

Issue Number 8

The Newsletter of the Felixstowe Allotment Association
www.felixstoweallotments.co.uk
Edited and designed by Peter Constable

So often the opening sentence in these Newsletters talk of the weather and how it impacts the growing season here in Felixstowe. We have 300 members busy on their plots trying to grow a variety of fruit and vegetables to feed family and friends. It's raining, again, it's August and that's after one of the wettest July's on record. It seems the jet stream is in charge.

Several weeks back we had no rain what so ever, many members were watering almost constantly, not good given it's chlorinated drinking water. Prior to that we had persistent and almost constant northerly winds which held back the young tender early crops we had not long planted. Those who grow need to be persistent and optimistic. But, after all of these early weather set backs we have now seen huge quantities of fruit, my plum tree is now dropping its branches as the fruit gains weight. I've also seen good results for potatoes, carrots, sweetcorn and other crops. We won't go hungry.

This has been a busy year in and around the allotment plots. The coffee/cake and compost gatherings at Cowpasture have been well attended. These Saturday mornings will cease after the August event on the 26th. I'm very grateful to those members who have helped

facilitate the event and especially those who have provided the huge variety of foodstuffs which I and many others have enjoyed.

The early BBQ did not happen but the September one will run regardless of numbers (and weather). If you can make it, bring your own food/drinks there will be BBQ's fired up and ready to go from 11.30 Sunday 10th September. Please tell Claire (Membership Secretary) that you are coming. It helps plan the day.

Later in September we commence the winter meetings at the Old Felixstowe Community Association (OFCA) Hall in Ferry Road.

The meetings and topics for 2023 are listed on page 2.

One issue which is going to impact all Association members is the unexpected loss of our compost supplier, Horticultural Supplies at Bramford. Sadly, one director died and his family have decided to close the business. I'm in dialogue with similar suppliers, but as yet can't find a local company who can deliver our needs direct to the shop at Cowpasture. This also impacts our seed potatoes and onions sets, but a separate article in the Newsletter shows we have that part of the business sorted. We are also talking to both Capel and Ipswich Allotments who find themselves in the same position as us.

To continue in this vein we

have also decided to take advantage of the direct access we now have to Kings Seeds at Coggeshall. The 50% discount on vegetable and flower seeds is automatically applied at check out. A further article will hold the internet link and further details to help. Should members decide to use the original paper order form as in previous years, one can be provided upon request to Claire and via the Treasurer.

NEWS NEWS



Felixstowe ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Kings have requested numbers for their catalogue to save unnecessary printing and distribution costs. Claire has requested the names of those who do NOT wish to receive a copy.

We continue to assist Felixstowe Town Council in their monthly inspections on the five sites across town. Some tenants have received cultivation notices should the plots not be worked in accordance with the tenancy agreements. This year a further set of regulations linked to the tenancy agreements governing

the use of the allotment plot have been adopted by the Council and may impact upon you if you contravene them. A copy of the regulations can be seen on the Felixstowe Town Council web site.

The waiting lists for plots continues to increase with some having to wait in excess of 18 months. The Ferry Road list is particularly long.

It's with sadness that one of our oldest members, Arthur Beales, aged 94 years, has recently passed having had a plot at Ferry Road for more than

half of his life. Our thoughts are with his wife and family.

Finally, the photograph below shows members placing a commemorative plaque at the base of a pear tree planted in the orchard at Cowpasture. Ernie Cobb sadly passed in 2022 after many years working his plot. His brother Ian, another keen allotmenteer still retains his plot at Cowpasture and can be seen with his wife, sister in law and Maurice Barber who gardened close to Ernie over the years.

Neville Farthing, Chairman



Potato and Onion Order 2023-24

Sadly, we have lost our local suppliers, they have retired. This change has caused us to look at how we order both seeds and potatoes plus how we collect our yearly subscriptions. We will now break them down into three transactions. The first one being the Potato and Onion order.

So, we have located an alternative outlet for spuds and onions, still at reduced prices. The 2.5 kg bags will be made available on an order form soon

to be circulated. We have again selected the most popular varieties which should be ordered on the designated form without delay.

If you wish to buy other varieties then you must seek other suppliers like Kings or DT Brown or local outlets such as Underwoods or Goslings. The prices being considerably more than our list.

The potato taster packs offered last year did not prove to

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 26th August

10.00am-12.00 noon

Hot drinks and cake at Plot 39.

Sunday 10th September

BBQ 11.30am-15.00pm

Bring your own food and drink

We provide the BBQ's.

Winter meetings

at OFCA Hall, Ferry Road

all at 7.30pm

Thursday 28th September

Gardens of Morocco

by Chris Burkitt.

Thursday 26th October

The story behind Sutton Hoo

by Sue Moss.

Thursday 23rd November

Royal Observer Corp

by Catherine Buchanan.

NEW MEMBERS

Cowpasture

Mark Wilkinson

Beth Relph

Emma Bangay

Colin and Janet Chilvers

Inge Paulsen-Liddle

Roxanne and Daniel Smith

Railway Hill

Karen and Alan Battle

Ferry Road

Wendy Halls

be popular and are not available for this coming season.

The onions offered are limited to Red Baron or Stuttgarter Giant and are offered again as 250gram bags, once again at a reduced price.

To conclude, once you have the form, please place your order with payment to the Treasurer. I will collate the entire order by the end of September. **No late entries can be accepted.**

Neville Farthing

Ordering from Kings Seeds, Coggeshall 2023-24

Members may or may not have received the latest seed catalogue from Kings.

