

Compton Allotment News – April 2017

Welcome to the April edition of Compton Allotment News.

Articles, pictures, photographs, open days, recipes, news, advice on growing, etc...

Please send to – Sue Day at keithandsueday@virginmedia.com

A big thank you to everyone who turned out on Sunday 19th March for our Work Party. The stream is now completely cleared and many large lumps and bumps have now been removed. This means that the mower will now be able to reach into other areas of the allotment. Thanks also needs to go to the organisers, with chairs, coffee, tea, mugs, etc.

Everyone kicking over the mole hills are doing a fine job, you are all making a real difference to the mowing.

The Peripheral Ditch work is still to be arranged. No date as yet.

A reminder that bonfires stop at the end of April. The Committee is in negotiations with Compton Parish Council to see if we can have a few designated days during the summer months.

I have been asked by a few plot holders “where has the produce bench gone”. It was beyond repair. Two new ones are being made in the next few weeks, one for the Withies end and one for the Polsted Lane end. Those new to the allotment, this is where we place any excess seeds, vegetables, fruit, flowers, etc., so everyone gets a look in.

The taps are now turned on.

The Compton Fete will be held on Saturday 13th May.

The Compton Allotment News for May, will be delayed until approximately the 15/16th. Please take photographs at the Fete and send them in, so they can be included in this issue.

Turnover on the plots has been quite high this year with 6 plots changing hands. There are now only 2 vacant plots. Thanks to the Plot Letting Officers, which in turn means that thanks needs to go to our Treasurer who is also working hard in the background. To all new (and old) Plot Holders, do not be afraid to ask for any tips, advice and information, we are all happy to help, we are quite a friendly bunch.

For those of you that are not aware, Mole Country Stores (formerly known as Scats) in Godalming is closing down in June. Knowing that many of you get timber and gardening products there, the next nearest stores I have found are Billingshurst, Redhill, Basingstoke, Winchester and Andover. (*Other nursery's and retail outlets are available*). Some items are already at sale prices, so you may be able to pick up a bargain.

Now is the time to enter Guildford In Bloom. There are nine categories to choose from, one being the allotment category. For more information visit: www.Guildford.gov.uk/guildfordinbloom email parks@Guildford.gov.uk or call 01483 444715.

Those that are squeamish and do not like seeing distressed animals, look away at the bottom of page 8. **This is a lesson to us all.**

Thank you to the ladies who have sent in recipes. These are perfect. One ends our last season, and the other looks forward to the new.

The Pop Up Car Wash is open for business at 6 Oaks Cottages, Withies Lane. (See March Issue or go onto the Compton Parish website). Please contact Nicola.kingston99@gmail.com

Some of the April things to do on the Allotment:-

This is a busy, busy, busy month.

Continue to plant out seed potatoes, try to complete by the end of the month. Don't forget to earth up, if frosts are about.

Complete the planting of onion sets.

Start or carry on successional sowings of beetroot, carrots, parsnips, lettuce, spinach, spring onions, radish, turnip, early peas, swiss chard – *and quite a few, I may not have mentioned.*

At the beginning of May you can start to plan and plant in pots or trays under glass, dwarf and climbing French beans, runner beans, sweet corn, outdoor cucumbers, courgettes, pumpkins, squashes, – all which can be planted out during June.

We need some help!

Compton Parish Fete on Saturday 13th May

Any help with the Allotment Stall on the day would be greatly appreciated, even if you can only spare an half hour or so, it will give others time to get refreshment. Please contact one of the Committee members so that timings can be agreed and recorded.

For those of you with green fingers, as on previous years, we welcome any plants you may have raised over the last few months.

Flowers: Marigolds, Geraniums, Snap Dragons, Sweet Peas etc., any thing in flower will sell, as will well known varieties.

Herbs: from experience do very well; pot up Mint, Chives, Thyme and Sage.

Vegetables: Runner Beans, Climbing French Beans, Courgettes, Cucumbers.

Rhubarb: you would not believe how this flies off the shelf, if you have surplus rhubarb we would love to sell it. I hope your harvest is a good one this year.

Preserves and Jams: are also very popular, do you have a surplus we could sell for the allotment?

If you cannot drop produce off on the morning let a committee member know and we will arrange collection.

For new plot holders, it is a great chance to come along and socialise and pick up some vegetables, flowers and fruit plants for your new plot. Lets hope for a glorious sunny day.

Richard (Ben) Bennett

Class of Spring 2017

Allotment Work Party – Sunday 19th March



(Back Row)

Janet Collins/Keith Day/John Goulter/Chris James/Brian Penny/Cathy McDermott/John and Ann Marie Benwell
Richard(Ben) Bennett/Jonathan Draper/Mags and Colin Allerton/ Pippa Chapman

(Middle Row)

Phil James/Carolyn Maslin/Heather Fordham/Pete Quinlan/Steve Meager/Sue Day/Patrick Overy/Kate Rayner

(Front Row)

Richard Paxton/Colin Venton/Jane Coe/Ann Gooding





Ladies, and I know of one Gentleman, you put the Great British Bake Off tent to shame with your own Compton Allotment Bake Off. You are all Star Bakers.



