

Happiness is plant shaped

Plants have a wonderful way of making people happy. Two of the ways in which I have witnessed plants making people happy can be seen by the copy of the letter printed beneath. The reason why I think it is relevant to this magazine is that two of our Allotmenters were involved in creating this shared happiness since Jackie Jones and her sister Daphne Mixabel who are avid plant -aholics grew lots of the plants involved or bought them at the many shows that they go to and grew them on and divided them when necessary to add to their contributions.

Extract of Letter –

Every May over the last ten Years members of the University and other keen gardeners in Liverpool flocked to the Faculty of Veterinary Science to buy plants at very reasonable prices. These plants Were professionally catalogued and the ladies selling them provided clients with tips and information on how to grow and maintain their plants. Alas the plant sale of this year (2004) is the last one! What many buyers may not have been aware is that all the proceeds were going for charitable purposes. These incredible women were putting all the time and energy required to grow and sell these plants to support victims of war and drought in Eritrea.

Of the money raised on behalf of the Friends of Eritrea/UK, a registered charity, £4,000 was used to send medical supplies~ £3-000 was used to send books and journals collected by the charity and £3,000 was used for the transport of supplementary food for displaced people donated by UNICEF. The money raised this year will be used for the transport of second-hand books and computers for a public library in Keren, a small town in Eritrea.

On behalf of all the beneficiaries and the Trustees of the Friends of Eritrea/UK, I would like to express my gratitude to Paddy Christian, Jackie Jones, Lynn Maclean and all those who supported them.

Zerai Woldehiwet

Chairman, Friends of Eritrea/UK

End of extract-

That happiness is plant shaped was proved just by seeing the delight on the faces of the people buying the beautiful, bargain priced plants and by reading the above letter confirms that plants have a wonderful power to spread happiness as I am sure all you Plant-aholics will agree.

Editor



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-Mr. Frugality-

We are considering running a competition to find the most frugal Allotmenteer in Britain. We would like you to submit your entries to this magazine. Let me relate to you one of the stories about one of our many frugal Allotmenters.

It was always a very tortuous process trying to extract the allotment rent from him and when he finally did submit it one could almost see him sweating blood to be parted from his money, when I say his money that is a dubious statement to make, since the rent money he submitted would be in pennies and twopences which were hardly recognizable as such because they must have been run over thousands of times and when Mr. Frugality was riding his bike along the road he would stop and pick these battered coins up. Mr. Frugality's eyesight must have been 20/20 or whatever A 1 eyesight is, he would have made a crack shot rifleman except he would have been too tight to part with the bullets. Since, Mr. Frugality would not pay rent for his accommodation he decided he would live on his allotment, so he had a wood-burning stove in his shed and a couch to lie upon. As he never spent any money we can only make a guess as to where he obtained his clothes and shoes, he always seemed to have another worldly, past times appearance. Upon settling down for the night he had an oil-lit storm lamp (no idea where the oil came from probably old used stuff which the "chippy" threw out, since he could not pass a single thing in the street without bringing it onto the plots (I would be doing "the inventory until Jan. 2006 of the junk he collected) anyway back to the story he has his oil lamp besides him and a pitchfork in his hand whilst lying on his couch in his allotment shed in the middle of the night and on a particular night a vandal broke into the allotments and opened Mr. Frugality's shed at 2 am only to see him lying there with the pitchfork in his hand, the vandal must have thought all his sins were catching him up and he was seeing Satan himself lying there, we still don't know who got the biggest fright the vandal or Mr. Frugality. To be continued with further frugal frontals in the next issue. Please let us have your stories of frugality.

G.Mallanaphy

Carrot Calamity

We are all aware of the fierce competition and committed passion that goes into growing for the big National Shows but how many of us have been 'Witness to the ferocity and passion that goes into growing for the small local shows and the competition to win 5Op or £1.00 in the more generous shows and the extremely hard work needed, for example of digging up row upon row of potatoes, in order to obtain five good ones to make up a show plate. This besides the hours spent preparing items for the show table and the time and money spent going to the show and displaying correctly and to the best advantage. However, despite all this hard work the excitement of the entrants when they find that they have won a prize is almost palpable.

