

Welcome to

DOWN
TO
EARTH

Christmas is now fast approaching, the year has nearly gone in a flash and for me it has been a busy time.

The Allotments are virtually full, with few spare plots and the Council continue to work with us to keep the plots well worked and productive.

The association thrives and our numbers continue to grow. I wish to place on record my appreciation of the committee, in particular Guy Pearse, who has tackled the changes brought about with the seed orders having left the National Allotment Association. This and other changes have occurred after much debate and communication often via email and I do appreciate the views and comments that come back to us after the initial circulations.

This summer we have rented a portable toilet at Cowpasture, partially funded by the Town Council. This six month trial, as expected, proved to be well received and the committee will seek a permanent solution next year after further debate with the landlord.

Many will know that we applied to the Town Council for a grant to purchase a new 'meeting hut' close to our shop at Cowpasture and we are delighted to announce, that our application has been approved. The internal fittings of the hut will be funded by the Association.

I feel I must mention three unfortunate accidents that have happened recently at the Cowpasture site.

One member tripped and fell sustaining a significant cut on his lower arm which I and others tended to whilst awaiting the ambulance. The other member fell against a glass shed door. The third accident was a visitor who tripped on 'something' and has probably broken her nose.

In short, we know allotments are dangerous places with rusty tin sheets, canes and spikes in the ground, cloches and netting spread across the plots. Have a look at yours, try to reduce the risk to yourself and others.

On a brighter note, the seed orders are in. I'm seeing plots being dug and members getting ready for a new season in the New Year. My broad beans will soon be in, joining the sweet peas planted in October.

May I wish you and your families a healthy and happy Christmas.

Neville



NEV'S
NEWS

'Down To Earth' is the newsletter of the Felixstowe Allotment Association
www.fsalg.org.uk



Felixstowe
ALLOTMENT
ASSOCIATION

December 2021

... and before anyone starts sniggering or blushing, no, it's not an affliction suffered by over-enthusiastic nudists exposing themselves in particularly hot, sunny weather!

Rather, it's one of the chief problems of lettuce crops worldwide... and a subject close to Monty's heart after two completely failed harvests because of it this year. With rising temperatures (sorry, Global Warming yet again,) it's becoming increasingly prevalent and if you've been fortunate enough to avoid it this far, don't feel left out as it's most certainly coming to an allotment near you soon.

In parts of the USA, Tipburn has become the dominant challenge for

commercial growers and the single largest cause of crop failures, since plants affected generally have to be destroyed.

Tipburn is characterised by a noticeable browning of the margins of young, maturing leaves particularly in butterhead and leaf varieties of lettuces. The brown area may be restricted to a few small dots at or near the edge of the leaves or may spread across the entire edge, with veins turning brown as well. Very often you don't know a lettuce is affected until you start to pull the head apart and reach the inner heart where the youngest leaves are.

Tipburn isn't actually a disease, rather it's a physiological disorder along the lines of blossom end rot in tomatoes. It's related to calcium, not low soil calcium, but rather the ability of the rapidly growing tissues of the plant to take this compound up. Calcium is required for strong cell walls. Tipburn usually occurs during hot weather when the lettuce is rapidly growing, making for uneven distribution of calcium in the plant. It affects the outer leaves because they are the ones that transpire more than the inner leaves. The plant will

seek to protect itself in response to these conditions, diverting water and nutrients away from the leaves and towards the central growing point.

There is no cure for Tipburn. Although low soil calcium can weaken the general health of a lettuce and therefore its susceptibility to disease and disorders, adding it as a compound won't in itself prevent or cure the condition. Given its commercial impact there are various studies being

MONTY SAYS

Let's talk about Tipburn...

undertaken to find out more about Tipburn but for the present there are three key ways that the amateur gardener can reduce the risks of having to throw affected crops away:

a) grow those varieties which have been proven to show a reduced exposure - Great Lakes (Kings Seeds), Antarctica (Thompson & Morgan) and Saladin (Premier Seeds Direct), are all good choices.

b) make sure that plants are regularly and evenly watered throughout the growing season, crucially so in the two weeks or so prior to harvest, when a light mulch of organic material should be applied to help avoid the soil drying out or becoming too hot at the roots. Commercial growers are also using shading materials to prevent the crop being exposed to bright sunlight.

c) don't be over-zealous when feeding lettuces, too much nitrogen will cause weak growth which is more susceptible to diseases and disorders. Instead, improve the overall structure of the soil by adding humus and water-retaining organic matter to help plants grow in the most sustainable way.

There's always something to worry about, isn't there?!!

Anyhow, enjoy your gardening (whatever Life and Mother Nature throw at us)!

Trelawny Place Development

Those of us at Cowpasture can both see and hear the houses shooting up at great speed and there is shortly to be a show house to help with sales.

In the meantime, we all have to cope with the traffic

disruption on Candlet Road for another month or two. At the time of writing, the contractor has switched the traffic to the newly constructed widening on the southern side of Candlet Road so that he can construct the

widening on the northern side and the rest of the junction. The junction will be four lanes wide with traffic signals, which will allow for pedestrians and cyclists to cross to and from Walton as well as for the junction turning movements.

