

Hi Everyone,

These are unprecedented times, and how lucky are we that we can still go to our allotments.

<https://www.gardenersworld.com/how-to/grow-plants/coronavirus-can-i-still-go-to-the-allotment/>

Gardeners World spoke to Doctor and Broadcaster [Amir Khan](#), who said: "It's still perfectly safe (and recommended) that you go out into your gardens and allotments for both the health of your mind and body."

But for safety's sake, and to carry on being able to go to our allotments, we do need to observe strict rules. These are the ones suggested by Gardeners World.

- Avoid public transport if possible. Instead walk, run, cycle or drive to the allotment, either on your own or with one other member of your household.
- Do not pick up anyone on the way and travel to the allotment with them. This is not allowed. If you bump into someone on the way then maintain safe social distancing protocols (stand two metres apart).
- Wash or sanitise your hands after using the allotment gate. It would be helpful to others if you wiped down the gate, as well, if you can.
- Don't wash your hands in the communal water troughs.
- Don't work on the allotment in groups of more than two. If you share the plot with someone from a different household then you must observe safe social distancing rules. Ideally, work out a timetable so you can visit the plot separately.
- If you bump into people then maintain safe social distancing protocols at all times.
- Don't make anyone a cup of tea.
- Don't share tools.
- Don't visit the allotment shop.
- Avoid taking your children to the plot if you possibly can. If you do take them, ensure they keep to your plot and avoid playing on communal areas.
- If you take your dog with you, ensure it is kept on a lead, within the bounds of your own plot. If it wanders off and you need to retrieve it from communal areas this could place you and others at risk.
- Wash or sanitise your hands thoroughly before and after eating food, and when you get home.

We can't stress enough to be careful when opening and closing the gate. Sanitise before and after.

Respect others' possessions at all times & touch only things that belong to you.

Plus, I have had to order more seeds through the post and have decided that when they arrive, I will just put the envelope on a shelf in the sun for a week – that will get rid of any C-virus bugs.

EHDC has banned the lighting of bonfires for the time being. We do request that plotholders observe the ban in order for us to continue with our allotment privileges.

<https://www.easthants.gov.uk/news/put-bonfires-back-burner-during-coronavirus-crisis>

We have been well served by our council in the past and have every reason to believe we will be again in the future. Whilst we all agree it would be helpful to have extra woodchip, scalpings, rubbish collections etc provided at our allotment sites, we must recall this is a time of emergency and there are greater priorities.

The Shed has now been closed but Abi has kindly said if there is anything people need or want to ask her about then please contact her through the STAA website. Since the garden centres have mostly closed, this is a very generous gesture from Abi and we are extremely grateful. Though please be aware that to use the Shed on Mill Lane you do need to join the Allotment Association (£5) if you not already a member. For the 2020 Stock List and Abi's contact link <https://sheetandtilmore.weebly.com/trading.html>

Thanks to David for keeping the website updated.

I have rummaged back through previous newsletters and have included in this newsletter a lot of good advice stuff that we have put out in the past. I have kept to basics in this newsletter as we have a lot of new ploholders, plus the time to really plan our allotments well. I have also included at the end, the whole sorry saga of why we must keep the gates closed.

Happy and Safe Allotmenting to you all! Alison xx

Every Cloud has a Silver Lining.

Aren't we lucky to have our allotments and our Allotment Association? And now as we face lockdown, panic buyers, empty shelves and difficulty to buy seeds and seed potatoes, aren't we lucky to have our allotments and our Allotment Association?

A huge thank you to Abi and Ros who have been stalwarts preparing and distributing seeds and potatoes before the lockdown, which are now like gold dust in this current climate.

Please do grow extra for the 'Plant Swap' to be held on Sunday 31st May, 10am at Tilmore Allotments, and bring them **clearly labelled** together with any surplus seeds to swap.

Unfortunately this year, it does look as though we cannot have our usual social gathering, but we can leave the plants and seeds on a table for you to swap, whilst maintaining social distancing. If things change in the coming weeks, we will let you know.

But every cloud has a silver lining. Our pollution levels are down according to a BBC headline today which states;

Coronavirus: Lockdown prompts clear fall in UK air pollution.

So enjoy this time on your allotments and do consider entering the allotment competition the year. It's the taking part that counts. Really?