A few of our Allotmenters have won lots of prestigious cups and medals over many years. One particular person has been entering the local shows for more than twenty years and has always been a great advocate of telling everyone to study and stick to the schedule 'With utmost diligence.

However, there are one or two younger growers and showers who are sweeping the board, sadly these First Prize winners do not belong to our Allotment Site. One person in particular has the most spectacular parsnips and carrots which would surely sweep the board in more grander National Shows, he has a most laid back manner when placing his exhibits, which he does in a matter of minutes just before the time is up for doing so. This he did a couple of seasons ago. However, our schedule scrutiniser had been checking the schedule and arranging his own display for over an hour.

When the judging was over it was excruciating to see that the super grower had not followed the schedule correctly and had entered two varieties of carrot instead of two types of vegetable in his arrangement on the Top Tray entry. But our schedule scrutiniser won the Gold Medal although his produce was not as good quality as the disqualified carroters. But his maxim still hold - stick rigidly to the schedule or you are wasting your time.



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SPROUT YOUR OWN GREENS

As a means to extending your growing season and provide fresh greens for your table all year round - have you ever considered growing 'sprouting seeds'? Sprouted seeds can be grown in a jar or other suitable container on your kitchen window sill or in a warm airing cupboard.

Before you dismiss the idea of sprouting your own seeds) you should consider the fact that a tablespoon full of Alfalfa seeds or approximately 25ml by volume will sprout to about 500ml by volume in as little as 5 days. There are many seeds which can be sprouted some of the popular ones are Alfalfa, Fenugreek, Mung and Aduki Beans and of course Mustard and Cress. Other seeds which can be readily sprouted are Barley, Chick Peas, Lentil, Oats, Pumpkin, Radish, Sesame, Sunflower, Soya Beans and Wheat. Also should you wish to, Burdock seeds can also be sprouted.

Sprouted seeds contain an excellent balance of amino and fatty acids with a high mineral content, sprouted beans such as Mung & Aduki are protein rich. When you sprout your seeds, they need no application of fungicides or insecticides and no other growth enhancers other than water. When ready they can be eaten straight from the jar without any further preparation in just three to five days from them starting to sprout, although this depends on type.

It really is easy to sprout your seeds and the equipment you need is minimal as per the following.

- (1) Glass jars or clear plastic containers such as sweet jars. (2) Flat Trays or some seed Trays
- (3) Cheesecloth or Muslin and some rubber bands. (4) Strainer or colander with a fine mesh.
- (5) Water purifier - not strictly necessary but useful as some seeds need pure water before they will germinate although to date the writer has had no problems germinating seeds using tap-water as supplied to households in Liverpool.
- (6) Some suitable airtight containers to store your un-sprouted seeds in.

As noted above you can sprout most types of seed anywhere and at any time of the year using the equipment listed above, you can use anything as long as it lets light through to the seeds. But it should be noted that some seeds need to be sprouted in the dark as sunlight causes them to develop a bitter taste. Should you be tempted to try sprouting your own seeds, a good start could be made by ordering some Alfalfa seeds from Dobies, taking advantage of the Allotments and Gardens 50% discount deal with them. If you do, you should then proceed as follows. (This procedure can be followed for almost all small sprouted seeds)

Place seed in a fine sieve and rinse with lukewarm water. Transfer into your jar or other suitable container and cover with water, cover with Cheesecloth or Muslin and securing it with an elastic band. Then leave to soak in pure water (optional) for 6 - 8 hours or over night.

After soaking, turn jar over and drain off soak water. If you used pure water, you could save this for use watering plants you have growing in the house or conservatory.

Place container on its side in a warm place.

Rinse and drain twice on a daily basis e.g. morning and evening until the sprouts are ready.

When the seeds have sprouted and show a short root with a shoot about 25mm/1" long they are then ready to be eaten.

