our friends at the shows over the coming season

**Hoss Martin, Chairman NoSDA**

## Northern Branch

### Chairman's Thoughts

Good riddance to the so-called spring weather with it's false dawns during April. Much of our early planted crops will be seen going to seed during August. Most of you by now will have seen my e-mail appeal for someone to replace Michael Osborn as Northern Branch Membership Secretary. The amount of time required to do this work has overpowered him and is impacting on his family life and allotment management. At the time of reading this, he will have resigned from the position and hopefully another brave member will have taken over. Also, in my appeal I did ask for members to consider the positions of treasurer and assistant, so hopefully we will have someone in line for those jobs.

At the April trustees meeting a discussion took place on the finances of the society and it was recommended that a membership

price increase should be accepted at the AGM at Harrogate. This was due to increasing costs and future spends. The increase to be £3-00, less £1-00 if members take up the direct debit. The new update of the judges guide should soon be ready for proof reading and then be sent to the printers. Sadly, this year we have seen the demise of Cheshire DA, and Crewe & Nantwich DA, thought due to lack of interest and aging members. I think the road shows that we do are a must to generate interest and new members throughout the Northern Branch. We cannot sit still and hope that new members will come to us, we have to go out and recruit them. Would someone care to give us an article on why we are losing members? Please keep sending your articles in to our Northern Branch editor, David Allison. Good growing.

**David Metcalfe, Chairman**

### North Yorkshire/ South Durham DA.

I am pleased to announce the result of the NVS stand at Harrogate. We achieved a Gold award. Thanks to all who contributed to the stand in any way and a big thanks to everyone who has helped sell plants and talk to the general public.

**Adrian Read, Chairman**





## Northern Editor's Report

Welcome to my first Northern Branch newsletter as editor. Firstly, a big thank you to my predecessor Michael Osborn, who has done a sterling job over the last five years and will be a hard act to follow, but I will do my best.

With the loss of two DA's this year so far, and one last year, we are now down to 9 DA's from 14 when I joined the NVS over 30 years ago, and with no new DA's formed over that period, it is a cause for concern. Fortunately, most of the DA's that we have now are very active, with talks, shows, visits etc, and provide a good level of support and information to their members. Again, fortunately, 6 DA's send in reports each issue of what they are getting up to. Thank you. A couple are struggling to fill officer positions, which seems general all over the country. Please also see our Branch Chairman's concerns in his piece.

The Northern Branch did submit a detailed discussion document to the last Trustees meeting in April, on the possible ways of taking the NVS forward, as we cannot afford to stand still. It is our opinion that we don't need three levels of admin, i.e. DA, Branch and Trustee level, particularly as we are finding it difficult to fill officer positions at all these levels. It will be interesting to see what develops.

The Northern Branch authorised the publishing of the fifth book in the "Getting Started" series of books entitled "Getting Started Growing cut Flowers", as the Trustees felt unable to commit to the funding of the book. This has been written by our good friend Derek Brooks, the third book he has written, and has been received well by those who have purchased a copy. There should be an advert

elsewhere in this copy of the magazine with full details.

Finally, you will have noticed a couple of articles in the Spring issue from Fiona, our General Secretary, on the changes on data protection which come into effect on 25th May. These detail, among other things, how the Society collects, stores and uses your personal information. It is important that everyone completes and returns the consent form included with the Spring magazine to your Membership Secretary if you wish to continue receiving communications from the Society, including this magazine. Cumbersome, I know, but it's the way of the world these days, and is for your protection.

As I pen these notes the sun is belting down, and we have had the warmest May day on record, over 28 degrees C. This, combined with one of the coldest, wettest springs on record, with regular ground frosts up to two weeks ago, our hobby is a challenge, if nothing else. Keep your plants looking healthy and growing well, whether for the show plate, dinner plate or both.

**David Allison, Editor**



## West Yorkshire DA

On February 13th the West Yorkshire DA meeting came together for an illustrated talk by our very own John Smiles FNVS. The talk was entitled 'A year in vegetable growing and showing'. As always John kept us well informed and entertained. The talk covers what John grows in his own garden, the help and encouragement he give to others, on the Lowlands Allotments, Mirfield. John shows from June through to October and is always there to encourage newcomers with his endless enthusiasm. He also gave us an insight into his work in his day job on the rhubarb farm and to end his talk John says 'There's always a career in rhubarb!!'

In March our speaker was Ian Sutherland from Blackburn, Lancashire, who came and gave us an illustrated talk entitled 'Growing and showing dahlias My way'. Ian is an excellent grower and show man and has won many prizes right up to and including National level. Ian's talk gave us an insight into, how to prepare the soil, take cuttings from tubers, planting out, supporting the plants and explaining stopping times for the shows according to the varieties of dahlias. Ian also talks about feeding the dahlias to enhance colour. All in all a great evening and very well attended.

Then in April we had another illustrated talk, this time by Dean Lockwood, Senior gardener of Golden Acre Park in Leeds. This included the history of the park and some very interesting information on the work being continually carried out to the present day. Dean came across very passionate about his work at the park and also the work of the team of gardeners who carry out the day to day running of the fabulous gardens. We were also informed of a very lovely tea room in the grounds, well worth a visit folks. As a society we are

going to Golden Acre Park for a guided tour by Dean on 21st August. Something for us all to look forward to. The April meeting also hosted the first of our mini shows, which was, as always two classes. One being - one daffodil, and the other - two sticks of rhubarb. We had 21 exhibits in the daffodil class and three in the rhubarb class. Peter Ridsdale won the daffodil class and Jackie Kendal won the rhubarb class, well done both and thanks to everyone who took part.

