

Be Safe – Keep Safe!

Dear Members

We hope this bulletin finds you safe and well at a time when the incidence of Covid 19 cases is again on the rise and further restrictions are placed upon us.

*Government restrictions changed again on 12th October and Cheshire East is now an area where the **local COVID alert level is HIGH.***

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-level-high>

The latest advice and directives can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

Click on this link to read about **Self isolating**

Click on this link to read about **social distancing**

Click on this link to read some useful advice about hygiene **Germ Defence**

For NHS information and advice **[Click Here](#)**

Can I still attend my Allotment Plot?

Our advice regarding attending your allotment plot remains the same

It is vitally important that you follow all the advice about the rule of 6, social distancing and hygiene and the points below and do not gather on site.

1. Non- Members of the AGA are not allowed on our Allotment Sites

It is essential that no un-authorized people are allowed onto the allotment sites for the duration of this emergency. Known co-workers are members so this is not a problem, but people who are **not members of the AGA are no longer allowed on the allotment sites.**

2. Closure of Toilet Buildings on Allotment Sites

Our toilet buildings will remain closed for the foreseeable future.

3. General Precautions

Members are advised that if you feel unwell at all you should not visit the allotment site. If you display any symptoms of coronavirus you must stay at home and self-isolate for at least 14 days or until symptoms have passed. Under no circumstances should you visit the allotments.

You should take the following precautionary measures when attending the allotment

- Keep hand sanitiser or another suitable product such as antibacterial wipes with you.
- Think about the things you come into contact with as part of your allotment journey. For example use hand sanitiser/wipes before opening and closing any gate locks, consider the use of disposable gloves.
- Observe “Social Distancing” with each other recommended at 2 metres.
- Do not share tools.
- Minimise the contact with each other, for example no handshakes.
- Do not wash your hands in water troughs or other containers of water
- If you display any symptoms of coronavirus stay at home and self-isolate for at least 14 days or until symptoms have passed. Under no circumstances should you visit the allotments.

Need to Contact Us?

Should you have any issues or if you are not able to attend to your allotment plot for an extended time, then please contact your site manager in writing as follows:

- Cedar Avenue Mike Hubbard 07979 968932 mrh712@live.co.uk
- Coronation Ave Mike Smith 877265 michael.smith619@btinternet.com
- Talke Road John Nixon 873445 nicojnixon12@talktalk.net
- Lawton Road Adrian Ford 877363 or 07976 978976 adrian_ford62@hotmail.com

or email the Secretary at alsagergardensassociationsecretary@outlook.com



SEED SCHEME

Hurry!

CLOSING 24th October 2020

Your seed and potato order needs to be with David Spall no later than Saturday 24th October 2020.

You still have time to get a catalogue direct from David Spall – details below - or your site manager. But Hurry! Time is ticking away!

Orders should be sent to
David Spall - Trading Secretary
63 Pikemere Road, Alsager,
Stoke on Trent, ST7 2SN
Tel:- 01270 874117
Or send a word file by Email:
d.e.spall@btopenworld.com

TRADING HUT OPENING TIMES

10.30am – 11.30am

LAST Sunday in the Month

FINAL DAY OF TRADING THIS YEAR

Sunday 25 October

Order to be emailed to Adrian Ford at
adrian_ford62@hotmail.com

[For New Price List](#)

Go to 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.



Tomato Chutney Recipe

As I had rather a lot of tomatoes and apples, I was looking for a quick and easy recipe and found this one fit the bill. I had a mixture of tomatoes, but most were small tumbler, so I wasn't keen on the idea of peeling them all! Having consulted my sister, and being told that most of the nutrients are in the skin (Carotenoids and Flavanols) I decided to do a very quick whizz of three quarters of the tomatoes in the blender - just long enough to chop them up. It turned out very well and is rather tasty! By the way, as I had no cooker's I used dessert apples.

Ingredients

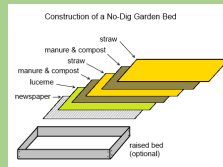
1kg [ripe tomato](#), peeled and chopped
750g [cooking apple](#), peeled, cored and chopped
375g [light muscovado sugar](#)
250g [onion](#), chopped
250g raisins
1 [green pepper](#), deseeded and chopped
2 tsp [salt](#)
½ tsp ground ginger
350ml [cider vinegar](#)

Method

Put all the ingredients into a large pan and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Stir occasionally until the sugar has dissolved. Boil the mixture, uncovered, for about 45-50 mins until the fruit is tender and thickened. Cool, then transfer the mixture to a sterilised jar and seal.