Aren't we lucky to have our allotments and our Allotment Association?

Happy growing. Julie Yardley. Pesticide Free Plot 34

RHS Sowing and planting advice Apr/May/June

APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal time to plant pot-grown fruit trees and bushes. • Chit and plant out second early potatoes in the first half of the month, main crop potatoes in the second half. • Sow seed outdoors for beetroot, carrots, Swiss chard, summer cauliflower, kohlrabi, lettuce, leeks, radish, turnip, spring and pickling onions, peas and perpetual spinach in well-prepared soil. • Try sowing unusual vegetables such as salsify, Hamburg parsley, or scorzonera. • Sow seed indoors of marrows, courgettes, pumpkins and squash. Also sweet peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, aubergines, celery, celeriac, salads and globe artichokes. • In very mild areas sow dwarf French beans and sweet corn outside under cloches or fleece at the end of April. In cooler areas wait until May. • Sow a seedbed of brassicas to provide transplants of sprouting broccoli, cauliflowers and cabbages for planting out in June or July. • Transplant broad beans grown in pots. • Plant shallots, onion sets and garlic. • Plant Jerusalem artichoke tubers. • Plant asparagus crowns. • Pot up tomato seedlings when they develop true leaves above the more rounded seed leaves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant out alpine strawberry seedlings sown in early spring. • Sow French beans, runner beans, squash, cucumbers and pumpkin seeds directly into prepared beds outside. Be alert to late frosts (for which a covering of horticultural fleece should provide sufficient protection). • Sow sweet corn outside in blocks, at least 45cm (18in) spacing, with two seeds per hole. The strongest seedling can be selected later. • Sow cauliflowers and purple sprouting broccoli for harvesting next winter. • Try sowing some unusual vegetables such as kohlrabi (like a large white above-ground turnip), scorzonera and salsify. • Witloof chicory can be sown this month, to have some ready for forcing next winter. Sow in drills directly outside. • After all risk of frost has passed, plant out tomatoes, courgettes and pumpkins that were previously sown under cover. • Other young plants can be planted out once conditions are suitable, and once they've been hardened off (acclimatised to the colder outdoor conditions) for 10 to 14 days. • Brussels sprouts for next winter should now be ready for transplanting after early or mid-spring sowing. • Plant out artichokes that were previously sown under cover. • Self-blanching celery can also be planted out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transplant outdoor melons under cloches, pinching out the growing point. • Move forced strawberries outdoors. • Continue sowing salad crops, such as beetroot, Chinese cabbage, pak choi and radish. Leafy salad crops may do better when sown in partially shady sites since hot dry weather can lead to bitter tasting leaves. • Sow French, runner and broad beans, peas, squash, sweetcorn, and outdoor cucumbers directly into prepared beds outside. • French beans are best sown in traditional rows, 45cm (18in) apart, at 15-22cm (6-9in) spacing. • Sweet corn works best planted in blocks, at least 45cm (18in) spacing, with two seeds per hole. Any seeds sown earlier under cover can now be planted out into the same block pattern. Sow before mid June and only in southern districts. • Runner beans need well-prepared ground and suitable supports (often a frame or wigwam of bamboo canes tied together with twine) for the shoots to twine around and grow upwards. • Courgettes, marrows and pumpkins can still be sown outdoors in early June in southern districts. • Although most winter brassicas need to be sown earlier in the season, calabrese, turnips and kohlrabi can be sown now for an autumn crop. • Start treating potatoes and tomatoes against blight. • Celeriac and celery can be planted out early this month. A well-prepared site with lots of organic

	<p>towards the end of the month.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ridge cucumbers can be sown indoors now, for planting out in early June. 	<p>matter dug in is essential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor ridge cucumbers can be planted out early this month. They benefit from a site that has been enriched with lots of organic matter to help retain water. • Plant vegetables sown indoors earlier in the season, including winter brassicas and sweet peppers. Peppers can only be planted out when all risk of frost has passed, and ideally beneath cloches. • Gaps between winter brassica plants can be used for quick-maturing catch crops, perhaps radishes or gem lettuces. • Plant out artichokes that were previously sown under cover. They can be grown as perennials (in which case they need 90cm spacing), or as biennials (45cm spacing is sufficient).
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Editors' Note: In my dreams !!

