Please forward or share with as many plotholders as possible.
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MONTHLY ROUNDUP

Birmingham & District Allotment Confederation : 2024 Issue 1

Welcome

Welcome to something new from your confederation. With some much happening here in Birmingham on our allotments we (the executive") thought it would be a good idea to try and keep in touch more often and perhaps increase the number of plotholders aware of what is happening. To comment or contribute contact us at monthlyrounup@bdacallotments.co.uk

On the Plot

A look at somethings you could be doing down on the plot:
Pruning: Whilst fruit trees and bushes are dormant it is the best time to prune trees such as apples (not plums and cherries) and fruit bushes
On a lot of sites the plots are too wet and cold to put stuff in the ground but if you have cleared your plot and are desperate to get started here are a few things you can put in the ground but the best place for most seeds is somewhere warm and light.

1. Lettuce
2. Fava Beans
3. Peas
4. Onions
5. Carrots

6. Spinach & Mustard Greens
7. Radishes

Now is a good time to plant rhubarb and prepare the ground with compost for the growing season in early spring.

Let us know what you are growing on your plot in March ready for the next issue.

Healthy plants have strong roots, green leaves and healthy buds!

Birmingham has over 100 sites which BDAC represents. It needs more people with experience to grow our roots and develop an organisation which can truly support its members. Could you be one of these?

Wanted:

- People with experience and ideas about how allotment sites can be managed and developed to be a positive experience for everyone
- People with skills and experience which will help to build BDAC into an organisation which can enable, support and advise associations and campaign to keep our allotments viable and well-funded
- If you're interested and have any time to spare, get in touch with the Secretary Hester Blewitt at bdac.allotments@gmail.com or ring 07812 248447
- Particularly welcome: Administrative skills, IT skills, 'Advice & Guidance', Legal experience,
- Experience of building/surveying, Marketing, Fundraising from grants, and generally experience of running committees and projects

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Plot to Plate

This month's featured vegetable is the potato. The recent BDAC survey showed clearly that 100's of kilogrammes of potatoes are grown on plots and at this time of year the question is "Chit It or Leave It". The scientific evidence on which gives better yields is non-conclusive. We chit ours but that is more about finding something to do as the growing season approaches. Our conservatory becomes the home of over 10 varieties. The idea of a "humble spud" is a misnomer and whilst learning to cope with

This picture is taken from the RHS Schools

earlies, second earlies and main crop would be confusing enough throwing in terms like determinant and non-determinant makes it hard work to keep up. Our strategy has come down to selecting the varieties we like for the various roles that await them. Let them chit and then in March start putting them in buckets of compost which we emptied last year and then stand them on a layer of used horse bedding and let them get on with it, making sure that they get plenty of water. We gave up growing in the soil on the plot after spearing so many when digging. If you would like to know more check out this video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNXq9UoMfgY

website and the article

How to grow potatoes in containers
Choose and buy your seed potatoes from a garden centre or online retailer. There are many different varieties of potato so check which type they are and when they should be planted.

The Gardener's Supply Company has an excellent article on types of potatoes if you have yet to choose your favourites.

Kings Seeds have an excellent selection although not the cheapest but your site shop may have placed an order. Avoid planting supermarket potatoes as many are treated with growth inhibitors and other chemicals to help them store.

Dauphinoise Potatoes:

(from the BBC Good Food Guide)

Thin slices of potato slow cooked in the oven with cream and garlic – the most decadent of side dishes

STEP 1
Heat oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5.
STEP 2
Tip 500ml double cream, 500ml milk and 3 garlic cloves into a large saucepan and bring to a simmer.
STEP 3
Slice 8 large potatoes very finely, about 3-4mm, add them to the cream and simmer for 3 mins until just cooked.
STEP 4
Gently stir to separate the potato and stop it sinking and catching on the bottom of the pan.
STEP 5
Remove the potatoes with a slotted spoon and place in a wide shallow ovenproof dish so that they are about 5cm in depth.
STEP 6
Pour over the garlic infused cream (discarding the garlic) – just enough to seep through the layers and leave a little moisture on the surface.
STEP 7
Scatter over 100g grated gruyère cheese, if using, then bake for 30 mins until the potatoes are soft and browned – increase the heat for 5 mins if not brown enough.

Tell us about your favourite fruit, vegetables and win an allotment voucher

This picture, looking forward to summer is from a plotholder at Birches Green

Send us your favourite picture from your site and win a voucher.

Exec' Update

BIRMINGHAM & DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS CONFEDERATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

14:00 SATURDAY 23RD APRIL 2023

BORDESLEY GREEN ALLOTMENTS

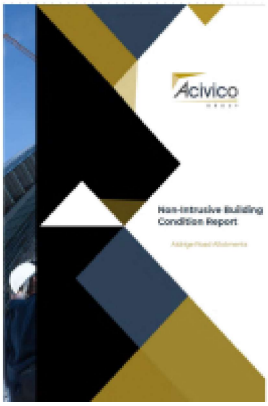
From Confederation to Cooperative

Birmingham & District Allotment Confederation needs to adapt if it is to meet the needs of the associations and their members in both the current political and economic crisis.

Central to this is the move to become a Cooperative; working closely with the National Allotment Society and its law team a new constitution, terms of reference etc.. are being drafted ready for the next AGM so please ensure your association is represented as it. This will be the biggest change in the history of BDAC. Linked to this may be the opportunity for larger sites to take on greater management responsibilities or for sites to give up their committees and be centrally run. Changes that will affect all sites and all tenants.

Further details, including agenda and motions will be sent directly to association secretaries

Cotact Hester Blewitt secretary@bdacallotments



Non-Intrusive Building Condition Report

Back in 2021 BCC employed Acivico to undertake a Non-Intrusive Building Condition reports on a number of Birmingham City Council assets including their allotment buildings. The work that they considered needing doing and the cost of maintenance was never shared. Now following a Freedom of Information request by a member of the Executive 79 of the reports are now available.

Click here to find your site. If you are missing let us know.

Support, Development and Training

Help us find out what support, development and training plotholders, committees and officers would like by taking a few minutes to complete the online survey on our website.

Click here to fill in the questionnairre

Insurance Form

This year the insurance firm is asking us for additional data before issuing the necessary policy. If they have not already completed the form then this needs doing as a matter of urgency. A link has been sent to secretaries but if you have not had it click here and complete the form online.

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE

ALREADY COMPLETED THE FORM

Find out more on their website

March Edition includes details of RHS Visit to Birmingham.

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