### Our future meetings include the following;

Tuesday 10th July, Phil Goldsborough, North Yorks DA, An illustrated talk on the ups and downs of 35 years of Growing and Showing.

Tuesday 14th August, Nick Smith, Show Director Harrogate Flower shows, "Behind the Scenes at Harrogate"

Tuesday 11th September, Paul Turner of Northallerton, "Herbs in the Kitchen Garden".

Tuesday 9th October, David Allison, West Yks DA, "Autumn Harvests of Fruit and Veg".

These are interspersed with a couple of visits, and our DA Show on 22nd September at Paxton Hall.

As always our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm in Leeds Paxton Horticultural Halls, 186 Kirkstall Lane, Headingley, Leeds LS5 2AB. Refreshment are available and everyone is welcome.

**David and Olive Peel**

*Dahlia speaker, Ian Sutherland*





# East Yorkshire District Association - Newsletter - Summer 2018

Despite the warnings of snow and ice, a goodly number of hardy folk braved the elements and attended our February 2018 meeting which featured our Chairman, Keith Abel, describing A Year in Our Garden with the aid of a set of slides illustrating various points of interest recorded throughout the year. Keith grows vegetables and a few late chrysanthemums while Janet, the other half of 'Our' garden, grows early chrysanthemums. Both are championship level growers and exhibitors in their own right and have won many trophies and awards in their chosen fields of expertise. Celery is one of Keith's specialist subjects and his celery often feature in the NVS exhibition stands at Harrogate Shows.

Keith told us about the history of their garden in Leconfield which has been considerably reduced in size following the loss of access to their neighbour's land which they were allowed to use for cultivation purposes. Although they now share an allotment nearby, it means that their garden facilities are necessarily highly compact and growing cycles have to be carefully project-managed throughout the year in order to accommodate the demands and requirements of their many exhibition varieties of vegetables and chrysanthemums. Such is their dedication that even holidays have to be fitted in carefully around key dates in their growing and showing calendar, as well as the availability of their local volunteer who carries out the watering duties during their absence!

The information provided was extensive but some key points to emerge from this talk included the following. The fungicide Cheshunt Compound is no longer available to purchase but Sigma was said to be obtainable through the National Chrysanthemum Society. Celery need lots of water to grow properly and potatoes need to be kept moist throughout their tuber formation in order to achieve and retain smooth skins. Onions should not be

overwatered, especially close to harvest time, otherwise split bulb skins will result and damage the chances of success on the show bench. Foot powder containing fungicide is potentially more useful than basic talcum powder for dressing onion skins during the ripening process. Young leek seedlings, especially those removed from seed heads, often exhibit a distinct bend which can be straightened by wrapping foam pipe lag tubing around the barrel and tying tightly for a week or so. It is important that this is done early as this treatment is less successful with older plants. Keith aims to obtain 18" (45cm) of blanch by mid-May in order to obtain exhibition quality leeks for showing in September.

When watering plants in the greenhouse, try to use water that is of the same ambient temperature. Repeated use of overcool water may shock the plants, affect their growth rate and, in the case of leeks and onions, may even cause bolting. Growing Tagetes alongside plants in the greenhouse helps to deter pests and also provides an extra bit of colour. Provado is the insecticide of choice to use on ripening chrysanthemum buds and using clothes pegs to attach bloom bags to chrysanthemum stems is easier than using string or wire ties.

Our March 2018 meeting featured Geoff Wilson who gave us a very interesting presentation on Leaf Nibblers and Sap Suckers. Geoff was a chemical engineer for some 40 years and firmly believes that, rather than spraying synthetic chemicals around indiscriminately, you first need to identify your enemies correctly and know how they live before you can effectively overcome them. Often, alternative strategies such as crop rotation, pruning, general cleanliness and the use of natural occurring botanical compounds are just as effective and less harmful to the environment.

We learned that only four of the many types of slugs and snails found in the UK present any kind of problem and remain



Keith Abel is Chair of the East Yorkshire DA and a member of Northern Branch Committee

largely inactive below a temperature of 7°C. Metaldehyde, the common slug pellet ingredient but which started off life as a camp fire fuel, is toxic to all sorts of wildlife and is even entering public water supplies. Nemaslug is a safer alternative which contains nematode worms which act as a natural predator.

We learned about the life cycle of various types of aphids and related insects and that sprays based on coffee, neem extract and soapy water (horticultural or insecticidal soap and NOT household detergent) can be very effective. Simply using a hosepipe can also work well by washing off the aphids on to the ground where they can be eaten by ground beetles and similar natural predators.

There are many beneficial insects to be found in the garden which act as natural predators. Examples include lacewings, ladybirds, hoverflies, wasps and various beetles. In some cases biological control of pests or, in the case of the Allium Leaf miner, physical barrier protection such as a fleece covering are the only effective solution.

The author was required for a training course in London and so was unable to attend the April meeting with Julian Davis but a report on the work of Stockbridge Technology Centre, Selby will appear in the next edition following our visit to the site in June.