Lifted from <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/in-month/july> etc.

CROP ROTATION

It is really important to rotate crops to avoid disease, get the best from your soil and also, really importantly, get full marks in the Yearly Allotment Competition.

Changing where you grow each vegetable from year to year helps maintain good soil structure, ensures sufficient nutrients, helps to control weeds, and prevents a build up of pests and diseases.

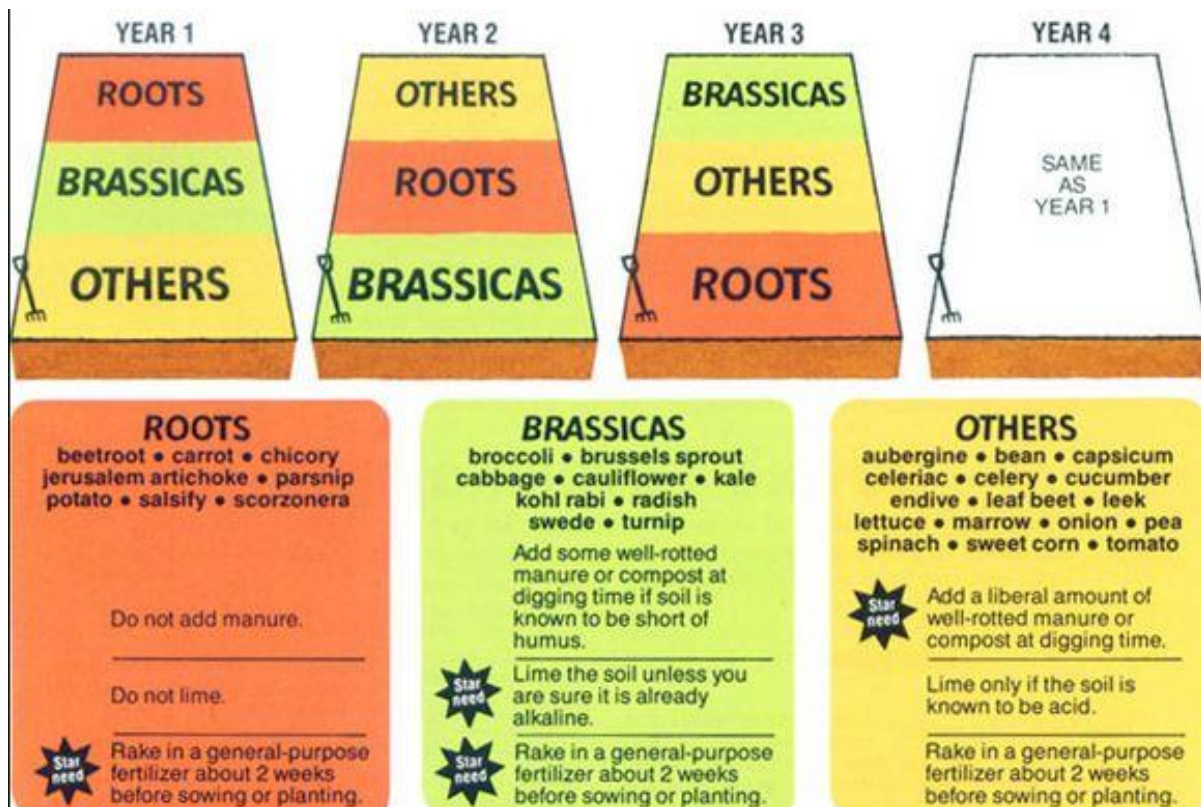
You can devise your own rotation, just remember to keep a record of what you have grown, where and when. First, divide your growing area into four or more sections. Then divide your crops into families (see below). If you keep the plants in these families together (such as potatoes and tomatoes), but move them around the different sections each year, you will have a successful crop rotation.

Vegetable Families

- **Alliums:** Onion, garlic, shallot, leek
- **Brassicas:** Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, oriental greens, radish, swede and turnips
- **Cucurbitaceae:** courgettes, marrows
- **Legumes:** Peas, broad beans, French and runner beans
- **Potato (Solanaceae):** Potato, tomato
- **Roots, general:** Beetroot, carrot, celeriac, celery, Florence fennel, parsley, parsnip (nb swedes and turnips are brassicas)

Of course it is always preferable to rotate most crops and avoid growing them in the same place year after year. The ones to make absolutely sure you rotate are the potato, allium, brassicas and roots families. These are the most prone to disease if not rotated.