Dobies estimate that 4 tablespoons of Alfalfa seeds (14grams or 1/2 ounce) will produce 175gram - 6 ounces sprouted greens in 5 days. All quantities given above are approximate as there may be some slight variation due to actual design of the bowl of the spoon.

The above method can be used for sprouting all seeds although larger seeds such as beans and grains will need a longer soak. While some such as Mustard and Cress need no initial soaking but can be sown direct onto a growing medium such as a damp paper towel on a suitable tray. However, if all else fails you really cannot go wrong if you follow the instructions given on the packet.

No Gain without Pain

Having an allotment site 10 minutes away from the Accident and Emergency department of a huge district general hospital has proved exceedingly provident on more than one occasion. Such as when one of our allotmenters fell through the greenhouse he was building and severed a blood vessel in his armpit and when someone else fell and suffered a broken leg, in each of these cases the people made full recoveries with the services of the A & E.

However, sometimes if someone has twisted or sprained or injured a limb, which injury is not classed as an emergency then the wait in A&E can, as lots of you will know, be anything up to four or five hours, so in those instances having an A&E 10 minutes away is ineffectual, since the injured person could fly to Spain or France to be treated by the time they have waited in A&E to be seen. We have found that if someone suffers a sprain or none emergency injury such as dropping a weight onto a foot, the use of a comfrey compress assists healing immensely, as long as there is no open wound or obvious signs of shock. Even if the injured person decides to go to the hospital, the application of the compress as a first measure and left in situ whilst the patients' waiting to be seen will help the healing process.

The method of making the Comfrey solution is firstly by gathering enough Comfrey leaves to fill a plastic dustbin, then before putting the leaves into the bin, fit a tap to the bottom of the bin, then put the leaves in with a weight on top of them in order for the juice to be squeezed out of them. Attach a container to the tap leaving the tap open and the Comfrey juice will drain into the container.

To use the Comfrey solution, simply pour the solution onto old clean cloths and wrap the soaked cloths around the injured limb. You will find that the Comfrey helps the healing process to begin. Just a word of warning it smells disgusting but it is worth persevering with the smell to reap the benefits of the Comfrey since, as with all medicine there is no gain without pain and the smell is the pain in this medicine.

The smell may be of benefit to you as well, since if you wrap the compress around your injury when you go to the hospital it may help you to empty the A&E of some of the patients in there when they smell it, the benefit of the smell to you is that you will go nearer to the top of the queue.

If you decide not to use it as a compress it can be used as tomato feed, just dilute it the same as any proprietary brand.

J.Jackson

THOUGHTS ON BECOMING A HORTICULTURAL AND ALLOTMENT JUDGE TOM COOPER. NVS & RHS JUDGE. A&GC NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER

As a keen showman for a number of years, after talking to experienced judges and exhibitors, I realised how little I knew about what judges looked for when marking the vast range of classes entered at most horticultural shows.

Both the NVS and RHS provide a judges guide book for the various classes of vegetables, fruit and flowers. The NVS book only covers vegetables of course. The RHS covers the whole range of classes you will find at your local Horticultural and Craft shows including cakes, bread and wine etc.

Training for judges seems to vary depending on area. The NVS prefer a hands-on approach where you accompany experienced judges around shows before sitting the exams. The theory paper is based on a good knowledge of the Judges Guide then a practical test where your scoring of sets of exhibits is checked by a panel judges.

For the RHS training, I was very fortunate in being close to the Leicester College where Leicester Judges Guild hold evening classes with both practical and theory classes from September to May. They also have a guest speakers on specialised subjects i.e. chemical and organic pest control, different growing methods etc.

June to September is a very busy time for the Guild but they still find time for the students one evening per month. During the summer the classes take place at one of the judge's gardens at home for subjects that are difficult to stage at college – for instance the judging of hanging baskets and containers, gardens and allotments.

