

# **ROEHAMPTON GARDEN SOCIETY**

FOUNDED 1873

## **MONTHLY BULLETIN**

February 2018

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



**CAROLUS POTATOES**

**SEE GILL TAMSETT, OUR TRADING SECRETARY'S REPORT ON PAGE 2 THAT INCLUDES SOME VERY USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SEED POTATOES NOW AVAILABLE IN THE STORE.**

**From The Running Hare by John Lewis-Stempel**

<https://uk-mg42.mail.yahoo.com/neo/launch>

***I am happy harrowing, an emotional state which may, according to scientists at the University of Bristol, be enhanced by soil itself. A specific soil bacterium, Mycobacterium vaccae activates a set of serotonin-releasing neurons in the dorsal raphe nucleus of the brain, the same ones targeted by Prozac. You can get an effective dose of Mycobacterium vaccae by walking in the garden or gardening.***

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

**Happy New Year to you all.**

I am sure you are planning for the coming growing year, so have a look at our new monthly guide on what to do on your plot (see later in this Bulletin or on our website) and you will find plenty to be getting on with!

**RENTS** We will be collecting rents in March this year (instead of April) and opening the store on both **Saturdays (9-11) and Sundays (10 – 12) throughout March.** This is in response to the requests from several members who find it awkward to get to the store on a Sunday.

**LEASE / CHARITY** As we start 2018 I am sorry to report that we are still no further on with the Council over the proposed Lease, as reported at the AGM. The debate is over the degree of independence the Council will allow us in our new Lease. The Charities Commission demands that all charities are operationally independent of "the State" (in our case Wandsworth Borough Council). We also regard this operational independence as crucial; we cannot agree to a Lease that will leave the new Charity on unsound financial foundations or in a way that makes the Charity a surrogate arm of the Council or a service provider.

**Jackie**

**Jackiesavage29@gmail.com  
07508 559134**

## **TRADING SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The Store is fully stocked in readiness for the major sowing season. Volunteers have also given it a good clean and tidy-up and I am very grateful to them for giving up their time to do this.

We are awaiting delivery of the Wool Compost for Seeds that was so popular last year. We will be selling this at the same price as last year - £7 for a 12-litre bag. We also have Gro-Sure Seed and Cutting Compost in the easy to carry 10 litre bags for £3.50 as well as John Innes Seed Compost in 25 litre bags for £4.

The potatoes finally arrived having been delayed in the main to the bad weather conditions in Scotland that, at one point, suffered temperatures of -8C!

We have 6 varieties to choose from all at £2 per kilo (you can pick and mix):

**SWIFT** - First Early. This is an exceptionally early variety, which produces lots of small, round potatoes. The plants are short making them ideal for growing in containers, or under cloches for an even earlier crop. Good for boiling and salads.

**KESTRAL** - *Second Early*, with attractive white skins with purple eyes. Good for boiling, mash, chips, roasting and salads.

**CHARLOTTE** - a Salad potato, ever popular, with a creamy flavour. Good for boiling, roasting and salads.

**PICASSO** - *Maincrop* with a smooth white skin and pink eyes with a good resistance to disease. Cara is one of its parents. It produces large yields that keep well. Good for boiling, roasting, mash and baked.

**PINK FIR APPLE** - *Maincrop* with a pink knobby skin and a creamy, waxy texture. It was originally introduced from France in 1850. It is good for boiling and salads.

**CAROLUS** - *Maincrop* with a slightly floury texture with pink eyes and yellow flesh. It is fully blight resistant and is thus well suited for those who like to grow organically. It can be boiled, roasted or mashed.

Potatoes are organised into 3 groups according to their season of harvesting. *Early* potatoes are planted in late March/early April for harvesting in June/July. *Second Earlies* are planted in early-mid April for harvesting in July/August. *Maincrop* potatoes are planted in mid-late April and lifted in August for immediate use or in September/October for putting into storage.

