

## **Be Safe – Keep Safe! – Face Coverings**

Dear Member

We hope you are remaining well and safe at this most difficult time. The government have now announced changes in legislation affecting the wearing of

### **FACE COVERINGS**

From Friday 24 July, you will need to follow the new government legislation on face coverings while visiting our TRADING HUT.

All members except those who have reasonable cause, such as a health condition, disability, physical or mental impairment, should wear a face mask, scarf or other covering. Not all exemptions are visible, so please make us aware if this applies to you as you will not be allowed to enter our TRADING HUT without a face covering.

The most recent government directives can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

In summary the following apply

In England, [you must wear a face covering by law](#) in the following settings:

- public transport
- indoor transport hubs (airports, rail and tram stations and terminals, maritime ports and terminals, bus and coach stations and terminals)
- shops and supermarkets (places which are open to the public and that wholly or mainly offer goods or services for retail sale or hire)
- indoor shopping centres
- banks, building societies, and post offices (including credit unions, short-term loan providers, savings clubs and money service businesses)

You are expected to wear a face covering immediately before entering any of these settings and must keep it on until you leave.

You are also strongly encouraged to wear a face covering in other enclosed public spaces where social distancing may be difficult and where you come into contact with people you do not normally meet.

# ALSAGER GARDENS ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN No 7 To All Members

25 July 2020

**So please adhere to this requirement and wear a face covering whilst visiting our Trading Hut.**

Members are also reminded that they will need to conform with all government advice on social distancing and you are also advised to wear disposable gloves

and remember - when attending the hut only one person will be allowed inside at a time.

A queue will need to be formed outside of the hut practicing social distancing keeping 2 metres apart. You need to be prepared for any bad weather - if it is raining the above will still be applied – ***no more than one person will be allowed inside the hut at any one time.***

## **Growing Food for Health and Wellbeing - 10 to 16 August 2020**

**Still time to enter the National Allotments Week Competition - tell us your Allotment Story**

- "What my allotment means to me" for individuals (14 years upwards)- **non-members free NAS membership plus £50**
- "The history of our site" or "Our site's projects and plans for the future" for associations - **non-members free association membership up to the value of £200**
- "What I grow at the allotment" for children (up to 14 years)- **£50 prize**

We are asking for short mobile phone videos or storyboards (slides on a power point or even illustrations) We are not looking for Oscar Winners, just stories that illustrate how much our members love their plots!

**Go To** <https://www.nsalg.org.uk/news-events-campaigns/national-allotments-week/> for more details. **Deadline 31 July**

## **TRADING HUT OPENING TIMES**

**10.30am – 11.30pm**

**LAST Sunday in the Month**

**Sunday 28 June**

**Sunday 26 July**

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August**

**Sunday 27 September**

**Sunday 25 October**

**Order to be emailed to Adrian Ford at**

[adrian\\_ford62@hotmail.com](mailto:adrian_ford62@hotmail.com)

**For New Price List**

Go to [www.alsagergardensassociation.org.uk](http://www.alsagergardensassociation.org.uk)

**The Hut will be staffed by Adrian and Judith Ford along with one other committee member. The 2020 Hut Rota is no longer applicable.**

***We hope that in 2021 we can revert to our usual weekly opening. Details will be published in January 2021.***

**Mr Fothergill's Recalls Some Courgette Zucchini Seeds**



Mr Fothergill's, the Newmarket based seed experts, have recalled stocks of Courgette Zucchini with the batch code I on the packet (located after the printed use by date) as a small number of seeds could produce bitter tasting fruits.

This follows a small number of complaints from customers who have experienced stomach pain and nausea after eating fruits. All remaining stocks from the warehouse, unpacked seeds and seeds in retail outlets are being recovered and destroyed.

The company believe that the naturally occurring cucurbitacins, which normally exist in very small amounts, have been increased by cross-pollination in the seed production cycle. High temperatures, dryness and other stresses when growing can also cause the increase in cucurbitacins. This causes a bitter flavour and, occasionally, stomach problems once eaten.

Since the flowers are insect pollinated it is possible for a seed received in a seed packet to have been cross pollinated with wild cucurbits, resulting in these high levels of cucurbitacins. When the cause of the bitterness is bred into the plant like this, the bitterness does not improve with better growing conditions.