From June to September my local Leicester Judges Guild provide judges for fifty shows and events. Some of these may require up to six judges and some, like the City of Leicester Allotment Competition can take up to five days to judge. At nearly all these events individual students are allowed to accompany the qualified judges learning all the time and gaining valuable experience.

At the end of the three year course most students feel well prepared for their examination. First there is the written exam, then the wait to see if you have passed before being allowed to take the practical a few weeks later. Then the long terrible wait to hear from the RHS Examination Board as to whether or not you have passed.

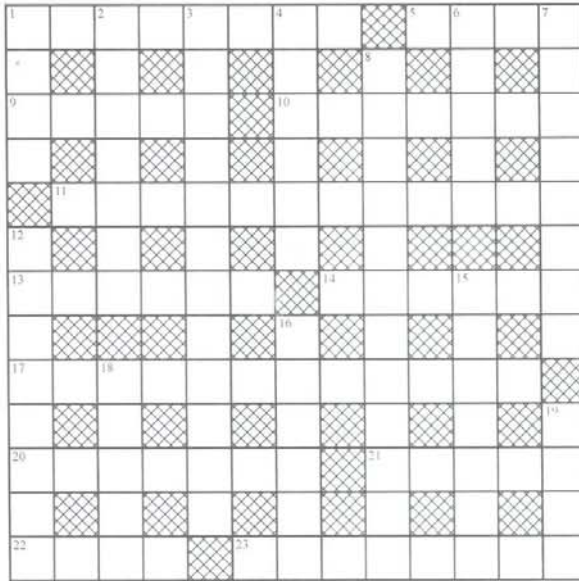
Thank goodness I was lucky enough to pass and am now a qualified judge.



Contacts for training by National Vegetable Society & RHS Guilds of Judges

Berkshire Guild of Judges and Lecturers
Berkshire Federation of Horticultural Societies
Bucks Association of Horticultural Societies
Dorset Federation of Horticultural Societies
East Midland Regional Federation
Essex Guild of Horticultural Judges
Gloucestershire Federation of Gardening Societies
Greater Manchester, Merseyside & North Cheshire Allotment & Leisure Gardens Council
Hampshire Federation of Horticultural Societies
Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies
Leicester & Leicestershire Horticultural Judges' Guild
Middlesex Federation of Horticultural & Allotment Societies
Plymouth & District Garden & Allotment Federation
QED Allotments Group
Scottish Gardeners Forum
Somerset Federation of Gardening Clubs
Staffordshire Association of Garden Guilds
Stockport Federation
Suffolk Horticultural & Produce Association
Surrey Horticultural Federation
Westmorlands & North Lancashire Federation of Horticultural Show Societies

Anyone wanting further information, contact Tom Cooper 02476 318220.



Doodle Area

(Answers on Page 15)

Across.

- 1 Iron a cat for this variety. (7)
- 5 Fish for a complaint. (4)
- 9 This variety is almost a character from the 'Wind in the Willows' we hear. (5)
- 10 The Streetcar screamed E when she saw this variety. (7)
- 11 Wales has a _____, but this Irish Province also has a Chieftain and a Sceptre. (6,6)
- 13 Cut the mooring ropes and your boat is this. (6)
- 14 Curly leafed salad plant. (6)
- 17 Seized for military purposes. (12)
- 20 Elle can lay in the airship gondola. (7)
- 21 If you do not _____, you cannot win. (5)
- 22 This area could be too big for a standard allotment. (4)
- 23 This variety has a Crown a Dell and a Squire. (8)

Down.

- 1 One of this variety could go in A garage. (4)
- 2 Hibitual gossip. (7)
- 3 D. N. A. could be used to make all varieties this. (12)
- 4 In life you get many low points such as this. (6)
- 6 Island, Pilot or Victory for this named variety. (5)
- 7 Goes before. (8)
- 8 You could feel this when doing this puzzle. (12)
- 12 This person could own one of the KESTREL variety. (8)
- 15 Has to be overcome to get things moving. (7)
- 16 Almost plus here. (7)
- 18 Acting _____, Means you are not a milksop. (5)
- 19 This crossword uses one. (4)

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As Promised in my article 'Keeping Chickens on an Allotment', here are some tips on how to start keeping Bees on your allotment.

