

ALLOTMENT LANE SEVENOAKS KENT TN13 3UZ  
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NEWSLETTER OF THE SEVENOAKS ALLOTMENT  
HOLDERS' ASSOCIATION SPRING 2011

**SPECIAL OFFER!**  
**Bacon roll, tea**  
**or coffee at the**  
**Trading Centre**

For the nominal charge  
of just £1 why not  
come along and enjoy a  
brew and bacon roll at  
the Trading Centre on  
the following Sundays,

9.30–11am:  
10th April  
1st May  
5th June  
3rd July  
7th August

This is a great opportunity to meet  
other plot holders, to share tips and  
stories and maybe get some advice.  
We look forward to seeing you!

*Ruth King [plot 170a]*

**Open day 2011**  
**Sunday 26th June 10am–5pm**

Part of the National Garden Scheme & Sevenoaks Summer Festival  
supporting NGS charities and Spring House

**Amazing scarecrow competition**

**Many hands needed to spread the load**

Can you give an hour to help at the gate; in the tea tent, or to guide visitors? Also  
donations of cakes, rolls, plants or garden bric-a-brac.

Contact the Open Day co-ordinator Merylyn Canet (plot 55) for more information or  
to volunteer:

telephone: 01732 461397 email: merylyncanet@talktalk.net



**Welcome to the**  
**new members:**

Julia Ambler 149  
Peter Ashwell 34a  
Sarah & Lars Axelsson 49b  
John Cook plot 150  
Sue & Terry Cronk 73a  
John Crump 152  
John & Janet Frith 90  
Laura Hardwick 33b  
Sally Hawkins 138b  
Anita & Kim Hitch 120b  
David Hodgson 46b  
Jo Hollingsworth 115a  
Claire & Simon Hooper 46a  
Mike Humphrey 45b  
Courtney Lemon 151a  
Ruth Mallors 37b  
Louise Merritt 135b  
Jamie Pearson 136  
Simon Quinn 32  
Claire Reading 25b  
Louise Spreyer 71b  
Kristine & Ed Tockman 84a  
Kathy & Ed Tyler 146b  
Chris Wallis 138a  
Laura & Graham Wynes 15b

December 2010 –  
snow on Mo's plot.

**thoughts from the Chairman** *Spring 2011*

It looks as if most of us have survived the winter. Slowly activity is returning to  
the allotment site. All of us are itching to get those seeds we bought last autumn  
into the ground. Don't be in too much of a rush; if the sun stays it's ok to get  
the early carrots, parsnips, broad beans sown direct into the soil. The onion sets  
should be in and soon the first potatoes.

But first the toilets. It seems impossible to get someone to do a quote – and we  
need three for the insurance. Do not despair, we are working on it and will have  
everything in running order as soon as possible.

We have met with the council again to talk about extending our lease. This  
time the problem seemed to be the coming elections and that as a result of  
this they were not able to give us an answer. If anyone wishes to stand as the  
'allotment candidate' to fight our corner, please step forward.

As a result of Geoff Brown's wonderful work, our waiting list is now down to  
about twenty, and there are only a few vacant plots. That means our occupancy  
must be about 97%. We will be doing regular 'walkabouts' to make sure  
everyone who has a plot is cultivating it. Tenants of neglected plots will be asked  
to leave, because those twenty on the waiting list are dying to get their spades  
into a bit of soil.

Good gardening. May the sun shine on your crops and the rain fall when you  
want it



*Rindy Bakker [plot 91]*

**from the editor's green house: plans & schemes**

How about some pea shoots in the salad or some crunchy mange tout? Or would  
you prefer peas with your chips? Leave them in for longer and all we'll get are  
fatter pigeons, if that were possible. Decisions down on the allotments are being  
made about what to grow and how to grow it. The choices are endless, as is the  
advice. My friend Astrid went to hear James Wong – celebrity ethnobotanist talk  
at Coolings the other day. She was all fired up and enthusiastic about growing  
some exotic crops, herbs and so forth. I had a little look at James Wong's website  
and found it worth further exploration. He suggests that we in Britain should not  
limit ourselves to growing spuds, sprouts and swedes like our grandfathers did, but  
should widen our palate.

We do what we can. Over the years I have attempted to grow easy, different  
stuff like kohlrabi, scorzonera, and even the odd oriental salad mix. Come to  
think of it, the humble spud was once exotic, ask Sir Walter Raleigh and, did the  
gardeners of the middle ages know what a carrot was?

Does James Wong know that there are gardening traditions and regional prac-  
tice we have to keep going, even if they are a waste of space. [I adjust my flat cap.]  
It is difficult not to get a little defensive when you feel guilty of being stuck-in-the-  
mud.

I am slightly excited about the extra-curricular activities on offer this summer.  
There is the Open Day (hordes of interested folk to impress with your efforts),  
the Autumn Show (another surprisingly satisfying traditional event), and a trip to  
Essex. If you are wavering over that one, can I persuade you that there is safety in  
numbers, and that you will not be left at RHS Hyde Hall or Beth Chatto's Garden.