Potatoes remain dormant at 4C. The purpose of chitting is to break this dormancy and encourage them to produce short green shoots. This advances their growth prior to planting.

To induce sprouting the seed potatoes should be exposed to good light and gentle warmth (12C). Set them in egg cartons with the scar, i.e. where it was attached to the original plant, at the bottom and the eyes, or the growth buds, at the top. The chitting process should last about 6 weeks

by which time the sprouted shoots should be 2cms long.

It is only necessary to chit Early and Second Early potatoes. Chitting Maincrop is not so critical as they can be planted directly into warm soil.

Potatoes grow best in fertile, free-draining, well-structured soil with lots of organic matter with a pH of 5.5-7. If lime is added, this should be done at least 6 months before planting.

This year we are trialling opening the Store on Saturday mornings between 9 and 11 am during March and April. This is to cater for those members who have other commitments on Sunday mornings and as we are no longer opening on Wednesday evenings in April.

***Do let us know how helpful you find this.***

***Gill Tamsett, Trading Secretary***

## **PLOT JOBS FOR FEBRUARY**

- Prepare for early vegetable crops by warming soil before sowing, covering seedbeds with polythene or cloches
- Keep off wet soils to avoid compaction. Use long boards as walkways, to spread your weight
- If the soil isn't too wet, start to dig in overwintered green manures such as grazing rye and winter tares, as the frost should have killed them off.

- Continue to tidy up and re-cut grass path edges where the grass has encroached on your plot.
- Give your compost heap a 'spring turn' this month. Turning will aerate and stimulate the heap. If it's too dry, continue adding wet kitchen waste, and water it occasionally. If too wet, add more carbon-rich stuff such as twigs, crumpled cardboard and paper waste, to open up and aerate the heap. Continue to add layers of uncomposted stable manure to your heap.
- Empty compost heaps when ready and spread the well-rotted dark crumbly compost on beds prior to sowing or use as seed compost.
- Chit potato tubers in a light, cool, frost-free place.
- Clean pots and trays by scrubbing in hot, soapy water before starting to sow new seeds. Pests and diseases can overwinter in old potting compost, surviving to damage newly emerging seedlings.
- Sow sweet peas in deep pots or Root-trainers in a cold frame, greenhouse or windowsill. *(A wide range of sweet peas - single varieties such as King's High Scent and Midnight as well as mixes e.g. Mammoth mixed and Incense are all available in store. Root trainers are available in store as well as free pots in the pot box next to the store.)*
- Pot on and pinch out autumn-sown sweet peas to encourage side-shoots to form.
- Sow tomatoes. *(Check out the range of varieties available in store such as Ildi, Megabyte F1, Gigantomo, Fandango, and Akron).*
- Sow sweet and chilli peppers from mid February in a heated propagator or sunny windowsill. Chillies can be slow to germinate. *(Check out the varieties available in store such as Long Red Marconi, Trinidad Perfume.)*
- Sow aubergines in a heated propagator or sunny windowsill. *(Check out the varieties in store such as Black Beauty and Long Purple as well as the patio varieties Jackpot and Pinstripe.)*
- Sow and celeriac in a heated propagator or sunny windowsill. *(Variety, Prinz is available in store.)*
- Sow broad beans outside. *(Check out the varieties in store such as Karmazyn, de Monica, Masterpiece Green Longpod and The Sutton.)*
- Sow cabbage. Check sowing advice on packets for different varieties. *(Cabbage varieties available in store are Greyhound and Hispi.)*