The occurrence of this problem is extremely rare, but not unknown, and is untraceable before growing out again for harvest. It is not an issue listed by the Horticultural Trades Association, whose caution labelling guidelines the company voluntarily and rigorously follows.

Mr Fothergill's have traced the problem to one particular lot of seed which comes from a grower with the most meticulous growing and husbandry routines. It could be that not all plants in a courgette patch could be affected. They can be tasted raw and, if bitter, spit out the sample and discard that plant.

Mr Fothergill's Tim Jeffries said: "We have reacted promptly to a handful of complaints we have received from our customers to withdraw seed and make efforts to advise customers to avoid any discomfort. The problem is impossible to test for in the seed itself and we have never had a batch of seed like this in our history. We wish to act responsibly and make every effort to advise people.

**Anyone who inspects their packets and finds the code letter I printed near the dating information should contact the company through the website [mr-fothergills.co.uk](http://mr-fothergills.co.uk) and a replacement packet will be sent for future use"**



**SEEDS SCHEME**

**Coming Soon!**

Look out for our August bulletin when we will be providing you with the details of how to get your Kings Seed Catalogue and how to order your seeds

**David Spall – Trading Secretary**

## “COW MUCK”



A discussion took place at a recent committee meeting regarding the cow manure which was sourced by the Association in October 2019.

**Derek Hough**  
**President of the AGA writes**

“For as long as I can remember, muck was good for gardens and allotments. We have been grateful to the association for obtaining muck and selling it at a very reasonable rate”

### **Aminopyralid and Clopyralid**

After the introduction of selective weed killers or herbicides (such as aminopyralid) for farmers about 15 years ago, some weed killer residues were found in manure. This occurred a few years ago when a weed killer was produced which did not affect grass, but which killed broad-leaved weeds, particularly dock. It seems these herbicide residues are being found again in manure, in some cases.

The weed killer was broken down inside ruminants (that is, animals which chew the cud, such as cows) and so cow muck was deemed safe BUT it was not broken down by non-ruminants (such as horses). The product was withdrawn by the manufacturer but was re-introduced a couple of years later, with the manufacturer's instructions saying it was not suitable for use on pasture grazed by horses.

Some allotment holders have recently reported symptoms like those seen with the weed killer poisoning and blame it on the manure which was purchased by the association. I have checked the offending crop, and it does appear to be similar to the cases of herbicide poisoning which I have seen, BUT it was sporadic with the majority of crops not showing any signs.

This is the background to the debate. One side suggested the farmer was at fault and that the Association should have had a written guarantee that the product was safe before it was supplied. The farmer in this case had given a verbal guarantee.

It must be pointed out that the Royal Horticultural Society have stated that **“The Health and Safety executive has investigated the risk to human health and concluded that produce from the affected land is safe to eat”**.

Members' views range from “the farmer is a lying ....” to “the committee are negligent and should pay the plot holders”.

I know the farmer personally, and I know that the advocates of both views are honest and work for the good of the Association.

### **So how can this arise?**

My view is that the product is broken down in the rumen, i.e. as the cow digests the grass, hay, or silage. Sometimes the manure contains some amount of uneaten or undigested grass. This would still contain the poison. It would then affect only the parts of the ground which were spread with the grassy parts of the manure.

**It's a Widespread Problem!**

The committee has done further research and it appears to be a widespread problem, not just affecting manure but also shop-bought compost. The complexity of supply chain may make it difficult to trace the source of the contamination. The farmer may not have used the product themselves, but it may be in the feed or bedding they have bought in.

Horse owners who supply manure would have to prove not only had they not used the product on their grazing land, but any hay and feed which may have been purchased was also produced without the herbicide.

So, it could be that both sides are right and that both sides of the debate can get back together again.

**Going Forward**

The committee must make up its mind as to whether or not to supply muck next year.

The allotment holders can make up their minds as to whether to buy it!

**Derek Hough - President**

*Please see the links below for more information about this article including reassurances that affected crops are safe to eat and what can be done about manure suspected of containing aminopyralid*

*The Health and Safety Executive*

*<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides/using-pesticides/general/issues-associated-with-the-use-of-farm-yard-manure-containing.htm>*

*The RHS website <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=477>*

**That's all for this month!**

**Be Safe and Keep Safe!**

**The AGA Executive Committee**

**25 July 2020**

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