At the end of May we look forward to a presentation from our local Beekeeper's Association on the importance of bees. In June, we will visit Stockbridge Technology Centre, Selby as a follow up to Julian Davis' talk in April about Innovations in Growing Vegetables and, in July, we will spend a pleasant summer's evening as guests of a local allotment site in Driffield.

Reports on all these events will feature in the next edition of *Simply Vegetables* and our full 2018 programme can be seen on our website <http://nvseyda.btck.co.uk>

by Paul Neve FNVS



Julian Davis is Head of Agronomy at Stockbridge Technology Centre, Cawood, Selby



Geoff Wilson is Secretary of North Yorkshire and South Durham DA



## Lancashire DA

April saw the end of the Lancashire DA season of talks and we've had some great ones since our last article.

In April, Ian Simpson very kindly came down all the way from Fife (coincidentally where some of my family are from). It was all about legumes – peas and beans and how to get the best from them, which varieties to grow for showing, how to show and he had some seed for sale, no excuses on not doing well. Ian kindly produced a fact sheet for the meeting too.

Ian Tyler gave us a fascinating talk on daffodils in March which was very timely. Who'd have thought there were so many variants on petal formation, evolution of species and their cultivation. I suppose most of us just think of the little trumpets of yellow sunshine often planted on our verges, or the little pots of tete a tete nodding. There's a lot more to it and some beautiful flowers and colour ranges.

February we had Gareth Cameron visit from Cumbria to give us a talk on growing organically and why he began to grow this way. He brought some goodies with him from Xtreme Gardening (Mykos, Azos, Xtreme Tea, Calcarb), which were very kindly donated to the raffle. Probably the best and longest raffle we've ever had. He gave us top tips on using essential oils for keeping pests at bay, Shield Products (Ian Simpson also uses), cinnamon to use as a rooting powder and as a deterrent for ants.

I tried the cinnamon powder to deal with some ants in the back yard - they were all over a rosemary bush and where the powder was sprinkled they avoided. The following day none on the rosemary. Amazing.

For our Community Food Growing Project, Incredible Edibles, DA Shows; I've started plenty of seed off and have been entrusted by David Metcalfe to look after some Patio Plumb tomato cuttings (seed available from Pennard Plants). It's a compact plant which can be grown in a small pot on a window sill.

It's been a bit hit and miss with some tomato, peas, beans, onion, pepper, cucumber, courgette and other seeds – basically everything. Quite a few haven't germinated, some peas and beans have rotted

off, as did some courgettes (too cold and damp apparently, even though they started off so well), others haven't germinated. And those peskie meeces have eaten my oca tubers. I thought they were safe in a tray with propagator lid on – no, as I'd left a small gap between lid and staging top. Ah well, you live and learn.

I entrusted my Father to look after my chillies and peppers whilst away for a week in Belgium and France and he's done a great job. He's keen on the Gibbering Idiot Chilli – he's never eaten a chilli in his life and I won't be letting him either, least not one of these. This year I'm trying root riot cubes in the Greenhouse Sensations Vitapod propagator (with grow light) and they're doing well. A seed can be just emerging in a morning and by evening it's up to 1st leaf. Fascinating. They don't seem to dry out as much as rock wool, which I used last year and wasn't impressed with.

All being well, the DA will be exhibiting again this year at Chorley Show, Astley Park, 28-29 July and at Southport Flower Show 16-19 August. If you do get along to either show, please call by to say hello. We're on hand to answer questions or just have a general chat. Our next season of talks will begin in October 2018, so watch out for information on those.

I'm pleased to report that we have seen several new faces at our DA meetings. It's always great to encourage new visitor who hopefully become Members of NVS – even if they don't they're always welcome. I've tried to grow our email list since taking over as Secretary, which for me is the most efficient (and cost effective) way of communicating. So if you are interested in our talks and events, please let me know – cathholmes@hotmail.co.uk – so I can add you to the list. Your details will be used for our DA circulation list only, never passed on to or shared with external organisations or companies (nothing more annoying than spam/unsolicited emails).

Don't forget our facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/NVSLancs/>

**Cath Holmes, Secretary**

## North East Derbyshire DA (NEDDA) Report

Looking back on the DA's activities since the last edition of *Simply Veg*;

In February the DA welcomed Mark Roberts who gave the members an insight into how he grows 20 point Vegetables for Collections. To compliment his lecture, Mark also invited the DA along to his newly acquired home and garden to see first-hand how he grows his 20 point vegetables.

In March, Gareth Hopcroft gave us an illustrated talk on hydroponics and alternative ways of growing with-out peat based compost.

Our meeting in April brought about something completely different from vegetable growing. Mike Osborn (Northern Branch) adorned the meeting with a fantastic illustrated talk named "In the Footsteps of Ernest Shackleton".

Mike gave us an in-depth talk on the route and challenges faced by Earnest Shackleton and his team has they tried to access and explore Antarctica. Mike has made several trips to Antarctica following in the footsteps of Ernest Shackleton and the stunning photographs he'd taken whilst there complimented his talk that he gave to about 35 DA members. It was evident on the night that Ernest Shackleton was Mike's idol due to the way Mike spoke with passion, enthusiasm and the detailed knowledge of the expedition. From all the DA members Mike, thank you for a most entertaining and informative night.

Looking forward; planning and growing is well on the way for our DA display at the Derbyshire County Show. Well I say well

on the way, the cold, wet prolonged winter conditions weather is really making hard work of it. The show is on Sunday 24th June at Loco Park, Derby. If you're visiting the show feel free to come over for a chat and cuppa.