A simple rotation plan:



For a very detailed 4 crop rotation system – check this link

https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/sites/www.gardenorganic.org.uk/files/Crop%20rotation%20chart_1.pdf

Best way to dig

As this is pretty much what we are all doing right now – this could be useful.

rhs.org.uk/digging-techniques

The ideal posture and technique to adopt when digging has been revealed by new research from the RHS and Coventry University .

Motion-capture equipment, usually used in making animated films, mapped the movement of gardeners while they were digging. This was recorded by high-resolution infra-red cameras and the data analysed by a computer programme developed at the university.

Bad posture was characterised by excessive forward bending, stretching limbs and uncontrolled movement. Loads in the lumbar region of the back could be increased by as much as half through bad posture, and almost doubled in the shoulder areas.

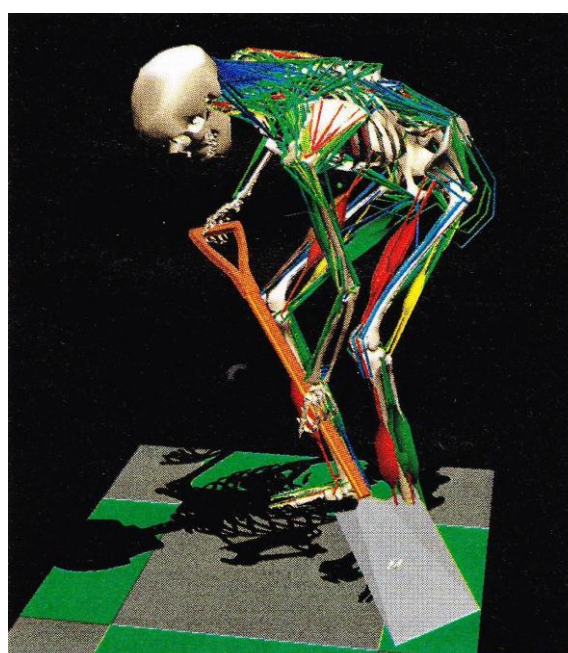
Researchers found that good gardening practice, using a regular and repetitive technique rather than erratic movements, was associated with more knee bending, and as a result minimal back bend. This method is therefore recommended.

Paul Alexander, RHS Head of Horticultural and Environmental Science, said, 'Digging is a common gardening practice - whether for planting trees or preparing a vegetable patch - yet we tend to rely on common sense, which can lead to gardeners complaining of aches and pains. Our findings will help ensure amateurs and professionals stay digging for longer, avoiding injury, and improving efficiency.'

THE FUTURE

In the image below, red indicates areas of stress.

RHS-funded research continues with studies into the optimum size and style of spade.

