



November, a time for bonfires, topping up our compost bins and removing the last signs of summer.

RALGS Bonfire Night



RALGS Committee would like to thank everybody that helped with the preparations of bonfire night and all of those who supported the event. Special thanks to

- Chris and Anna who took some brilliant photographs of the fire and the fireworks.
- Graham, Felicity, and their children who managed the fire work display.
- Duncan, our resident naked chef, who took control of cooking our food.

Events - Dates for your diary

Xmas Celebrations

Saturday 17th December 2022

10.30 – 14.00

The committee would like to invite you to the RALGS Christmas get together in the big shed. Drop in and join the committee for something to eat and drink.

If you are unable to attend the event but would like to buy some Christmas raffle tickets, please speak to a committee member.

Key points from RALGS Committee meeting

The committee would like to clarify the process for handing back plots or the taking over of additional plots. Should either of these options be something that you are thinking about, please put your request in writing to Heather Hughes via email RALGSnews@gmail.com. This will enable the committee to consider all applications and to ensure that allocation of plots are done fairly and impartially.

The Next plot inspections will be taking place on Sunday 4th. December 2022. The results of the inspection will be reviewed during the next committee meeting.

The committee has proposed and agreed to some changes to the judging process and categories for next year's (2023) produce show. Details of the changes will be detailed in the next newsletter.

The committee would like to thank John Pelosi for developing the RALGS website. www.RALGS.weebly.com. We are looking to hold a range of RALGS documents on this site, health and safety guidance, newsletters, diary of events and general allotment information. Feedback will be gratefully received.

Glyn has decided to step down from the committee, we would like to thank him for his hard work during his office. James Broughton has kindly volunteered to join the committee.



Allotment Planning for 2022/2023

If your allotment is new to you or a continuing long-term project this is an ideal time to prepare a planting plan for overwintering and the New Year. A top target is to try to have crops throughout the full year. Succession planting of crops like lettuce, beetroot and spring onions can also ensure a steady supply during the main growing period.

A good starting point is to consider what you want to gain from the land by way of crops that you like and will eat in the quantities grown.

A scale drawing will soon bring you down to earth with what is possible in the space you have, as you will find that it very quickly gets used up. Keeping a plan year on year will greatly help you with crop rotation (Brassicas, roots and 'other veggies' on a 3-year rotation) by reminding you where you grew last year. Crop rotation will help keep the soil in good condition and reduce pests and diseases. Digging in organic material will also increase crops. Manuring is most effective when made at 3-year intervals. Some crops do not like freshly manured ground (root vegetables, potatoes etc.).

Established allotment growers may well already have prepared the ground after this year's crops have been taken. Some overwintering crops may also have been planted such as Broad Beans, Garlic, Onions and Shallots.

New members should resist the temptation to rotovate the ground as the more persistent weeds such as couch grass, docks, nettles and bindweed will be chopped up and will spread and multiply as a result. Although seeming tedious, cut your weeds back to stubble height then dig them out. Regular hoeing especially in dry weather is the best way to keep the ground clear as the seasons progress and crops grow. Compost on your plot or use the council garden waste disposal facilities for the bindweed, couch grass and nettles.

Newcomers will then benefit from getting a propriety seed brochure to identify and enable planting of your choices. Surprising varieties may become apparent to you. Plants and seedlings are also available at various

times of the year. Established gardeners may well share surplus plants such as strawberries.

Established growers will audit their seeds, discard any out of date and buy replacements or new varieties to deliver their plan.

A monthly planner is an invaluable asset helping make best use of your ground and inform your plan, prompting you to plant at the correct time. Seed packets show the length of time crops will occupy the ground through the Sow period/harvest period information on the packet.

Time to make your plan and deliver it, enjoying the fruits of your labour before you know it.

Consider raised beds, they allow easy access to crops and are especially handy for weeding and watering. You can also choose the type of soil you want to grow in.

