



NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2009

Happy New Year to you all

Although it doesn't feel like gardening weather just yet there are still a few jobs to be done besides the usual tidying up and winter digging.

*Rhubarb can be split now or forced ready for spring

*Blackcurrants and gooseberries can be pruned and hardwood cuttings taken

*Autumn fruiting raspberries should be pruned to the ground and mulched. It is also a good time for planting fruit trees and bushes.

*If you haven't already started your sweet peas you can still sow them now.

*Winter is also an ideal time to take root cuttings from some perennial plants I've tried this for the first time this year and have been lucky with Anemone if anyone has had success with others let me know.

While we are on the subject of cuttings and seed sowing, if anyone would like to raise a few more plants than they need, all donations could be used for the plant sale in spring or for the 'Community Garden'

*It will soon be time for chitin potatoes (which should be delivered in January for those of you who ordered from Kings). Thank you if you did place an order as this also helps with fundraising. The 2nd order should be with you in the next couple of weeks.

The main reason for this early Newsletter is to let you know about the **Open Meeting** to be held at Newton Community Centre on **January 19th at 7pm**. As always only items on the agenda will be discussed, if there is anything you would like to add please forward it to Pete Johnson before the **12th of January**. Ideas for fundraising or improving any of the three sites would also be welcome.

The committee is currently looking into a number of grants and John has recently applied to the Local Big Foods Lottery for a grant of £2000. At the moment the improvement of roadways seems the most popular use of any grant money we may get.

We would also like your help in trying to reduce the crime on the allotments. Pete would like to keep a record of any criminal activity and as asked for everything to be reported to the police and the crime number and details passed on to him. Acts of vandalism are still happening, most recently on the Blackwell site and are upsetting for everyone. We all look out for our neighbouring plot holders but unfortunately it seems that these things happen out of gardening hours.

I hope your gardening season will be a good one. It would be great if any of you would like to pass on your gardening wisdom to me so I can include it in the next newsletter. Do you have any secrets like feeding your cabbages beer? What to do with all those marrows? If so let me know.

We have both organic and non organic allotment holders and one man's weed may be a friend to another. A nettle patch can have its uses!

Please try to keep your allotments as weed free as possible over the coming year and 'please' don't let them run to seed. If you prefer chemical means rather than manual then please also consider where, when and what you spray. Happy gardening