For many years in August the DA have put up a display of vegetables at the Bakewell Show and have been awarded a Gold Medal for their efforts. Unfortunately there is no Bakewell Show this year due to varying reasons but hopefully the show will be back in 2019.

Our DA Secretary Geoff Butterworth has worked hard behind the scene as usual to source and book speakers and organise days out for the DA. The remainder of the DA year is as follows;

14<sup>th</sup> July – Visit to David Metcalfe's & Mike

Osborn's Allotments

18<sup>th</sup> July – DA visit to Stockbridge

Technical Centre, Selby

15<sup>th</sup> August – Graham Wagstaff: BBC Visit to my Garden & The Show Bench

19<sup>th</sup> August – DA visit to Mark Roberts garden

September – No Meeting (DA Show)

17<sup>th</sup> October – TBC

21<sup>st</sup> November – Adrian Baggaley: Cider Apples and Cider Making

December – No Meeting

North East Derbyshire DA Show – Sunday 2nd September. For further details and show schedule please contact any DA member.

**Mick Shipley**

## Manchester & Cheshire DA's merger

Unfortunately, the decision was recently taken to dissolve Cheshire DA as there were so few members and no members prepared to take on the Chair and Secretary roles. However, the good news is that the DA will now merge with Manchester DA.

The newly merged DA will be known as Manchester & Cheshire DA. Details of our talks and events schedule can be found on the NVS website.

One of our first joint events will be a Plant Sale in Wythenshaw at the end of May followed by a day trip in early June to places of interest in the Garstang area of Lancashire. Fingers crossed we get a good day for it.

Plans are being devised and developed for Tatton Show in July and Sandra McNicholl our Show Secretary has some exciting plans following feedback from the judges last year.

**Noelle Ryder, Secretary**

For more details, follow us on Facebook; Manchester DA, National Vegetable Society.

Email; [nvs@manchester-da.co.uk](mailto:nvs@manchester-da.co.uk)

Website; <http://manchester-da.co.uk/>



# Midlands Branch

## Chair's Report

We are well into the season now and stuff is really starting to move, at last!!

In the last few months I have visited Essex DA and the West Midlands DA and seeing as I am in my last year of office now, I decided to visit the one affiliated to Midlands that I have never got to, the Bucks DA. It was their AGM along with a talk given by Ian Simpson, I made my way down and had a really warm welcome from them all, some of whom I have met, but many new faces to me. It was a very enjoyable evening; the talk on legumes was very informative, so no excuses now not to get some good beans and peas on the bench.

The tunnel is starting to fill up now and the biggest job to keep up with is the weeding, but on goes the radio, grab a bucket and down on my hands and knees crawling about. I find it quite relaxing and therapeutic. I don't even have to walk through a load of .... to get to the tunnel door anymore I have a nice clean new path, but of course that has to be brushed along with the others, more housework!! We have also installed an overhead irrigation system to make watering easier. Let's see how it goes?

We have just finished five days at Malvern Spring Festival

where once again we got a 'Silver Medal' while the team was very disappointed I pointed out to them the reason we are there is to promote the National Vegetable Society, being present to talk and encourage the public to grow their own and hopefully gain new members, along with our social side, working as a team and having a good time ourselves. Winning a 'Gold Medal' would be the icing on the cake. We probably wouldn't do it if we didn't enjoy it. Isn't that what they say?

Preparations are now underway for Shrewsbury Show in August, and then our Branch Championships, Malvern in September (29th & 30th) we will be holding a social evening on the Saturday and I would like to know how many people would like transport to the venue from Malvern and the campsite on the Showground please, so that I get the right size coach.

Thank you for your co-operation on this matter.

**Sandra**  
Contact me on [noddy.crudgington@outlook.com](mailto:noddy.crudgington@outlook.com) or  
07917690292



Photos of  
Sandra's tunnel

## Midlands Branch AGM

The Midlands Branch AGM was eventually held on 25th March, having been postponed from the scheduled date due to the snow. The meeting was held at the Three Counties Show Ground, Malvern, and the Chair, Sandra Hall, welcomed 25 members of the Midlands Branch to the meeting.

In her report Sandra explained what a busy year it had been and gave particular mention to the Branch hosting the National Championships at Malvern. These had been very successful and extremely well supported.

Reports were also received from the Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

Following the meeting and after a delicious buffet lunch, Mark Hall gave a very interesting talk on Growing in Containers.

### The committee was elected as follows:

President	Roy Binfield	
Chairperson	Sandra Hall	
Vice-Chairman	Mike Davies	
Secretary	June Davies	
Treasurer	Graham Brickstock	
Membership/Advisory Officer	Trevor Last	
Newsletter Editor	June Davies	
Sponsorship/Publicity	Mark Hall	
Show Manager	Mike Davies	
Show Secretary	Pat Brown	
Cup Stewards	June Davies	Sandra Hall
Trustees	Sandra Hall	Bernard Brown
General Committee	Nick Anderson	Bob Oliver
	John Branham	Wilf McCrady
	Brian Rance	Dorothy McCrady
	Sam Forrester	Sue Meek
	John Guest	Alf Thornhill

### OBITUARY

## Dorothy Binfield

The Midlands Branch is sad to report the passing away of Dorothy Binfield, the wife of our President, Roy Binfield. Dorothy was a well-known figure in the Midlands Branch, accompanying Roy in his many activities for the NVS. She had not been well for quite a while and will be extremely missed. Our condolences go to Roy and his family on their very sad loss.

