



September 2021

NEWSLETTER

Egham Garden & Allotments Association



AUTUMN

2021

MANOR FARM DAY CENTRE

Unfortunately there is still no word from Runnymede Borough Council as to when the Manor Farm Day Centre will reopen to allow meetings and at the Committee meeting held on 2nd September it was decided to explore other venues with a particular focus on the United Church. Enquiries have been made and I will let you know how we get on. It looks as though it will be October at the earliest.



In the meantime, I have heard from David Abbey that he has decided to step down from our Committee due to health issues but it is hoped that he will still come along to monthly meetings when they resume. I am sure you will all wish to join with the Committee in thanking David for the huge input he has given to the Club over many years.

Kim Callaghan has also decided to step down in her role as Treasurer at the AGM in December this year. If there is

anyone who would like to take on the role please let me know. Kim is happy to give some training. Our thanks to Kim for her time and effort in the role.



EGHAM COMMUNITY FAIR

The Egham Community Fair is to be held at the United Church, Egham on Saturday 23rd October from 10am – 12 noon and we have booked a stall space. If anyone has any plants, flowers or gardening related items to donate please contact me by email, address below:

email: cynthia.reilly@hotmail.co.uk



EGHAM CHRISTMAS FAIR



The Egham Chamber of Commerce will be holding the Egham Christmas Fair in the High Street on Saturday 11th December and this is a great opportunity to get some Christmas spirit inside you!

THE CHRISTMAS OUTING

The question of a Christmas outing came up at the Committee Meeting and Winchester seemed to be the favourite destination. I will investigate cost of coach hire but envisage this being in the region of about £20 or so per person but obviously depends on take up by members and their family/friends.



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BERNARD & JANET HALES APPLE JUICING PLANS



Bernard and Janet Hales plan to take their apples to a farm in the Chilterns for juicing and bottling during October. They tried this two years ago and found it very worthwhile as the produce has a two year shelf-life. The bottles come back at £1.75 each (or £1.90 if you want them labelled).

If you have a glut of apples this year and would like them turned into juice they will be happy to take yours to the farm at the same time and bring back the bottles a few days later. More info at <https://www.pasturefarmjuice.co.uk/> Call or text Janet on 07958 130513.

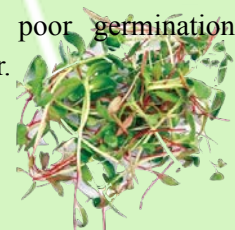


HAVE YOU TRIED GROWING MICRO-GREENS?

There are probably few amongst us who haven't grown cress in a saucer on the windowsill at some point but have you tried growing micro-greens? Smaller than "baby" salad greens but larger than sprouts micro-greens are termed that once they have produced a minimum of two "true" leaves after the cotyledons appear.

Often used as a garnish in restaurants they are so much more than just that. You can buy them in the shops but they may have been in cold storage for some time and travelled a long distance to get to the shelves. So much better to be able to grow your own, pick, wash and eat them. This way they have a much higher nutritional value as they are harvested immediately before use thereby retaining

their nutritional and medicinal qualities. Be sure to use a container that is lightweight, shallow with good drainage and portable. I recycle plastic food trays which are perfect as there is no need to have huge amounts of soil as this only causes some of micro-greens (peas especially) to send down long roots which makes the growing medium thick and matted and cannot be reused. All containers should be thoroughly cleaned with bleach between uses. Once you have chosen your preferred growing medium (soil or pumice) fill your container – about 4cm deep is fine then flatten down gently. Sprinkle seeds evenly over the surface giving them a light pressing to settle them into the soil – not too firm as this will compact the soil. Cover them lightly with either more soil, a clean cloth or paper towels (the seeds do not need light in order to germinate) and give them a gentle watering. Keep them moist at all times as under-watering will result in poor germination but don't overwater.



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FUN WITH FIGS



We are enjoying some luscious figs this year. Our fig tree is a “Brown Turkey” variety (the hardiest sort, usually grown in this country), planted in a small space by the bay window at the south facing front of our house. It was planted in 2008.

To our delight, most years we have had two crops even though all the books say you can only get one crop here. Usually July, from the tiny fruitlets that overwintered the previous winter, and then again in September from new fruitlets which develop in the current year. This year the first crop has only just started, a good month later than usual, in spite of all that gorgeous rain we had in May (!), and the hot spell in early June. We think the cold April delayed the development of the overwintering fruitlets. Unlike other fruit, like apples and pears and soft fruit, with all the fruit coming ready at the same season, it seems figs go on producing fresh leaves and new fruit all through the growing season, and I think fruit development must be entirely dependent on temperature. You have to look nearly every day in the



main fruiting period to see if one of the many, many green figs, has suddenly turned brown, inflated like a balloon and drooped down from its stalk, then it’s ready to pick and my goodness, it’s like eating a spoonful of honey.

The picture below, shows the larger figs on 22 July which are ripening now – late August – and the little ones which just might ripen in the autumn.....?

And did you know you can make an amazing cordial from the leaves?!!

By Janet Hales



WILD FLOWERS & WEASL'S SNOUT



Have you joined in the “No Mow May” movement to help insects and wild flowers? We’ve done this for two years now, the star plant is Cat’s Ear which has a neat, flat rosette and yellow flowers which go on for months. Also violets, daisies, purple self-heal, lesser trefoil (a tiny yellow clover) and yarrow whose fine leaves stay fresh green however dry the summer.

Last year I found 50 different species of wild flowers on my allotment, including one which is “Vulnerable” on the Red Data List. It’s a miniature Antirrhinum called “Weasel’s Snout”. I have just read that Surrey Botanical Society surveyed the churchyard of St

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John's Church, Egham, earlier this year and found 74 species!

So there's a lot we can all do to look after biodiversity – encourage wild flowers and so many insects follow, the birds come for the insects, and on it goes.

By Janet Hales



EGAA members are warmly invited by St John's Church, Egham, to take part in their Harvest Festival on Sunday 3rd October. The Church would love to have lots of real veg on display. The plan is to have some displays (also refreshments) outside the Church from 10 am (indoors, in the Easter Centre if wet) and then at 10.30 there will be a procession to carry the produce into the Church for the Harvest Service. They may also lay on a Harvest Lunch afterwards for everyone. **Janet Hales is coordinating this and would love to hear from you, on 07958 130513 or Sara Draycott on 07428 790317.** We do hope lots of people will take part! As we haven't had an Annual Show in 2021, this is another way of making the most of what we have been growing this year.

Website Address: <https://www.egaa.org.uk>.

Scan the QR code (QR - Quick Response Code) below:



This can be done using your iPhone or your Android mobile phone. You can also download the QR reader software from the iPhone App store or Googleplay



Cynthia Reilly