NAS Annual General Meeting

2pm on 7th November 2020 via Zoom



TALK

“Raised Beds and No- Dig Cultivation”

By Mike Poultney

Followed by a short break and then the AGM

Message from John McNab West Midland Regional Secretary

If you are interested in attending the NAS AGM email John at johnmcnab2010@gmail.com

Hi Everyone,

I hope that you are all surviving and enjoying your allotments. They do seem to be the safest place, other than your home, to be at the moment and for the foreseeable future.

*Bearing this in mind, our Annual General Meeting 2020 will **not** now take place in Walsall. Instead it is intended to hold it via Zoom, with the Head Office holding the licence and very kindly facilitating the meeting.*

If you have managed to access this email you are nearly there.

The next thing to do is notify me of your wish to be "present" at the A.G.M. (email johnmcnab2010@gmail.com The meeting can hold a maximum of 100 people so tickets will be on a first come first served basis.)

I will send you an email containing the link to the meeting and, on the day, just before two o'clock, you click on the link and via the wonders of IT you will be in the Meeting's Waiting Room.

When the host is ready you will be let into the Meeting.

You may need to click on a picture of a video camera for everyone to see you but that is all.

Best wishes,

John McNab

West Midland Regional Secretary

johnmcnab2010@gmail.com

“Make Your Own Compost”

Hilary Robinson, AGA membership Secretary, Master Composter and Waste Reduction Volunteer, explains to us how simple it is to make our own compost.

Hilary and her colleagues are available to help with composting problems and queries, as well as recycling and Love Food Hate Waste topics.

You can contact Hilary via her email address hilrobinson@hotmail.com.

Why we should all make compost

- Home-made compost is a **free product** which can be used to feed and condition the soil, and in making potting mixes.
- It is made from recycled garden and kitchen waste, and can also include paper products.
- It helps cut down on landfill/incineration by keeping compostable matter out of the black bin.
- Compost is a “living” product which enhances soil health and improves plants’ resistance to disease.
- Composting is an aerobic, bacterial rotting process which does not give off the greenhouse gas methane. Organic matter rotting in anaerobic conditions (such as landfill) gives off methane. When burnt, carbon dioxide is emitted.

Making and using compost is the cornerstone of gardening.

The finished product is rich, dark, crumbly and sweet-smelling. Compost-making is often considered to be complex, but all you need to do is provide the right ingredients and let nature do the rest. However, a little know-how will help you make better compost, more efficiently.

Compost bins can be made or bought, in many designs. A basic black plastic “Dalek” can be bought at a garden centre or online. There are lots of fancier types, or you can make your own from timber. Home-made bins often have the advantage of providing homes for wildlife such as reptiles, amphibians and bumble-bees.

For best results, use a mixture of types of ingredient. The right balance is something learnt by experience, but a rough guide is to use equal amounts by volume of “greens” and “browns” (see below).

Anything that was once living will compost, but some items are best avoided. Meat, dairy and cooked food can attract vermin and should not be home-composted.

Some things, like grass mowings and soft young weeds, rot quickly. They work as ‘activators’ or ‘hotter rotters’, getting the composting started, but on their own will decay to a smelly mess. Mix well with “brown” items.

Older and tougher plant material is slower to rot but gives body to the finished compost - and usually makes up the bulk of a compost heap. Woody items decay very slowly; they are best chopped or shredded first, where appropriate.

‘Greens’ (nitrogen-rich ingredients)

- Grass cuttings, young weeds, tops of perennial weeds, comfrey leaves
- Urine (ideally diluted 20:1)
- Uncooked fruit and vegetable peelings & trimmings
- Tea bag contents and tea leaves, coffee grounds
- Soft green prunings
- Animal manure from herbivores e.g. cows, horses, rabbits; poultry manure

‘Browns’ (carbon-rich ingredients - slow to rot)

- Cardboard e.g. cereal packets, toilet roll tubes and egg boxes
- Waste paper and junk mail, including shredded confidential waste
- Newspaper & magazines - although in general it’s better to send them for recycling
- Bedding (hay, straw, shredded paper, wood shavings) from vegetarian pets eg rabbits and guinea pigs
- Tough hedge clippings, woody prunings
- Old bedding plants
- Sawdust, wood shavings, straw
- Autumn leaves (use them to make leaf-mould if quantities are large)

Other compostable items

- Wood ash, in moderation
- Hair, nail clippings, egg shells (scrunched up)
- Natural fibres, eg wool or cotton (need to be chopped or shredded)
- Vacuum cleaner contents (not from synthetic carpets)

Do NOT compost

- Meat, fish, cooked food
- Coal & coke ash
- Cat & dog faeces, mineral cat litter, disposable nappies

Perennial weed roots and diseased material should be put in your garden waste bin.