## Simply Vegetables Binder

Store your magazines away.  
Each binder holds 12 magazines.  
(3 years worth)

**£5.00**

To purchase contact: Sandra Hall  
FNVS, Midlands Branch, on  
01952 541396





# Malvern Spring Festival 2018

The Malvern Spring Festival is a 4-day show in May, starting on Thursday and finishing on Sunday. The Malvern Committee provides and erects the stand, which makes it much easier and takes less time for the Branch to arrange their display. This year the Plant Societies were situated in their own marquee, instead of in the sheds and this proved to be quite a popular move, with other related gardening exhibits being in the same area.

The team met on the Tuesday prior to the Festival, armed with pots of well-grown and good quality vegetables, and information was displayed by each pot, with details of the plant.

Satisfied that the team had done the very best they could, especially as it is very early in the season to have vegetables as advanced as the ones on display, it was time to wait for the judges to come along and make their decision. We were awarded a

Silver. Only one society in our marquee was awarded a Gold and so we felt we had done well on our achievement.

Members manned the stand over the 4 days and talked to many visitors, providing information and advice.

The Midlands Branch Committee is grateful to those NVS members who gave up their time to come along and assist during the Festival, and to the staff at Malvern for their continued help and support.



Malvern stand



Malvern Spring Show

## West Midlands DA Report

I am writing this report while at the Spring Festival at Malvern. Our stand has been awarded a Silver again. The display is made up of ten types of vegetable grown in large pots. Over the four days members will have served on the stand, giving help and information to the public.

By the time you read this our May meeting will have gone when our speaker was Roger Umpelby on Pests and Diseases. Also on the same night our Bring and Buy will have raised a substantial amount of cash for our funds.

The August meeting will be our next mini-show with a new schedule, the prize money being £5 for 1st, £3 for 2nd and £2 for 3rd. This has been done to encourage more members to enter exhibits.

The prizes have been sponsored by various members and I should like to thank you all for this and hope that it pays off.

I should like to remind all members that the success of the DA is in your hands and that the more attendees we have and the more raffle tickets we sell, the better the funds are increased and the better speakers we can have.

We are well into the growing season now so let's hope that the weather is kind to us. If so, maybe one or two of you will be able to enter into the Midlands Branch Championships in September.

Have a good summer!

**John Guest, Chairman, West Midlands DA**

## Dates For Your Diary:

Shrewsbury Flower Show – 10th & 11th August  
Scottish Branch Championships – 31st August, 1st & 2nd September  
Welsh Branch Championships – 8th & 9th September – St Fagans, Cardiff  
National Championships – 14th, 15th, 16th September – Harrogate  
Midlands Branch Championships – 29th & 30th September – Malvern  
Judges' Exam – 6th October 2018

## Judges' Exam – Saturday 6th October 2018

If you are interested in entering the NVS Judges' Exam, please contact either our Chair, Sandra Hall, (Tel: 01952 541396/Email: noddy.crudgington@outlook.com) or Secretary, June Davies (Tel: 01531 822750/Email: june.davies03@btinternet.com).

## Bucks DA Report

The first meeting of 2018 was held on 20th March, preceded by the AGM, and held at the new venue, the Memorial Hall, Wingrave. 80 people attended. The AGM was conducted by the President and outgoing Chairman, Mike Ross, who had served for 4 years. As the DA had not received any nominations for the vacant position, John Branham agreed to take this on, for which the DA is very grateful.

Following the AGM, Ian Simpson, who made the long journey from Scotland, gave an excellent talk entitled 'Growing Legumes', which was very well presented and informative.

The next meeting in April included a talk by Chris Day, returning for a second time, which was enjoyed by all.

**Patrick Lawrence,  
Bucks DA**



# Southern Branch

## Southern Branch Chairman / Secretary

As well as the vacancy for the National Chairman the Southern Branch are looking for a chairman and secretary. These are key posts in the branch so it is important that they are filled as soon as possible.

If you would like further details about what is involved in the role of these posts, please contact Ian Clemens the previous chairman or Peter Cranfield the previous secretary who would be pleased to give you details.

These roles will be ideal for someone who likes to be at the heart of an organisation and lead it forward. You will require a nominator and seconder but I am sure that will not be a problem for a suitable candidate.

If you are interested in either of these positions, please contact Neil Hope or Kelvin Mason their contact details are on Page 3 of the magazine.

**Kelvin Mason, Sub-editor**

## Surrey DA

On Sunday 22nd July 2018, at 2pm, we will be visiting Bardsey, a private two acre garden, which features a productive fruit and vegetable garden, bog gardens and a natural pond, and a meadow within a parterre. There is a bee hive, bug hotel, chickens and ducks. This garden is opening especially for the NVS. Places for this visit must be booked in advance, please contact Beth Otway [beth@pumpkinbeth.com](mailto:beth@pumpkinbeth.com) to book your place.

Thursday 11th October 2018, Ian Clemens will be joining us at 8pm, for a talk about growing giant veg, entitled 'Land of the Giants!' in the Lovelace Room of East Horsley Village Hall, Kingston Avenue, East Horsley, Leatherhead, Surrey KT24 6QT.