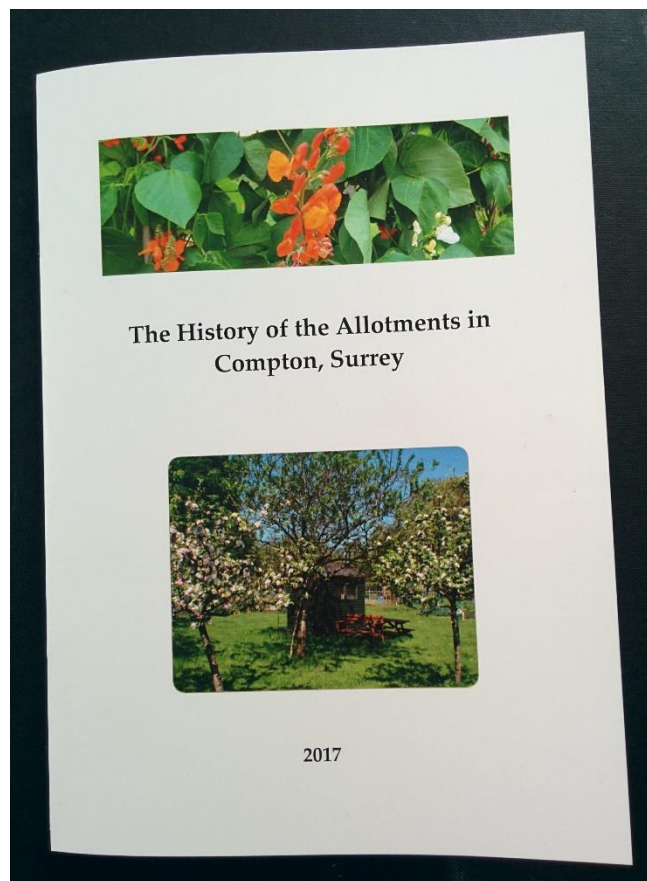
After the success of reading The History of the Allotments in the January Newsletter it was decided to have it printed so that it can be kept and read as a booklet.

The Parish Council generously donated the cost of printing to the allotments so profits from the sales go to our association.

So dig deep and please buy a copy.

Any remaining copies will be sold on our stall at the Compton Fete on 13th May.

Now on sale in booklet form



cost £5

**Available from Carolyn Maslin
please contact : maslincarolyn@gmail.com**

Rumoured to start blooming on St George's Day the bluebells should be out until the end of May

For those of you who are new to the allotment or anyone travelling from outside the local area and not in the know, you are in for a treat, you will only have to walk 200-300 yards from either gate.

Walk left out of the Withies gate and walk to the end of the allotment. Go straight ahead into the woods where the footpath sign is marked.

Walk right out of the Polsted Lane end gate and walk to the end of the allotment. Go left into the woods where the footpath sign is marked.

You are now in Bummoor copse! Go straight ahead and the colour and the scent will welcome you in.



Photographs taken early May 2016

Moroccan Vegetable Tagine

This is a tasty way of using up those last parsnips and winter vegetables

For the chermoula paste

1 red onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves
small knob of fresh peeled ginger
2 tsp. each of honey, cumin, paprika
and turmeric
2 hot chillies
50 ml oil
juice of a lemon

For the tagine

1 tbsp. oil
3 carrots, cut into chunks
3 parsnips, cut into chunks
2 onions, cut into chunks
1 large piece of pumpkin, cut into chunks
6 dates or figs

Method

To make the chermoula whiz the paste ingredients in the blender.

Heat the oven to 175 C.

Parboil the carrots and parsnips and pumpkin, drain.

Heat the oil in a heatproof casserole and fry the onion until lightly browned with the chermoula paste then add the rest of the vegetables.

Add the dates and 100 ml of water.

Cook in the oven for about an hour, check the liquid during the cooking process, more water may need to be added.

Chopped fresh mint can be sprinkled on top to serve.

Recipe – Carolyn Maslin



This (not so little toad) was enjoying the sunshine on Dave Underdown's plot during a warm day in March

He has found a damp little home, where he can be found on a regular basis.

We are now just looking for a name. Any ideas!

Photograph - Colin Venton

Rhubarb and Vanilla Jam

Makes 3 x 1 lb jars

Very easy to make and does not need lots of preparation. I never had any problem getting it to set. I had lots of rhubarb so I doubled it. The vanilla pods definitely stop it tasting too acidic.

1kg rhubarb, weight after trimming. Cut into 3cm chunks.
1kg jam sugar.
2 vanilla pods, halved lengthwise
Juice of 1 lemon



Method:

1. Put a small plate in freezer.
Put rhubarb into a preserving pan, or large saucepan. Add sugar and the halved vanilla pods.
2. Heat gently, stirring, until all the sugar is dissolved. Then pour in the lemon juice and increase the heat.
3. Boil for about 10 mins. Keep skimming off the scum as it boils. Fruit should now be soft.
Test for setting point using cold plate method, or if using a sugar thermometer the temperature should reach 105C.
If not ready, keep cooking for 2 minutes intervals, testing in between.
4. Once jam is ready let it cool for 15 mins. Ladle into warm, sterilised jars. Chop up vanilla pods so you have a bit for each jar. Cover with waxed disc.

Will keep for 6 months in a cool dark place.

Recipe – Val Venton



The Hedgehogs are now starting to get out and about

Please do not be the one to cause this.

Tidy up netting and anything else they may get trapped in.

This one was freed and made a full recovery within 15 minutes. Others may not be so lucky if you are away from your plot for any length of time.

Photograph - David Underdown