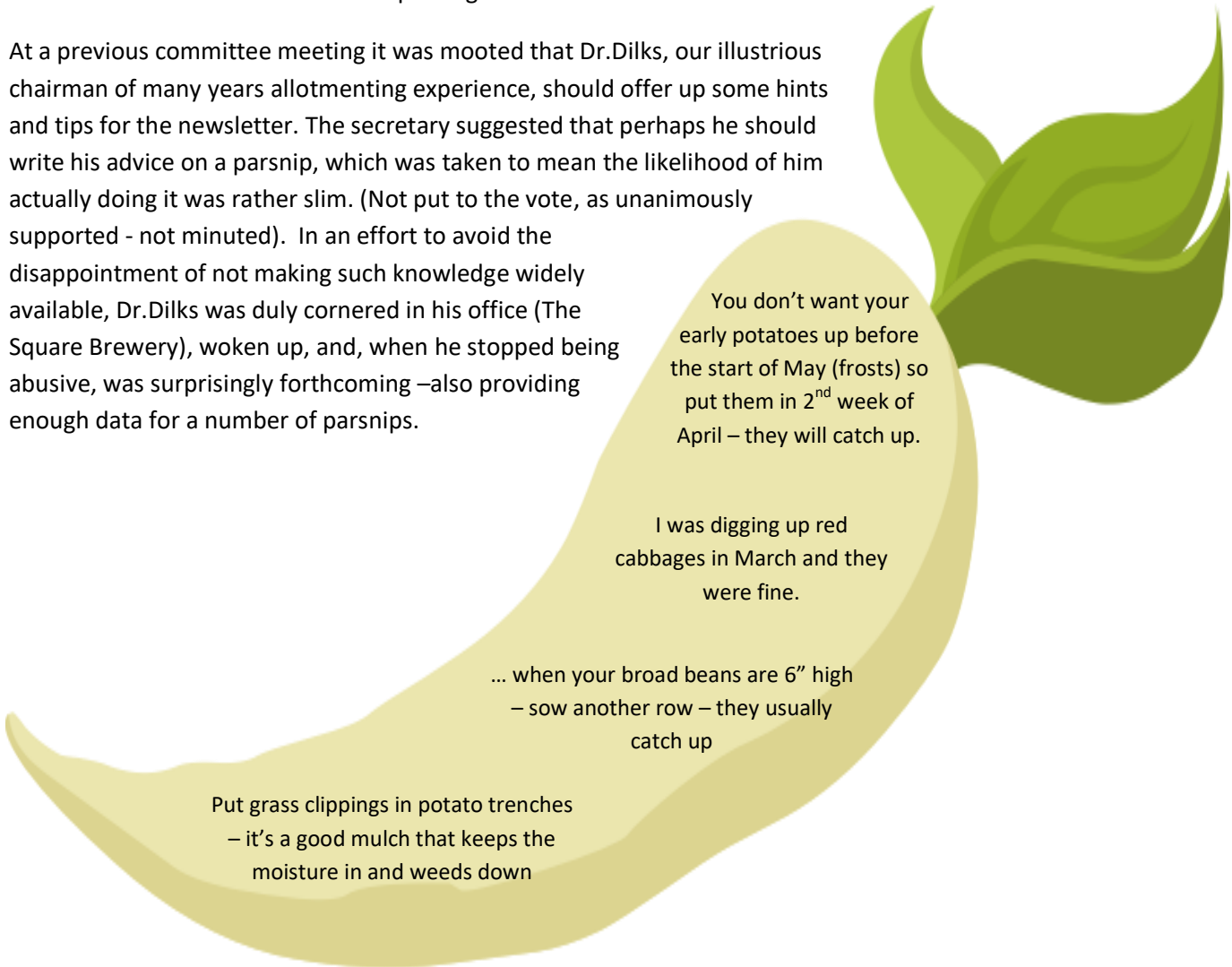


Thanks to Helen Freeston for sending me this for the newsletter.

The Chairmans' Parsnip of News

This rare occurrence is well worth repeating.

At a previous committee meeting it was mooted that Dr. Dilks, our illustrious chairman of many years allotmenting experience, should offer up some hints and tips for the newsletter. The secretary suggested that perhaps he should write his advice on a parsnip, which was taken to mean the likelihood of him actually doing it was rather slim. (Not put to the vote, as unanimously supported - not minuted). In an effort to avoid the disappointment of not making such knowledge widely available, Dr. Dilks was duly cornered in his office (The Square Brewery), woken up, and, when he stopped being abusive, was surprisingly forthcoming – also providing enough data for a number of parsnips.



You don't want your early potatoes up before the start of May (frosts) so put them in 2nd week of April – they will catch up.

I was digging up red cabbages in March and they were fine.

... when your broad beans are 6" high
– sow another row – they usually catch up

Put grass clippings in potato trenches
– it's a good mulch that keeps the moisture in and weeds down

The weed mantra . . .

- It's only another type of green manure
- A weed is just something growing in the wrong place
- Shows my soil is good (tricky as we all know a determined weed will grow on a plastic bag)
- Plant as much as you can and crowd the weeds out
- Cover dug soil with black plastic or cardboard – slows weeds, warms soil and makes me look like I have a plan

COMPANION PLANTING

IN NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS, PLANTS PERFORM FUNCTIONS THAT CAN EITHER HELP OR PREVENT OTHER PLANTS TO GROW. THE SAME IS TRUE IN OUR GARDENS. CERTAIN PLANTS GIVE NUTRIENTS BACK TO THE SOIL, WHILE OTHERS NEED TO TAKE UP NUTRIENTS. PLANT AROMAS AND FLOWERS CAN ATTRACT POLLINATORS OR DETER PESTS. BELOW IS A CHART TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHICH PLANTS GROW WELL TOGETHER AND WHICH TO PLANT FAR APART!