The footpath through to Ataka Road is shown as being surfaced and lit on their plans. The contractor has to build a combined footway and cycleway along the north verge of Candlet Road to link the development with the Beatrice Avenue roundabout by the Grove Medical Centre. This will require modification to

the levels of our entrance from the Garrison Lane roundabout. We are seeking to get the drainage improved to avoid the current puddling. This work will inevitably affect the ability to get to the Cowpasture plots while it is done.

We have been in discussion with the developer and the

Town Council about the possibility of a new, secure pedestrian gate near the north-eastern corner of the Cowpasture site. This would give access not only to any new tenants from the development, but also to the car parking layby to be constructed nearby on the new distributor road.

Guy Pearse

Felixstowe in Flower 2021

The Allotment Association was approached by Felixstowe in Flower to see if members were prepared to offer their plots into the Completion which was not held in 2020 due to Covid.

The committee were happy to promote the competition and a good number of members subsequently submitted entries to the judges.

I am delighted to announce :

Best Overall Allotment:
Claire Smith at Cowpasture
(Second left on photograph)

Best at Cowpasture: Bill Younger
(Mrs Sue Younger received the award on her husband's behalf)

Best Newcomer at Cowpasture:
Mike James

Their awards were handed out at the EGM held on 25th November by the Mayor, Councillor Mark Jepson, see photograph below.

Neville

2021 Pumpkin Competition



We had just four entries, three being the same as last year.

The picture shows Ray Martin sitting on his monster which measured 1.95M. John Austin 1.45M yet again beat his son in law David Cole 1.12M and very pleasingly we had young Yannick Crowther 1.04M grandson of Chris Adamek, our first ever young entrant.

Next year we might extend the competition to include tallest Sun Flower and promote it more aggressively among the youngsters who spend time on the plots with their elders.



FAA Members save money at the FAA shop at Plot 39 at Cowpasture

Open Saturdays from 8th January
9.30am till 12 noon

The following are on sale to
FAA members -

Compost 60 litres £6:

Chicken Pellets 4kg £4:

Bonemeal 3kg £3.50:

Fish/Blood/Bone 3kg £2.50:

Growmore 3kg £2.50:

Potato Enricher 3kg £3.50:

Fine or Large Mesh

£1.50 or £2 per metre:

8ft Bamboo Canes £8 for 10:

Fleece 35g £1 per metre:

Garden Lime

3kg £2 or £7.50 per bag:

Paper Potato Bags

£1.50 for two:

Plastic Pipe for hoops

50p per metre

Come along and take
advantage of your FAA
membership and these
bargain prices!

*You may also get a free cup
of tea or coffee...*

NEW MEMBERS

AT RAILWAY HILL

Peter & Tracey Mason

AT COWPASTURE

Emma Johnson

Zoe Wragg & Tabettha Snape

Andy & Kathy Grainger

Kevin & Pauline Purser

Mariusz Traczyk

Sarah Hollingham &

Cameron McIntyre

Claire & Mark Mackinder

Nick Ravenhill

AT FERRY ROAD

Christiaan Taylor

Danny Warren & Chelsey Huckerby

Derek & Caroline Cofield

Martin Biddle

Bruce Read

THANK YOU

Since moving from Colchester
in May, we have found the people of
Felixstowe very kind and generous,
including many allotment holders,
who have helped us.

We would especially like to thank
John of FR12, Gary and Sarah of FR13,
David and Glynis of FR14,
Neville Farthing, Robin Farrow,
Keith Horn, Jeff Green,
John Rowland and Bill Younger.

Peter and Sheila Constable

Seed Orders 2021

First of all, thank you to everyone who has ordered seeds, potatoes and onions this year. The Committee decision to leave the National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) gave us the opportunity to move to Kings scheme for allotment and gardening clubs. This meant that we used a full priced catalogue and applied a 50% discount to the total cost of vegetable and flower seeds rather than the previous catalogue where the seed prices were already discounted by about 40% and our Association received a rebate of 10%. Those of you who ordered seeds have been better off and the Association has lost some income. To offset this, we have saved the annual subscription to NSALG.

The move has not been without its problems but these have been overcome and we will be modifying the Potato/Onion order form and the membership form for next year to make them easier to use and understand, if we decide to continue. The most common problem was missing out the packaging charges on seeds and potatoes, closely followed by calculating the discount on the whole Kings order value, instead of on the seed value, and arithmetical

mistakes. This greatly increased my workload in contacting people for their underpayments and in accounting for a consequent increase in transactions.

The 15 or so people who did not understand what a deadline is were lucky to get their orders included. I went away for a family half term holiday to Norfolk on the day after the deadline but fortunately my son-in-law had to come back to work for a couple of days and was able to sweep up the latecomers. A zero tolerance approach is the obvious solution!

On the positive side, we had 106 members making a Kings order of almost £2700. Seventy eight members made a potato order of almost £900; plus 37kg of onion and shallot sets worth just over £200.

If you have any queries or problems with your Kings order, please contact them direct on 01376 570000 quoting Order No E090 and the FAA Account No KA1183.

Let us hope that we get a good growing season in 2022 to give us tasty, fresh produce of which we can be proud!

*Guy Pearse -
Treasurer and Seed Order Co-ordinator*