

ALLOTMENT LANE SEVENOAKS KENT TN13 3UZ  
WWW.SEVENOAKSALLOTMENTS.CO.UK

NEWSLETTER OF THE SEVENOAKS ALLOTMENT  
HOLDERS' ASSOCIATION SPRING 2010

## from the Chairman *March 2010*

What a winter it has been. Cold. Snow. Rain. All my autumn sown broad beans killed. Spring cabbages not much better. At least we can now get back onto our plots, which is better than my friend in Germany who had snow again last week. But things are looking up. Last Saturday was the first day of spring and the snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils are flowering. To quote Swinburne 'blossom by blossom the spring begins'.

Plots are been dug. Soon the potatoes and onion sets will be planted, and parsnips, carrots and peas sown. There are still winter vegetables to be harvested and some of us may already have had a first picking of rhubarb. I would encourage our newer members to ask their neighbours who have had plots for a bit longer for advice and help if they have any problems. Remember that we nearly all started with a plot overgrown with grass and brambles.

As mentioned elsewhere in *Compost* we do have a long waiting list and plots have to be cultivated or given up – GROW or GO!

Good gardening.

*Rindy Bakker [plot 91]*

## Dates for the calendar

### Open Day

Sunday 27 June: see insert or contact Anita McEwen <mcewen@talktalk.net>

### Autumn Show

Saturday 4 September, St John's Church Hall, St John's Hill  
New schedule available from 26 June at the Trading Centre

### AGM

Tuesday 26 October in St John's Church Hall, St John's Hill

### Outing

summer – to be announced

**Rents due** 1 October    **Seed orders due** 28 October



# GROW

OR

# GO!

There may be a good reason why your plot is not ship-shape. Please speak to a committee member, otherwise as there are over 50 on the waiting list for an allotment, you could be asked to give it up.

## from the editor's greenhouse

The plan is to produce two issues of *Compost* a year. This one comes with your membership card, entitling you to 10% discount at French Street Nurseries ([www.frenchstreetnurseries.co.uk](http://www.frenchstreetnurseries.co.uk) for directions), or ask Bill at our Trading Centre on a Sunday morning. We are sending this issue of *Compost* by post. Please fill in the slip below and put in our post box (at the main gate) so we can gauge how you want to receive future issues. Please feel free to contribute any thoughts, ideas or articles via the postbox, Trading Centre or to <jane@andjones.globalnet.co.uk>

### Allotment envy

You know what they say... 'if it's on the tele, it must be true'. That's where I heard Nigel Slater – the fine writer, cook supremo and gardener – say that he never envied anyone's house or material possessions, but was truly envious of anyone with an allotment with plenty of space to grow things to eat. He said this on a cooking programme where he had his pick off a friend's allotment and rustled up a delicious feast there and then. It all looked rather idyllic – lush vegetation and no neglect in sight. The idyllic scene as it is on our site when it's not too cold, hot, dry, windy, wet, or any combination of inclemency. Plus we have a view. If you walk across our site when the evening sun falls on the north Downs with a warm glow from the higher viewpoints the 180-degree view is magnificent. The view from my plot is ok, but if only I was a bit higher up on the hill where the grass is greener on the other side...not another case of allotment envy!

## Essential contacts

COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2009-10:

PRESIDENT: Bill Hider · plot 53

CHAIRMAN: Rindy Bakker 01732 464772 · plot 91    VICE-CHAIRMAN: vacant

SECRETARY: Geoff Brown 01732 453178 · plot 42

TREASURER: Ian Grattidge · plot 19

PLOT LETTING: Andy Levick 01732 458391 · plot 16

Ian Fenn · plot 50

Graham Gaston · plot 158

SITE GROUNDSMAN: Edgar Patrickson

COMPOST EDITOR: Jane Jones · 01732 454974 · plot 54

### New members

Russel King  
Christa Purves

### Deaths

Alison Read-Smith  
Peter Turner

## Communication & updating the data!

Although this issue of *Compost* comes by post, this is expensive. Please let us know by 1st May how you wish to receive your copy in future.

name.....plot no.....