PLANT	GOOD COMPANIONS	BAD COMPANIONS
BEANS	MAIZE, SUNFLOWERS, LAVENDER, CABBAGE, CUCUMBER, STRAWBERRIES, BRINJAL	ONION, GARLIC, FENNEL
BEETROOT	BEANS, ONIONS, GARLIC, LETTUCE, CABBAGE	
BRINJAL	CALENDULA, MARIGOLDS, MINT, PEAS	
BROCCOLI, CABBAGE, CAULIFLOWER, KALE	AROMATIC PLANTS, DILL, SAGE, ROSEMARY, POTATOES, BEETROOT, CELERY, GARLIC, ONIONS, GERANIUM	TOMATOES, POLE & RUNNER BEANS, PEPPERS
CARROTS	LETTUCE, CHIVES, LEEKS, ROSEMARY, SAGE, PEAS, WOODWOOD	STRAWBERRIES, FENNEL, CABBAGE
LETTUCE	CARROTS, RADISH, STRAWBERRIES, CUCUMBER, BEANS	CELERY, PARSLEY
MAIZE	SUNFLOWERS, AMARANTH, BEANS, PEAS, & OTHER LEGUMES, PUMPKIN, SQUASH, CUCUMBER, MELONS, & OTHER CUCURBITS, PARSLEY	CABBAGE, TOMATO, CELERY
ONION/ GARLIC	CARROTS, BEETROOT, STRAWBERRIES, TOMATOES, LETTUCE, CABBAGE	PEAS, BEANS, PARSLEY, LEEKS
PEAS	LAVENDER, CARROT, TURNIP, RADISH, CUCUMBER, MAIZE, BEANS, GROWS WELL WITH MOST VEGETABLES & HERBS	ONION, GARLIC
PEPPERS	TOMATOES, GERANIUM, BASIL, CARROT, ONION	BEANS, KALE, CABBAGE FAMILY
POTATOES	CORIANDER, MARIGOLD, BEANS, MAIZE, CABBAGE FAMILY, BRINJAL	PUMPKIN, CUCUMBER, SQUASH, MELONS, SUNFLOWERS, TOMATOES
SPINACH	STRAWBERRIES, BROAD BEANS, PEAS	POTATOES, FENNEL, CABBAGE FAMILY
TOMATOES	BASIL, OREGANO, PARSLEY, CHIVES, NASTURIUM, ONIONS, CARROTS, CELERY, CALENDULA, GERANIUM, BORAGE	GENERAL PEST DETERRANT, PLANT THROUGHOUT GARDEN
CALENDULA	TOMATOES- REPELS TOMATO WORM!	COMPOST ACTIVATOR. USE LEAVES TO MAKE COMFREY TEA FERTILIZER!
COMFREY	FAST-GROWING NUTRIENT ACCUMULATOR. PLANT ALONG EDGES & USE LEAVES FOR MULCH	REPELS CABBAGE MOTH. PLANT ON BORDERS TO KEEP FLYING PESTS AWAY!
CHILE PEPPER	CABBAGE, MAIZE	USE MARIGOLD LEAVES TO MAKE AN ORGANIC GENERAL INSECTICIDE SPRAY!
MARIGOLD	PLANT FREELY THROUGHOUT THE GARDEN - REPELS SOIL NEMATODES, APHIDS, BEAN BEETLES & MANY MORE.	REPELS WHITE FLIES & SPIDER MITES
NASTURIUM	TOMATOES - IMPROVES FLAVOR!	DETERS CABBAGE WORM
THYME	CABBAGE	DETERS CABBAGE MOTH, BEAN BEETLES & CARROT FLY!
ROSEMARY	CARROTS, CABBAGE, SAGE, BEANS	KEEPS ANIMALS OUT! ALSO REPELS WHITE FLY
WORMWOOD/ ARTEMESIA	AROUND GARDEN EDGES	PLANT NEAR AROMATIC HERBS TO ENHANCE ESSENTIAL OIL PRODUCTION
YARROW	PLANT FREELY THROUGHOUT THE GARDEN. REPELS SOIL NEMATODES, APHIDS, BEAN BEETLES, AND MANY MORE!	