Firstly, it is most important to check with your local Council that they will allow you to keep Bees and also that your Field Committee and neighbours are happy and comfortable with the idea.

Secondly, and just as important, you must belong to a bona fide Beekeeping Society. To find your local branch of the British Beekeepers Association call 024-7669-6679 or E-mail: bbka@britishbeekeepers.com. Membership of your local branch enables you to learn the craft of Beekeeping through lectures and practical demonstrations in the Apiaries of other members plus most branches carry a comprehensive library of books appertaining to Beekeeping and Bees. Further, membership carries insurance for up to two hives with the option of purchasing cover for extra hives at competitive rates.

Thirdly, you will need to procure the necessary equipment together to house your swarm or nucleus when you obtain one. You will find Beekeeping impossible if you think that a hive is just an old box with a few frames in it to enable the Bees to build their comb on. A hive is in fact a precision built box, being constructed in such a manner, that when the frames containing 'Foundation Sheet' are placed in it, the largest gap anywhere in it, is not much greater than 6mm or 1/4", this is known as the 'Bee Space', any space larger than this gets burr comb built in it. The hive is divided into two sections namely the brood chamber and the super which allows the Bees to store their surplus honey in it. The Queen Bee is confined to the brood chamber by means of a 'Queen Excluder'.

Assuming that you complete your hive e.g. all the above plus floor, cover board and roof, the minimum amount of equipment you need should include the following items:-

Beesuit or a light coloured boiler suit plus a Hat and veil.

Smoker.

Hive Tool, needed to open the hive and separate the comb frames. You could possibly manage with a wood chisel or heavy duty scraper initially, although, using such tools in this manner could cause damage to the hive.

Honey Extractor, initially this could possibly be borrowed from your local branch if they have one to loan to their members or borrowed from a fellow member - such is the importance of networking.

... Continued

If you wish to keep bees on your allotment (or your back garden) and are also new to Beekeeping, you should consider buying a hive as re-designed by Robin Dartington, called after him the 'Dartington Long Deep Hive' (DLDH). This radical design has many advantages over conventional standard hives. Its primary asset is in its ease of use i.e. it was designed to minimise the weight that the beekeeper has to lift when manipulating the hive e.g. a maximum of about 7kg or 16lbs compared to 15kg - 30lbs found in a normal super full of honey. You will appreciate lifting a smaller weight sometimes to shoulder height, produces less strain on the operators back. The DLDH can readily be divided to make it easier to prevent swarming. The DLDH was designed to take advantage of the most recent research on Bee behaviour and is manufactured to an exacting standard to incorporate convenience - safety - economy and style in order to make recreational Beekeeping 'more fun' and 'less work'.

Cost? The only guide I can give is roughly what it would cost ex-supplier. I have always dealt with Stamfordham (see their advert elsewhere in this issue) and have enjoyed excellent service from them. The Dartington Long Deep Hive plus associated equipment would cost in the region of £500.00 from them. A standard hive with its associated risk of a back injury would cost half this amount. However, if you amortize the cost of this equipment over a 5 year period (much of it will last a lot longer). This works out at approximately £2.00 per week. The major return on this investment is the Honey crop (up to 15kg - 30lb per super and you can have more than one super on a productive hive). There is also the added bonus that most branches have an excellent social agenda to follow and usually have highly entertaining guest speakers visiting to lecture on the different aspects of Beekeeping.

Why not give it a try? You do not need to commit yourself right away, you could initially join your local Branch to find out more about this fascination pastime before you decide that it really is for you.

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L	T	E	L	I	N	L	E	Y	O	L	J	E	W	D
H	D	L	Y	O	Q	Y	M	V	U	H	P	G	B	L
X	A	I	S	A	X	F	Y	L	W	A	O	F	A	O
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The RHS Cardiff Spring Show - A Beginning, a Muddle and an Ending



It looked fine on paper.