Thursday 8th November 2018, Writtle College Lecturer Michael Abel will be joining us at 8pm, for a talk on 'Growing Vegetables' in the Lovelace Room of East Horsley Village Hall, Kingston Avenue, East Horsley, Leatherhead, Surrey KT24 6QT.



Neil Hope manning stand



## Essex DA

The Essex DA has got off to a great start for 2018 with two talks; Mark Hall on Pests and Diseases and then our very own Sherie Plumb on A Year in our Garden.

Mark and his wife Sandra travelled to us from the Midlands and Mark gave an extremely informative talk on various pests and diseases you can come across in your garden. We all took a lot away from the talk and are much better placed to identify some of the creepy crawlies that we find in our vegetable patches going forward as well as knowing some prevention methods.

Sherie Plumb then gave us a talk during our April meeting, sharing her and her family's experiences in their garden over the years. The talk takes you through a typical year in their garden with something going on in virtually every month!

We also supported RHS Hyde Hall's Spring Plant Fair once again this year, selling plants and providing advice and sharing our experiences with members of the public over the weekend. Lots of people had returned to the event after seeing us last year to buy plants and ask us questions. It was great to hear so many success stories people had had with plants they'd bought from us the previous year!

Our next meeting will be a talk by John Branham and Jim Thompson on "Exhibiting and judging vegetables" which will be held on Sunday 14 October.

If you would like any further information about the Essex DA or any of our events please contact Emily on [emily.plumb@btinternet.com](mailto:emily.plumb@btinternet.com) or 01621 741787.



Mark Hall's talk



Sherie Plumb's talk



The Essex Team



# Hants DA

Chairman: Jim Townsend  
Secretary: Ali Clarke  
Treasurer: Ann Brown FNVS

You have to hand it to national treasure Sir David Attenborough. The final episode of Planet Earth II highlighting the haunting abundance of plastic waste in our oceans and suddenly avoiding single-use plastic becomes the 'in' thing. This man-god has achieved in one hour what some organisations have struggled to promote for years, but at least the message is now firmly out there. People who previously never displayed any interest in being green are now saying to their pals "You shouldn't be using that drinking straw".

Avoiding the demon plastic is something I try to do, albeit with mixed success. When I first started veggie growing, I invested heavily in terracotta pots. Discovering their limitations, with a heavy heart I switched to plastic, however many years on, I am still using those very same pots.

I had believed I did quite well at limiting my use of plastic, until a recent talk at our Horticultural Society on 'Gardening for Climate Change' left me despondent. It pointed out that as gardeners, we are guilty of using a vast amount of plastic. Perhaps that will change with programmes such as Gardener's World getting behind the anti-single-use plastic campaign. In a recent episode, I was intrigued to see Monty making paper pots, because I received a pot making kit for Christmas but have never used it despite my green credentials. How would he deal with the practicalities of paper pots and the other favourite suggestion, cardboard toilet roll tubes? Both seem like a great idea until it comes to watering. I watched Monty intently. Of course, it is simple in TV World; you fill them with bone-dry compost, pop in a seed, top up with more dry compost then put them out of shot and introduce the next



Greta with abundant broad beans



Paul's beans avoiding single-use plastic

feature. In real life, you water them and they start to fall apart. Reusing polystyrene cups is another common suggestion although having recently received as "swapsies" 2 aubergine plants struggling to survive in waterlogged soil, I'm not convinced I'll be trying polystyrene any time soon. In complete contrast, at Hants DA's recent Plant Sale, one of our members demonstrated that he has obviously mastered the use of alternatives. Paul Shadwell kindly donated a generous quantity of extremely healthy looking Tendergreen beans grown in salvaged coffee cups.

Therefore, alternatives clearly do work when people develop the knack of using them. It would be good to hear tips and tricks from those who have tried alternatives to plastic in the garden and discovered which work best. If the debate becomes as lively as "removing the excess bean from an exhibit" then it should generate a surprising number of suggestions.

Anyway, talking of the Hants DA Plant Sale we held our event on a gloriously sunny day at the beginning of May and had a fantastic day. It is one of my favourite NVS events and our trusty devotees turned up to support us as usual. Despite having 'mislaidd' our NVS banner, which normally alerts passers-by that we are trading, we still managed to attract some new visitors who were thrilled at our produce. Quite often, people refuse to take their change because the plants are such good quality and such great value. Every year we resolve to co-ordinate what we grow for next year, then totally forget but somehow still keep our consumers satisfied with the choice of plants. Many thanks to Peter Whiting, Bob Marsh, John Trim, The Brown family, Len and Heather Sherring, Ros Holton and newbie Paul Shadwell, for helping out this year, plus of course the committee and all those who contributed plants and made purchases to make our sale a success.

Back in March, we welcomed Graham Wagstaffe and Wolfgang Bopp to speak at our seminar and enjoyed their talks on Greenhouse Crops and The Sir Harold Hillier Gardens. Despite extra efforts to publicise the event, ticket sales were less buoyant than hoped, so we are planning to take a break from having a seminar in 2019 and will arrange an evening talk for March instead.

An unexpected highlight in April was a talk by Steve Austin on "Planning and Planting for the Year Ahead". Our scheduled speaker had "double booked" and Steve kindly stepped in. Steve is from the stable of Sir Harold Hillier and Beth Chatto and having started young, has built up extensive expertise despite his tender years. His illustrated talk showed how to keep colour in the garden all year round with abundant advice on the growing conditions required for healthy planting.