Method using a “cool heap”

1. Site your bin, ideally on soil and where it will get some sunshine.
2. It may help if you place a few woody plant stems or small twigs on the bottom first, especially if using a plastic bin, as this will improve the air circulation and drainage.
3. Start filling the bin. Aim for a mix of “green” & “brown” items. Spread the ingredients out to the edges and firm down gently. Alternate soft and tough items, or mix them together first. If items are very dry, water well every 30-60cm.
4. Continue to fill the container. Items can be added individually, but a bigger batch is preferable. If most of what you compost is kitchen waste, mix it with egg boxes, used kitchen paper, loo roll middles and similar paper products to create a better balance.
5. When the container is full - which it may never be as the contents will sink as it composts - or when you decide to, stop adding any more. Then either just leave it to finish composting or go to Step 6.
6. Remove the container, or everything from the container. If the lower layers have composted, use this on the garden. Mix everything else together well; add water if it is dry, or dry material if it is soggy. Replace in the bin and leave to mature.
7. Compost can be made in six to eight weeks in warm weather, or it can take a year or more. In general, the more effort you put in, the quicker you will get compost. Turning compost will add air and speed up the decaying process. However, it will still become compost if you never turn it, it will just take longer.
8. When the ingredients you have put in your container have turned into a dark brown, earthy-smelling material, the composting process is complete. It is then best left for a month or two to ‘mature’ before it is used. Don’t worry if your compost is not fine and crumbly. Even if it is lumpy, sticky or stringy, with bits of twig and eggshell still obvious, it is quite usable.

Cheshire East Council / ANSA scheme

The system ANSA are now running is based on a new facility near Crewe. The contents of garden waste bins, which can now also contain food waste of any sort BUT NOT PAPER OR CARDBOARD, are collected and taken to the depot. They are shredded and heated, then composted to make municipal soil improver. The heating ensures that any diseased material is made harmless, so even blighted potatoes etc can be put in the bin.

Note that paper and cardboard are fire risks. They should be put in your silver (recycling) bin.

Obviously it is better to dispose of organic matter in your garden/food waste bin than in the black bin. But home composting is better still, as it is done in situ with no “rubbish miles” involved at either end of the process.

More information is available on the following websites:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/Advice/Profile?PID=444>

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/waste_and_recycling/bins-waste-and-recycling.aspx



Association News

Committee Meetings

Throughout the pandemic and since March 2020 your committee has been meeting regularly via ZOOM to progress the business of the association and ensure that members are kept up to date with the latest government advice and in touch with the latest AGA news.

We will be continuing these bulletins on a regular basis going forward but hope to produce our usual Winter Newsletter along with the allotment plot invoices in early January.

Remember if you are looking to give up your plot at the end of this year you need to give us advance notice in writing by 30th November.

AGM

It remains unclear as to whether we will be able to hold our annual AGM in February 2020.

We will continue to monitor the situation and take advice accordingly.



“MORE COW MUCK”

Further to the article
in bulletin No 7

Following requests from our members, the AGA has sourced a provider for manure. We believe this to be free from any herbicides but there is no cast iron guarantee given the way in which these toxins can enter the farm food chain.

Each person will need to decide on a purchase based on these facts and that the AGA believes this is a reliable and credible source of manure.

The manure is expected on allotment sites toward the end of October. The charge will be 60p per barrow and payment can be made in the Trading Hut if it is open or by bank transfer to the AGA account as follows

**Alsager Gardens Association
Sort 60 01 12 Account 01020420**

**In the reference field please put the first 3 letters of your allotment site (CED/COR/TAL/LAW) followed by your surname and the word Manure
In this example I have used the surname “McIntosh”**

Example CEDMcIntoshManure Note- There is a maximum of 18 digits

*If you pay by bank transfer, please make sure you email our Treasurer David Pitt so that he can track the details of your payment for the accounts.
davidpitt4@sky.com*