- Sow peas outdoors. (*Variety, Early Onward, is available in store.*)
- Sow onions and early leeks in the greenhouse or under cover. (*Varieties, Blue Solaise, Below Zero F1 and Giant Winter are available in store.*)
- Sow early lettuce and keep in cold frame or greenhouse for earlier harvest. (*Varieties Oakleaf Navara, Salad Bowl and Little Gem Cos are all available in store.*)
- Sow hardy annuals for companion planting such as Calendula and Tagetes indoors for earlier blooms.
- Sow mustard and cress in a small seed tray on a warm windowsill for pickings in just a few weeks.
- Complete pruning of apple and pear trees, gooseberries, redcurrants and prune out a quarter of blackcurrants' older growth at ground level.
- Prune autumn raspberries, cutting all canes down to the ground.
- If summer-fruiting raspberries have grown above their supports, cut back to one or two buds above the top wire.
- After pruning, apply a general-purpose fertilizer to tree, bush and cane fruit and mulch with well-rotted manure or garden compost. (*all available in Store*)
- Top-dress all tree and soft fruit with sulphate of potash. (*available in Store*)
- Spray dormant fruit trees and bushes with plant oil-based winter tree wash (*available In Store*) to kill overwintering eggs of aphid pests.
- Apply 2" layer of well-rotted garden manure or garden compost around perennial crops such as Jerusalem artichokes or rhubarb. (*Country Natural available in Store*)
- Start pruning bush roses at the end of the month.
- Fruit bushes can still be planted now.
- Force rhubarb for sweeter, earlier stems by covering crowns with straw and then a container to exclude light.
- To reduce club root on brassicas, apply lime to soil at 270g per sq m, 8oz per sq yd. (*lime available in Store*)
- Prepare a new asparagus bed by digging in well-rotted manure and order asparagus crowns.
- Apply general fertilizers such as Growmore, (inorganic) or fish, blood and bone or seaweed, organic. (*all available in Store*)

<p><b>WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS AND PLOT-HOLDERS</b>  <b>Site 3</b>  <b>Sophie Arcari</b>  <b>Jo Buckingham</b></p>
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## **NEW SITE SECRETARY FOR SITE 2**

Mariangela Renshaw is taking over from Georgina, as Secretary for Site 2, after a timed handover. Georgina is going to remain on the RGS committee.

Our sincere thanks go to Georgina who has worked very hard in the role of Site 2 Secretary for many years.

## **EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY KEW GARDENS:**

*Orchid Festival 10 February to  
11 March 2018*

*International Garden  
Photographer of the Year 10  
February to 11 March 2018*

[www.kew.org](http://www.kew.org)

## **RHS WISLEY:**

*Butterflies in the Glasshouse  
13 January to 4 March 2018*

[www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

## **FEBRUARY RECIPE**

### **Cauliflower Rice**

This can be used as a substitute for rice or couscous with a casserole or curry or mixed with chopped raw vegetables as a salad.

#### Ingredients

1 small cauliflower – pulsed for 30 seconds

1 tsp. olive oil

Salt & pepper and 1 tsp. ground cumin

Put the cauliflower onto a baking sheet and toss in the oil and seasoning. Bake 220C/180C Fan/Gas 6 for 15 minutes.

## **WORMERY NEEDS A GOOD HOME**



If you are interested in taking over a well established wormery from one of our members who is moving, please let me know via email [patdark13@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:patdark13@yahoo.co.uk) or telephone 020 8789 7568.



## **NOTICES**

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Summer Show: 16 June 2018  
Autumn Show: 8 September 2018  
AGM: Wednesday 14 November  
2018

### **RGS ADDRESS AND POST BOX**

Fixed to the gate at site 2, The  
Pleasance. The address is:  
Roehampton Garden Society The  
Pleasance Allotments The  
Pleasance  
London SW15 5HF  
Website:  
[www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk](http://www.roehamptonallotments.co.uk)

### **RHS CONTACTS**

Committee Chair: Jackie Savage,  
Site 2 Allotment Secretary:  
Georgina O'Reilly;  
Site 3 Allotment Secretary: Helen  
Finch.  
Site Manager: Shirley Gillbe;  
Comments, questions for Chair  
and/or Committee via website:  
[root@roehamptonallotments.co.uk](mailto:root@roehamptonallotments.co.uk)