This is another fine mess you've got me into
As they say in the trade!!

Friday 22nd May, an amazing day for the allotmenters of South Rise, when the Princess Royal came to admire the allotment garden they had created for the Royal Horticultural Society Spring Show.

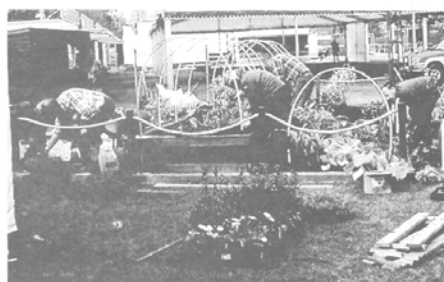


Princess Anne congratulated them for achieving a silver medal on this their first such enterprise and to their surprise, the judges made a special point of inviting them to come again to future RHS events.

It was a wonderful experience to be involved with the team of hand picked "volunteers" who all pulled everything together in the adrenaline charged last two days of setting the stage

Then like ducks gliding serenely over the pond, they smiled nicely at the cameras while trying to get their breath back from the frantic paddling that had been going on beneath the surface.

During the Friday, Saturday and Sunday, about 19,000 people visited the show despite the weather and it seemed as if they all came to visit the allotment garden. When it was raining it was even better because lots of people came into the information tent which gave us an opportunity to extol the benefits of joining the Allotments & Gardens Council.



"Down to Earth" A Raised bed Allotment



Wot! No Green Wellies Ma'am ?

Answers

1	C	A	2	T	R	3	I	O	N	A		5	C	A	R	P
	A		A		D		A		E				R		R	
9	R	A	T	T	E		10	D	E	S	I	R	E	E		
	A		T		N		I		T		A		C			
		11	U	L	S	T	E	R	P	R	I	N	C	E		
12	F		E		I		S		A						D	
13	A	D	R	I	F	T		14	E	N	D	15	I	V	E	
	L					I		16	A		G		N		S	
17	C	O	18	M	M	A	N	D	E	E	R	E	D			
	O		A		B		H		M		R		19	G		
20	N	A	C	E	L	L	E		21	E	N	T	E	R		
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22	R	O	O	D		23	P	E	N	T	L	A	N	D		

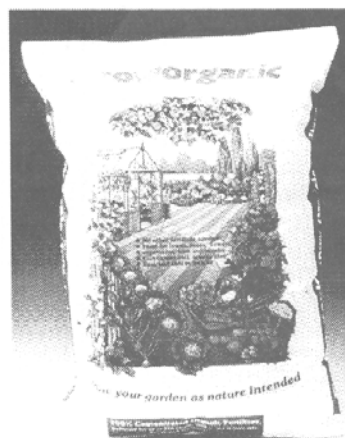
F	P	V	Z	A	E	L	A	G	L	A	P	M	S	B
P	I	H	A	N	T	I	R	R	H	I	N	U	M	H
L	T	E	L	I	N	L	E	Y	O	L	J	E	W	D
H	D	L	Y	O	Q	Y	M	V	U	H	P	G	B	L
X	A	I	S	A	X	F	Y	L	W	A	O	F	A	O
S	I	O	S	K	P	S	R	G	B	D	Z	V	K	G
M	L	T	U	E	N	V	Z	S	E	R	E	B	Q	I
H	L	R	M	A	C	F	A	T	H	N	E	S	O	R
D	E	O	P	P	M	D	I	W	D	X	J	F	V	A
Y	B	P	O	E	G	A	G	E	R	A	N	I	U	M
U	O	E	B	T	E	X	R	I	M	C	S	N	G	C
R	L	Z	Y	U	N	K	C	O	H	Y	L	L	O	H
O	U	J	U	N	T	D	Y	T	O	K	R	L	C	I
K	A	F	R	I	C	A	N	D	A	I	S	Y	W	M
E	G	C	X	A	T	Q	N	J	D	R	E	T	S	A

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