Our June event is a talk by Matt from Simpson's seeds on rejuvenating the kitchen garden at Longleat, after which is the New Forest Show and NVS Southern Branch Championships on 24-26 July. Good luck to all who exhibit.

## Next Meetings:

9 Sept Hants DA Flower and Vegetable Show

9 October Sweet Peas – Jim MacDonald

13 Nov Seed Production – Dave Thornton  
We meet at Wellow Village Hall, Buttons Lane, West Wellow, Romsey, Hants SO51 6BR.

The Hants DA programme of events is available on the NVS website [www.nvsuk.org.uk](http://www.nvsuk.org.uk)

Alex stocking up for the next Big Allotment Challenge





## Jersey

Around 50 entries have so far been received for this year's fun carrot-growing competition organised by the Jersey Association of the National Vegetable Society. The majority of these are from children, some as young as two.

With the help and advice of committee member, Mark Day, Islanders had the opportunity to sow their carrot seeds, supplied and donated by Marshalls,

into the required 30-litre containers at a workshop held recently at the Royal Jersey Showground. During the coming weeks, they will be watering and tending their seedlings in preparation for judging of their three best and most evenly matched mature carrots in August.

Along with the workshop, there was a very successful sale of quality vegetable and herb plants donated by Jersey's HM Prison.



## Kent District Association

The AGM was held on the 14th March with no changes to the DA officers, Ian Clemens gave a talk on What's new and not so new in the seed catalogues this year.

This year we have two plants sales the first which was a the Tonbridge all Angels football club on the 12/13th May, for the first time that we were there it went very well.

On the 19th May we were at a new event run by Medway Council, the event is known as The Focus On, this was to celebrate twenty years of the Medway council.

On the 6th/7th/8th July we have our first stand of the year at the Kent county Show at Detling, this is with the Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies.

August Bank holiday weekend we are at the Edenbridge and Oxted show with the second stand.

Our DA show is on the 8th/9th September at Wingham village hall, schedules are available from the secretary.

Speakers for our meetings can be found on the NVS web site or from the secretary.

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month from March until October, no meeting in July.

Everyone is welcome at our meetings

More details are available from the secretary Gordon J Francis FNVS on 01622 710486 or email [gordonjfrancis@googlemail.com](mailto:gordonjfrancis@googlemail.com) or off of the NVS Web Site.

## Devon District Association

Chairman: Don Cockman.

Treasurer: Joe Wallis

Secretary: Dave Wickstead.

At a meeting held on the 17/4/18 Joe Wallis was welcomed as the new treasurer & all the relevant paperwork was handed to him by the outgoing treasurer Alan Terry, Alan was again thanked for his work over the years as treasurer.

It was pointed out that Dave Wickstead had made a mistake with the date of the open garden day at Tony Evans, the date should have been the 17th July NOT the 2nd.

Dave Wickstead had purchased some books from Neil Hope to have for sale at the next meeting of Plympton Gardeners Association where we are trying to encourage more people to grow for showing, I purchased Getting Started on the Show Bench & Getting Started growing Cut Flowers.

I will also have NVS application forms to try & get more members.



## Sussex DA

Chairman: Ian Clemens FNVS  
Vice Chairman: Paul Dalby  
Treasurer: Brian Jeffries FNVS  
Secretary: Marion Neden

Sussex DA have just enjoyed a successful two day event at Ardingly Spring Show. The weather was so much better than last year and the visitors just flooded in. We managed to sign up two new members, sell lots of plants, books, our 'Sussex Gold' fertiliser and black potato bags. A lot of these were sold after Marion's Talk in the Garden Theatre on Canny Containers, this year it was aimed at getting people started using

what they have around the house rather than buying lots of expensive containers, labels etc. There were a lot of tips given and plenty of questions asked. Thanks must go as always to those who grew the plants to sell as well as all the helpers. Without them we couldn't do it. We raised the awareness of the NVS at the same time had a lot of fun. Roll on The South of England Show when we start all over again.

We followed this up with a gardeners question time with Barry Newman FNVS, Ian Clemens FNVS and Jean Griffin who is well known for her gardening slot on 'Dig it' on BBC Radio Sussex and Kent. She is also

a Judge and Trustee for South and South East in Bloom. We are also fortunate to have her as a member of our DA. An informative evening with lots of questions, all of which were answered comprehensively by the panel. We also signed up two returning members.

Don't forget we have our mini show Wednesday 12th September at Ashurst Village Hall. Please ask Marion for a schedule.

By the time this is printed we would have had the South of England Show at Ardingly and will give a report on how we got on in the next issue. Until then...



Marion's talk



Sussex DA stand



Barry, Jean and Ian

## Welsh Branch

### RHS Cardiff Show

The Welsh Branch had an advisory stand at Cardiff Spring show. There was a good crowd on Friday even though the weather was quite cool. Saturday was the biggest attendance and just like Friday there was a lot of interest around our stand. Sunday some rain early on kept people away but by lunch time there was a fair amount of people at the show. We had our usual range of books and literature but by far the most interest was in the plants that were donated by our members.



Arwyn Edwards and John Oliver



Arwyn Edwards and Ralph Hall

### Royal Welsh Show

The branch now looks forward to the Royal Welsh Show at the end of July. We are planning a display and advisory stand. There is a good competitive vegetable section which our members enjoy.