### **BASIC RULES FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL COHESION ON OUR ALLOTMENT SITES**

- Respect the rights and belongings  
of other plot holders.
- No dogs without leads.
- No unsupervised children.
- Lock the gate behind you.
- Dispose of your own rubbish.
- No structures to be erected or  
trees to be planted without  
permission of your Site Secretary.  
*If you think someone is breaking  
the rules contact a committee  
member or me, rather than confront  
another plot holder.*

[jackiesavage29@gmail.com](mailto:jackiesavage29@gmail.com) or  
07508 559134

### **THE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION TOOL SHED**

**Mend** and re-furbished old garden  
tools  
For schools  
[www.conservationfoundation.co.uk](http://www.conservationfoundation.co.uk)  
[www.vegetableseeds.com](http://www.vegetableseeds.com)

### **DISCOUNTS**

#### **Adrian Hall, East Sheen**

On presentation of your RGS  
membership card you will receive  
10% discount on horticultural  
goods that you take away with you,  
not on delivered items.

#### **Neal's, Heathfield Road, SW18 3HR (opposite Wandsworth Prison)**

Register for their loyalty card, as an  
RGS member by showing your  
membership card, giving your  
name, email address, post-code. A  
7% retrospective discount on  
goods purchased, which can be  
redeemed at the time of the next  
purchase (like a Nectar card). The  
amount of discount is recorded as  
'points' on the card and shown on  
each till receipt. £5.00 worth of  
points is put on your card as a  
thank you when you register.  
If you are over 50, and a loyalty  
card member, you will receive 10%  
discount on Wednesdays.

### **THE CARTRIDGE PEOPLE,**

Give 10% of the cost of your order  
back to the Society when you buy  
from:  
**[www.cartridgepeople.com/Raising  
MoneyFor/Roehampton-GS](http://www.cartridgepeople.com/RaisingMoneyFor/Roehampton-GS)**

## **AUSTIN MOWERS**

Repairs and sells reconditioned mowers and sharpen shears. 300 Garrett Lane, SW18 4EH 020 8874 4206 [www.austinmowers.com](http://www.austinmowers.com) [austinmowers@aol.com](mailto:austinmowers@aol.com)

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## **SECURITY**

If you see someone trespassing or causing damage on the Sites, or in an emergency phone 999 or text phone 18000.

## **NEW DAWN GARDENS**

Artan Deliallisi, one of our plot holders, offers regular or casual maintenance for gardens. He will repair or build fences, gates, sheds, paving, walls and arches. 07411 288485 [artandeliallisi@gmail.com](mailto:artandeliallisi@gmail.com)

## **MANTRA LANDSCAPES**

Grounds maintenance specialists' [www.mantralandscapes.com](http://www.mantralandscapes.com) Alexander Barrington Thompson-Byer  
Tel: +44 (0)7985 463 283

## **CAPITAL GROWTH**

Capital Growth is the largest food growing network in London. It was set up initially as a partnership initiative between London Food Link, the Mayor of London, and the Local Food Fund and helped create 2012 new community food-growing spaces across London by the end of 2012.

You may be interested in their courses and voluntary work opportunities. See what they are doing and sign up for their newsletter at [www.capitalgrowth.org](http://www.capitalgrowth.org)

## **Volunteer gardeners needed**

Volunteers are needed to help in the large and beautiful gardens at Mount Court which is a retirement home in Weimar Road, Putney SW15 1SJ. If you are interested please phone Maggie on 07549 279 215.

## **THE STORE**

Store open on Sunday mornings between 10 -12.00 noon. Café, serving teas, coffee and homemade cake.

## **NEXT BULLETIN:**

The next Bulletin, Sunday 4 March 2018 by email, in store and on both sites. Copy for next edition to Pat Dark (020 8789 7568, 27 St Margaret's Crescent, Putney, London SW15 6HL or by email to: [patdark13@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:patdark13@yahoo.co.uk) by 14 February 2018.