*Jane Jones [plot 54]*

## Trading Centre Price List

	1 Kg	3 Kg	20 Kg
Autumn Lawn Feed	75p	2.20	14.90
Rose Food	73p	2.20	14.64
Ammonia	55p	1.60	10.52
Blood Fish & Bone	60p	1.80	11.40 (5kg pre-packed £3.80)
Bone Meal	56p	1.72	11.70
Growmore	62p	1.86	12.50
Hoof & Horn	56p	1.72	11.50
Iron	85p	2.50	16.75
John Innes Base	97p	2.90	19.33
Lawn Sand			8.13
Lawn Weed & Feed			17.75
Lime	36p	1.08	7.15
Potash	1.24	3.70	24.83
Potato Fertilizer	1.05	3.15	14.68
Sulphate of Iron	85p	2.55	17.00
Superphosphate	15.66	78p	2.35
Bean & Pea Netting (2m wide)	4m £2.40	6m £3.20	10m £4

Bordeaux Mixture £1.83  
Cane Cap Protection 6p  
Canes (8ft) 35p  
Jeyes Fluid £4.50  
Jute Fillis twine £1.05  
Jute String Ball £1.40  
Garden Netting T.B.A.  
Garlic Barrier £5.15  
Grow Organic 40L £4.50  
Marker Pen 47p  
Pathclear £1.70  
Phostrogen £2.10

Polypropylene twine £1.10  
Plant labels 15cm 15p 10cm 40p  
Potato Sacks 75p  
Poultry Manure 8kg £4.80  
Provado £6.90  
Renadine £6.30  
Rose Food £2.10  
Rubber Cloche Clips £1.75  
Sequestered Iron Tonic £4  
Slug Pellets £3.20  
Swellgel £6.80  
Twist Tie 63p

Various old tools can be found in the Trading Centre – some are second-hand and available to purchase.

### Equipment

The following equipment can be borrowed Sunday mornings between 9am–12 noon.  
4 Strimmers 2 Rotavators 4 Grass cutters 2 Wheelbarrows

To cover fuel and maintenance there will be a small charge of £2.50.  
Borrowers must bring their own safety equipment.

## Autumn show 2010 report

Chairman Rindy Bakker, commented that allotmenters made a sterling effort and entries were of a very high standard. The prizes were presented by Deputy Mayor Councillor John London, who also has an allotment and he was very impressed with the number and quality of the entries. Helen Stephens swept the board by clinching five of the trophies although she firmly stated that she couldn't have done it without her husband and father's help.

Here is a full list of winners:

SAHA Challenge Bowl Sevenoaks Allotment Association 1978 for most points over all vegetable classes (1–42) **Helen Stephens**

SAHA Ladies Shield for the woman with most points in all classes (1–83) **Helen Stephens**

George Francis Cup give to celebrate 50 years of SAHA Committee service for best exhibit in vegetable, fruit & flower classes (1–65) **Helen Stephens**

Bartholomew Tankard 1978 presented by Mr F C Bartholomew for winner of Allotment Collection class 38 (6 items) **Helen Stephens**

Pelham Bowl 1979 for most points awarded in Flower classes 49–65 **Helen Stephens**

Castleden Cup 1978 presented by Mr A A Castleden for winner of Allotment Collection class 37 (5 items) **Geoff Brown**

Eldridge Cup for most points in the Culinary classes 66–73 **Linda Brown**

Sevenoaks Town Council Cup 2005 presented by STC for Best Newcomer for most improved allotment **Christa Purves**

Chairman's Trophy for Best Kept Allotment **Geoff Brown**



### Committee members 2010–11

PRESIDENT:

Bill Hider · plot 53

CHAIRMAN:

Rindy Bakker · 01732 464772 · plot 91

SECRETARY:

Geoff Brown · 01732 453178 · plot 42

TREASURER:

Ian Grattidge · plot 19

COMPOST EDITOR:

Jane Jones · 01732 454974 · plot 54

Ian Fenn · plot 50

Graham Gaston · plot 158

Edgar Patrickson

Sue Strand · plots 86a & 87a

## Forced chicory: witloof & friends

Salad leaves in the winter are at a premium and from my first allotment year I have tried to grow and force Belgium (Witloof) chicory. The growing is easy, the digging up, no problem, but storage has been a problem with the roots becoming limp and using up space in the garage. Forcing using the heat in the airing cupboard works, but once the stored roots were less than fresh the failure rate was high.

This winter I have found a storing method that has yielded fresh high yielding roots from November to March. The 'books' recommend lifting but I have light sandy soil so an alternative approach seemed in order.

I have left the roots in the ground

and just dug them up when needed.

The roots survived this last vicious winter so I reckon that it will work every time. By early March the roots are starting to push up new leaves and so marks the natural end of this veg.

### How I cultivate

- Sow Witloof chicory (endive) direct in the ground April / May. Choose a spot where they can stay until March / February the next year.

- Thin to about 8 inches between plants each way and keep weeded throughout the summer. I sow in blocks; if you are a row sower I suggest thin to 4–6 inches between plants and leave 1ft between rows.

- Let leaves die down naturally

### How I force

- Take one big deep plastic flower pot or bucket. I line my flower pot with a plastic bag so the soil does not fall out.

- Dig up some roots. Place them round the edge of your pot. The roots look like parsnips; if they are too long cut a bit off the thin end until they fit. Each root usually gives one head (chicon) so use that as guide for your needs.

- Pack around the roots with allotment soil to about level with the crown of the root.

- Place in an airing cupboard with several sheets of newspaper over the top.

- I look every few days and add some water if the soil seems dry. In the big

pots in a warm place water logging is not a problem.

- In 10 days I can start picking and by 2 weeks the heads (chicons) are well grown.

- Once each load has been picked, chop up old roots and return with soil to the allotment via the compost bin.

We eat them raw in salads and as a braised vegetable.

I hope this encourages you to have a go.

Good luck 🍀

*Claire [plot 29]*