## Irish Section

The majority of vegetable exhibition classes in Ireland are included as part of general Agricultural Shows taking place during the summer. The Irish Shows Association recently published the list of dates of Shows for 2018 and the trend of some shows changing from late August and September to earlier dates on the calendar continues this year. This has a knock on effect making it more difficult to have vegetables ready for shows, especially this year when we had a very poor spring with a snowfall in early March.

We are hopeful that the cup (pictured) we have donated for the Potato classes for Tullamore Show in August will boost entries in the section and attract new members to the NVS.





# Go from Green to Seen in 3-4 weeks *naturally*

Beautiful **clear** ponds  
& water features  
from **just £9.99**

- ✓ The **natural way** to clear your pond from algae bloom, green scum and blanketweed.
- ✓ Environmentally friendly, no nasty chemicals
- ✓ Eliminates nitrates with no mess
- ✓ Safe for fish, wildlife, pets & children
- ✓ Results can be seen in 3-4 weeks
- ✓ Can treat up to 40,000 litre ponds (20-30 square metres)



"Added to my pond and all the algae has gone. It was completely green before I added it and now clear. **Amazing stuff!**"



**AFTER**

*Crystal clear waters after 3-4 weeks*

Choose the pack to match your pond size & enjoy **Crystal Clear Water** in under a month

TREATS 40,000L



**Pond Clear Large**  
(20-30 square metres)

TREATS 20,000L



**Pond Clear Medium**  
(15-20 square metres)

TREATS 10,000L



**Pond Clear Small**  
(8-12 square metres)

**PLUS**



**EXTRACT OF BARLEY STRAW**

Helps balance your pond waters chemistry and release extra oxygen

**POST TO: Unwins, Alconbury Hill, Huntingdon PE28 4HY**

Description	Code	Price	Qty	Sub Total
Pond Clear Small (5g pack)	1090-4257	£9.99		
Twin Pack Pond Clear Small (2x 5g)	1090-2216	£14.98		
Pond Clear Medium (10g pack)	1090-4259	£11.99		
Twin Pack Pond Clear Medium (2x 10g)	1090-2217	£18.98		
Pond Clear Large (20g pack)	1090-4261	£18.98		
Twin Pack Pond Clear Large (2x 20g)	1090-2218	£32.98		
Extract of Barley Straw (1L)	1090-4264	£14.99		

Quote AECONVX1 when ordering or enter it in the 'redeem voucher' panel in your on-line shopping basket  
I enclose a cheque (payable to Unwins Ltd)

for £ \_\_\_\_\_ or charge my Mastercard/Visa/Maestro Card Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
If ordering Extract of Barley Straw P&P is £4.99

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_ Issue No. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Tel No. \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick here ☐ if you prefer not to receive mailings from our company. Offers subject to availability and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer from Unwins. See website for terms and conditions. Credit/debit cards charged at the time of ordering. Offer valid until 31/07/18.

**unwins**



**ONLINE:** [unwins.co.uk/ECONVX1](http://unwins.co.uk/ECONVX1)

**CALL:** 0844 573 8400

**QUOTE OFFER CODE**  
**AECONVX1**

**unwins**



# PICK YOUR OWN BERRIES



## THIS SUMMER

**TWO HUGE 5L  
POTTED FRUITS  
FOR UNDER  
£20**

Blueberry  
Bluegold

Raspberry  
Ruby Beauty

*Sent to you in well-  
established 5 litre pots*



5 STAR REVIEW



Go to [marshalls-seeds.co.uk/PBRNVX1](https://marshalls-seeds.co.uk/PBRNVX1)

CALL: 0844 557 6700

QUOTE OFFER CODE  
APBRNVX1



**100% SATISFACTION  
GUARANTEE**

If you are not satisfied with one of our products at the time you receive it, or it does not perform to your satisfaction, let us know and we will replace or refund.

Ceramic pots not included

Buy these two attractive 5 litre patio perfect varieties, chosen especially for their big crops every summer.

### Blueberry Bluegold 5 litre

Easy to grow, Bluegold is one of the most productive fruits, providing up to five large punnets of sweet and succulent berries in the first year.

### Raspberry Ruby Beauty 5 litre

You'll pick masses of sweet fruit from this variety. Thornless stems make Ruby Beauty the perfect choice for easy picking and is great for children.

**SEND TO: Marshalls, Alconbury Hill, Huntingdon PE28 4HY**

Description	Code	Price	Qty	Sub Total
Blueberry Bluegold & Raspberry Ruby Beauty - 2x 5Ltr pots <b>SAVE £15</b>	1060-5675	£19.98		
Blueberry Bluegold - 1x 5Ltr pot	1060-5670	£17.49		
Raspberry Ruby Beauty - 1x 5Ltr pot	1060-5970	£17.49		
			P&P	£4.99
			Total	

\*Quote APBRNVX1 when ordering or enter it in the 'redeem voucher' panel in your on-line shopping basket

I enclose a cheque (payable to Marshalls Seeds Ltd) for \_\_\_\_\_

or charge my Mastercard/Visa/Maestro Card Account Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Security Code      Expiry Date      Issue No.      Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Post Code:

Daytime Tel No.

Email:

70

YEARS  
1948-2018

# Marshalls

YOUR VEGETABLE AND FRUIT COMPANY

Please tick here ☐ if you prefer not to receive mailings from our company. Offers subject to availability and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer from Marshalls. See website for terms and conditions. Credit/debit cards charged at the time of ordering. Offer valid until 31/07/18.