Edible Hedges

During 2022, a number of plot holders donated their produce to the local community, which helped a number of local families. It has been recognised that as the cost of living increases, more people are beginning to struggle with their household bills. With this in mind, the committee is now looking to put edible hedges around the allotment perimeter so that the local community can help themselves.

If you have any spare fruit bushes that we can put into the hedgerow, please speak to one of the committee members.



Rainbow Oven Roasted Vegetables

Ingredients

- 2 – 3 medium Beetroot
- 3 Carrots
- Butternut squash
- Broccoli
- 1 – 2 medium Parsnips
- Cherry Tomatoes
- 1 Red onion
- Olive oil
- Thyme
- Ground Cumin
- Flat leafed parsley
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

This dish is very versatile, you can switch any or all of the vegetables to include the following:

- Swede
- Turnips
- Sweet potatoes
- Pumpkin
- Celeriac
- Jerusalem artichokes (sunchokes)
- Cauliflower
- Marrow
- Red Pepper
- Sprouts

Method

1. Preheat the oven to a temperature of at least
2. Prepare the vegetables by cutting them up into 1 -1/2 inch thick cuts. If using broccoli, cut into bite-sized florets.
3. In a bowl, combine ½ tablespoon of olive oil, thyme and cumin and gently toss onions, then place onto tray. Do the same for every vegetable except the broccoli when you use a full tablespoon.
4. Arrange the vegetable in a single layer on your cooking tray in order of the rainbow: Beetroot, tomatoes, carrots, squash, broccoli, parsnips, onions.
5. Sprinkle with salt and black pepper
6. Cook for 20-25 minutes or until the vegetables start to brown and the carrots are fork tender.



If you have leftovers, you can put them in soups, salads and dips.

You can also heat up the vegetables and top with cheese.



Jobs for November



Pruning

Pruning soft fruit bushes can be done any time between November and end of February. Raspberries which fruit in the Autumn (Autumn Bliss and All Gold) produce the following seasons fruit on new wood, so winter is the time to cut all of the old canes to ground level. Thin out blackcurrant bushes by removing approximately a third of the old stems to encourage healthy new shoots to develop from the base of the plant.

Redcurrants and gooseberry bushes: reduce the length of healthy canes by a third and open up the centre of each bush, so it looks like a goblet. This will allow the air to circulate and help the fruit buds develop. Always cut out any dead or diseased stems.

Mental Health

Christmas is traditionally a time of celebration, eating, drinking, spending time with family and friends and generally enjoying the festive spirit. However, for some of us, this time of year can prove to be difficult. If you are struggling over the Christmas period, you are far from alone. Mental health issues at Christmas affect more of us than you think. If you are struggling with loneliness, bereavement, anxiety or stress consider reaching out to get help. Below there are numbers and websites that you may find useful.

- Samaritans: call **116 123** from any phone for free
- Mind Infoline **0300 123 3393** or www.mind.org
- Rethink Mental Illness Advice Line **0300 5000 927** (9.30 – 4pm Monday to Friday)
- SHOUT first 24/7 text service Text **85258**
- WWW.PrioryGroup.com (this website will help self-care strategies)

Crops to harvest

Clear the ground of any remaining vulnerable crops such as celeriac, carrots and Florence fennel and put them in to storage before the hard frosts.

When picking Brussel sprouts, pick from the bottom of the stalk to make sure all the sprouts get a chance to swell. At the same time nip off any yellowing leaves at their base to ensure that there is good air circulation around the plants.

Wait until after a frost for parsnips. The cold will turn the starches into sugars and this gives them their natural sweetness.

Sowing and planting

This is a time that you can plant your hardy peas. They can be planted in the open ground if the weather conditions are favourable or plant in pots and transplant out later when the roots have reached the bottom of the pot.

It's not too late to plant your broad beans.

It is also a good time to plan new fruit trees and bushes. It is also a good time to move soft fruit trees.