A DIVERSE GARDEN IS AN ABUNDANT GARDEN. HAPPY PLANTING!





Cinderella



Carnival

Baby Boo



Kabocho



Sugar Pie



Red Kuri



Hubbard



Italian Stripe



Crook Neck Gourd



*Snow White
Acorn*



*Golden
Acorn*



*Table Queen
Acorn*



Delicata



Curcubita



Turban



Butternut



Jack O' Lantern

Why We Shut the Gate

Well, this is the saga also referred to as 'Deer Deer Deer' – the clue is in the name.

It had been a pleasant early morning at the allotment and I was just finishing off and tidying up when I looked up to see a deer, bold as brass, strolling in through the open gate. The only two people there were myself and another lady and we tried to shoo it out but it vanished off down through the plots. It literally disappeared – I would not have believed it and thought it must have gone.

In an effort to encourage people to keep the gate closed, I sent out this email.

So there I was this morning, weeding my carrots and enjoying the early morning peace, when I heard a shout from Elva in the plot by the main gate. Looking up, I saw a massive great stag (I could be exaggerating a little), charging straight at me across Tim Dilks' plot with an evil glint in its eye and quite a few of his recently planted brassicas in its mouth – only by throwing myself onto the ground did I avoid being trampled by its massive thundering hooves. I don't want to go into the details, but it won't be bothering us again.

The point of this is that Bambi brazenly strolled in through the main gate and on that occasion, it was me who had left it open after bringing my car in.

I know it's a pain having to keep opening and closing the gate, but it really has to be done.

The next thing was that I received this email from the Police:

It has been brought to my attention that you have been having problems with deer in the allotments at Petersfield and one that managed to get in has been killed by one of your members.

Can you please let me know if this is the case and who was responsible and how it was done. I am of the understanding that it was not in a very humane fashion.

As you can imagine, I was rendered somewhat speechless by this.

Anyway, I thought that in the next Newsletter I would attempt to put people's minds at rest over this whole terrible misunderstanding.

Extract from Deer, deer, deer Part II – July 2017

Disclaimer – no deer were harmed prior to the writing of this newsletter

Well I've been expecting a bang on the door in the small hours and an armed raid on my freezer since the saga of the deer at Tilmore reached even the ears of the authorities, who seemed to be under the impression Elva and I had dispatched the unfortunate beast in some sort of frenzied ralplex fuelled ritualistic sacrifice. Presumably using her hoe, my dibber (the big one . . . obviously) and a length of hose. Yes, there was much banter concerning venison burgers, shotgun licences and friendly butchers – but there was also a

5am posse of concerned volunteers, patiently meeting day after day until eventually managing to gently herd poor Bambi out through a gate. You are welcome.

Incredulous as it may seem, the gate is still being left open. There have been suggestions we should strap a deer's head to it to serve as a reminder. The one I had in my freezer I had to get rid of and in rather a hurry one night (see above and thanks for the tip-off) but if anyone else has one then please contact me on just_kidding@seriously?.com.

The BBQ was well supported – best turn out ever we think and we were very lucky with the weather though the venison burgers were an unfortunate coincidence. I feel there is something I need to bring up and I am really sorry but I just thought the dancing round the fire and the chanting of “kill the beast” not only went on far too long but was in extremely bad taste - though I couldn't fault the choreography – top marks guys. “Maybe there is a beast... maybe it's only us.” ^{ref 1}

Ref.1 “Lord of the Rings” – though I could be wrong (*one for you literary geeks!*)

PS. It's been 3 years now since I first sent this out and not one of you have picked me up on that glaringly WRONG (but rather good I thought) reference. Come on guys!

PPS. Don't miss the beautiful poem on the next page

The Peace of Wild Things

BY WENDELL BERRY

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake rests
in his beauty on the water,
and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.

I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light.

For a time I rest in the grace of the world,
and am free.

Thanks to Kathy Dilks for sending this wonderful poem.