### How would you like to receive *Compost*?

- by post
- by email. Send an email to <jane@andjones.globalnet.co.uk>
- collect from the Trading Centre, Sundays 9.30am-12noon
- not at all

# Press on. Maximum effort!

**Compost's roving reporter interviews our President, Bill Hider**

*How long have you had an allotment?*  
57 years – this month. 20 rods, I took over my grandfather's allotment.

*What was it that got you started?*  
I started helping my father when I was a child.

*I've also noticed that you have a special technique for digging. Who taught you to dig?*  
My father. He did it that way, as did my grandfather.

*And can you tell us how you do it?*  
Well just open the trench, put the soil down the back, and then you maintain that trench right across your garden and then fill it in.

*What's the best part of gardening up here on the allotments?*

What you get from your efforts and money you save and you get exercise.

*What's your favourite vegetable then?*  
Asparagus, which grows very well on our soil.

*Is there anything you don't like about the allotment?*  
That's a leading question!  
Not really, no.

*Well, your motto seems to me, to be 'press on, maximum effort.'*  
That's right.

*Who said that to you?*  
God knows. I have no idea.  
*Perhaps it's your own personal motto.*

*What encouragement can you give for new plot-holders?*  
Well, people these days seem to think they can put something in and come back in a couple of months to harvest it. You have to keep at it. You must put in an appearance at least once if not a couple of times a week.

*Thanks very much Bill.*  
You're very welcome.



## IT'S NOT ROT!

Axminster, foam-back or shag-pile; plain, coloured or patterned; runner, rug or mat – a carpet for every room in the house but please not on your allotment plot.

I know carpet fitters are very happy to leave your old carpet behind and because it will smother weeds, the allotment is where it often ends up. But it doesn't 'end up' – it lasts forever! Those synthetic fibres never decay. And although the adhesives, latex, and dyed wool fibres slowly break down, the toxic compounds released will pollute the soil.

Now you know why some allotment sites completely ban the use of carpets and if you've ever dug into a forgotten carpet, then tried to separate a knot of weeds, soil, and tangled carpet fibres from the tines of your fork, you'll understand.

This happens, because the surface of a damp carpet will grow its own crop of weeds and vanish from sight, just waiting to surprise and infuriate the next person to dig there. Porous landscape fabrics can be bought from garden centres to smother weeds, but my plea to you is 'think carefully before you bring anything synthetic onto your plot unless it's bio-degradable'. Some plastics will outlast us and I shudder to remember digging up half melted gardening gloves and fused-together plastic bottles from long forgotten bonfires.

Sheets of cardboard from opened-out boxes makes a good weed suppressing mulch and best of all, they rot down completely, adding humus to the soil. Wood chips are plentiful and cheap and can be spread over the cardboard. They are totally organic and will decay and improve the soil. So carpet should always stay indoors, never outside, unless it's waiting for the bin men to take it away to the council tip to be disposed of properly.

*Ian Fenn [plot 50]*

## Red Pepper & Beetroot Paté

1 small red pepper, de-seeded and chopped  
1 medium beetroot, raw, peeled and chopped  
100ml olive oil  
3 tbsp tamari \*  
1 tbsp cider vinegar  
200g cashew nuts †  
1 tbsp roughly chopped ginger  
½ red chilli, roughly chopped  
1 tbsp maple syrup

§ Put all ingredients into blender until completely mixed and smooth, stopping occasionally to scrape sides.

§ Refrigerate for 2–3 hours to firm up.

§ Decorate with strips of red pepper and beetroot to be served with mixed green salad with ginger dressing and/or parsley salad with almonds and broad beans.

*Notes:*

\*Tamari is a rather smart organic soy sauce – dark soy sauce works just as well.

†Light toasting – gives additional flavour.

*Tony Rudd [plot 112]*

For those who don't know, since the last edition I have taken on the role of plot manager and have passed on the reins of editor to Jane Jones. It has been a joy to be editor and I thank all those who have contributed in any way over the last few editions, and to those who have said how much they enjoyed reading it. I know that you will support Jane and provide many articles in the future. Now to my new role...where's that waiting list?

*Andy Levick [plot 16]*