The Allotment Committee have now agreed with Kings Seeds that our members can purchase vegetable and flower seeds direct via an Internet link but still receive our 50% discount.

Members must use the dedicated link in column two and once you are registered it can be used on multiple occasions, still taking advantage of the discount.

The discount only applies to the seeds. Fruit trees, potatoes etc attract carriage costs and are not reduced.

<https://www.kingsseeds.com/secure/register?ur=KA1183>

However, should members wish to order using the green form these can be processed as in previous years by the Treasurer. If you need a form please request it from Claire, the Membership Secretary.

The internet link enables members to deal direct with

Kings, take advantage of the 50% discount and removes a considerable administrative burden placed upon our Committee members.

FAA membership renewals will now be requested later in the year as a separate function, splitting it away from seed and potato sales which have to be actioned very early each Autumn.

The Committee thank you for your understanding and hope this change will meet with your approval.



The Outing to Capel St Mary

On the 17th June a group of members visited the Capel Allotment site. The guided tour was well received and it was apparent from the outset that the members and residents of Capel have a jewel at the heart of their village.

The plots without exception were all cultivated and carefully planted either with vegetables, fruits or flowers or a combination of all three.

There are no greenhouses

what so ever and sheds are strictly placed and limited in size. Water troughs are plentiful but garden hoses are not tolerated.

The huge communal poly tunnels were overflowing with tomatoes, peppers and the like. Any tenant can rent a small area within the tunnel for their more tender crops.

The allotment also houses a shop selling an huge amount of products not only in the gardening world but also BBQ coals,

bird seed and dishwasher salt.

A large committee oversee the enterprise, and offer a relaxed but organised opportunity to grow and meet like minded souls all residing on the doorstep. Linking in with other groups in Capel a village show is held each year with many allotmenters showing off the fruits of their labour.

Many thanks to Capel Allotment Committee.

Neville Farthing

I think we had our Summer somewhere between 2:30 and 4:45 on the afternoon of June 29th ... what a damp, cool few weeks we've had. It really doesn't feel that Summer has kissed the plot with anything other than the mild disdain of a spinster aunt's acknowledgement of an unwelcome nephew at Christmas.

The weather must have been inclement, since even the courgettes, (the veg that in every other year never knows when to stop attempting to force feed the entire globe from just one single plant), have given up all enthusiasm to fruit and sit sulking on a mattress of rotting

leaves. It's just not warm enough to tempt them to flower and once out of the

habit, there's little likelihood that they're destined anywhere other than the compost bin. To a degree this is partly my own fault as I decided not to grow *Midnight* this year and to give *Defender* a go. *Midnight* has given superb results for seven or so years so choosing a different variety to such a consistently outstanding one is a decision I can't even begin to defend, (excuse the pun!). Suffice it to say, lessons have been duly learned – and rigorously and robustly reinforced by Mrs Monty's disappointment at being deprived of her favourite Summer vegetable.

Another failure this year has been the French Beans. I grew *Boston* as it's a superb cropper and has exceptional taste. Well, they produced a fabulous quantity of beans but they proved inedible, they just wouldn't cook, whether steamed or boiled. They simply stayed hard however long they were cooked, even to the point of forsaking all colour and flavour. The Executive Chef at the Monty Residence has discussed this untoward problem with her fellow Domestic Goddesses who recount exactly the same experience with other French Beans from allotments. So this suggests this isn't down to Monty's green fingers deserting him but rather it's another consequence of this year's adverse weather conditions.

Common scab seems to have been particularly bad this year with the potatoes. The very dry, hot period we had earlier in the season is undoubtedly to blame, as the infection thrives in such weather. There's no control available, however consistent watering may help to create soil conditions hostile to the infection.

Personally I have an issue with using quantities of scarce water on spuds, so have to tolerate scab. Growing varieties less susceptible to infection is very obviously a sensible approach, although my worst-affected row this year is *King Edward*, which the RHS identify as one of the more resistant choices. Maybe they need to come and trial them at Cowpasture instead! *Kestrel*, in contrast, has hardly any scab whatsoever - so I know what I'm growing next year!

It's not all doom and gloom, however.

If the French Beans objected to the cool and wet, their Runner cousins seem to have positively revelled,

with a crop that probably exceeds

anything I've seen before. I've grown only a single row this year, for the first time, facing South so as to maximise light (I very nearly said 'sunlight', but that would have been gross misrepresentation!). I've found in the past couple of years that Beans facing North (so what would be the reverse side of a double row) produce a very poor crop so this year decided to plant the single row only. I also spaced them further apart, about 18 inches, to give the plants more light and air.

The other veg that seems to have adored recent grey skies and lower temperatures is lettuce. I've had some exceptionally good heads this year, particularly from *Miniko* which I've grown for the first time. Don't be fooled by what Kings say about this variety ... they describe it as a small iceberg suitable for eating in one meal. Well, mine are easily in excess of a foot across and even the world's biggest rabbit would certainly balk at finishing one of these monsters off at a single sitting!

And at least the persistent rainfall and lower temperatures have meant I'm not chained to the watering can this year, a very valuable silver lining. The gratitude of those of us whose distance from the taps is measured in light years is deafening!

But whatever the weather throws at us, enjoy your gardening!

MONTY SAYS
Something happened to Summer

If you have an allotment and are not a member of the Felixstowe Allotment Association, you could be missing out! There are several advantages, like free insurance, discounted garden seeds etc and monthly meetings.