

A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS

ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY LEISURE GARDENS LTD
GLENTHORNE AVENUE, CROYDON. CR0 7EZ.
www.awslg.org.uk

SEED POTATOES ON ORDER

Newsletter

DECEMBER 2019

First Earlies

Foremost, Rocket.

Second Earlies)

Charlotte, Kestrel, International Kidney, known as Jersey Royals.

Main Crop

Cara, Desiree, Maris Piper, King Edward, Pink Fir Apple, Sarpo Mira (slug and blight resistant).

All prices are the same as last year, £1.20 per kilo, £30 per 25 kilo bag with the exception of Pink Fir Apple £1.70 per kilo, £34 per 20 kilo bag.

If you would like to pre-order a 25 kilo bag of potatoes, please contact Hillary Waterhouse. We require your name, plot number and telephone number so we can contact you when the potatoes have arrived. We need a £15 deposit per bag. We will try to obtain the variety requested however some years varieties and quantity are not available due to weather and larger orders taking precedent.

Foremost is an old favourite with many gardeners. The round, white-fleshed tubers are firm and waxy when young and retain their fine taste. New, boil, steam or sauté.

Kestrel has a wonderful old fashioned taste, which absorbs less fat when it is cooking. Good for the show bench and resistant to slugs. Colour - white, blue. Shape - long oval. Boil, steam, mash, chip, sauté, bake or roast.

Desiree. A red skinned, yellow fleshed potato which is very versatile as it can be used a second early potato. Tubers can become very large and slightly misshaped but this does not detract from its excellent flavour, superb mashed with a little butter or baked, roasted, boiled or steamed. Produces a heavy crop even in dry seasons.

Pink Fir Apple is an old French variety which can be traced back to at least 1850. They have a top quality taste and texture, good storage abilities for a salad type potato. These potatoes have a long, knobby shape which often produces lots of laughs at harvest time. They are difficult to peel however so be prepared to eat them with their skins on.

The AGM of AWSLG Ltd will take place on Saturday December 14th at 2.30p.m. in the Hall. All plot holders are invited to attend, but only Shareholders may vote.

Please allow plenty of time for signing in as your name and plot number has to be checked against the register before the meeting can begin. I would suggest turning up at least half an hour in advance.

Nominations required for this year:

Chair
Trading Treasurer
Trading Secretary
Committee Members.

NEWS FROM THE CANTEN

Saturday and Sunday 9.30—11.30am

The canteen is going to move temporarily to the hall by the wildlife area from the 7th of December as the present premises are going to be refurbished. The last open morning for hall canteen facilities will be Saturday 14th December 2019. We hope to reopen on Saturday 4th January 2020, any changes will be published in the newsletter and posters.

The **mulled wine event** will be held in the hall on 15th December, so do come and join us from 12.30pm onwards and get yourselves into the merry Christmas spirit.

There will be a box available for the collection of non-perishable donations for the Shrublands Food Bank. Please give generously to this local cause.



A huge thank you must go to all the volunteers who turned up on a very frosty morning for the **BIG TIDY UP.**

This extra help is very much appreciated by Peter and the regular members of the weekly grounds maintenance team. Thanks also to those who gave up their time to provide lunch afterwards, with a special mention for Maria who provided an excellent home-made pumpkin soup.

The Trading Centre will close after the morning session on Sunday 15th December and will remain closed until we reopen at 10.30am on Saturday 11th January 2020.

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JOBS TO DO IN DECEMBER

VEGETABLE CARE:

Parsnips can be left in the ground until needed, or lifted and then buried in a shallow trench for easy access. They taste better when frosted. Make sure to mark the trench as you need to remember where they are and cover it with a protective layer of cardboard if hard frosts are forecast.

If you have Brussels sprouts ready for harvesting, pick the largest sprouts from the bottom of the stalk first. Earth up any Brussels sprouts stalks that look leggy and vulnerable to wind rock.

Continue winter digging as this exposes soil pests to frost and bird predators. Frost will help to improve the condition of your soil by breaking down larger clods. You can incorporate soil improvers into vacant areas of your plot. However try to avoid disturbing the soil too deeply as this can leech valuable nutrients. Ration supplies by manuring selected sites rather than the whole plot. Try a crop rotation plan as different crops have different nutrient requirements. Changing crops annually reduces the chance of particular soil deficiencies developing as the balance of nutrients removed from the soil tends to even out over time.

Clear polythene or **fleece** increases the soil temperature which will help to have earlier spring sowings. Use **Black polythene ground cover** to prevent re-colonisation by weeds and save yourself a back-breaking task in the spring.

Remove yellowing leaves on Brussels sprouts and cabbages to prevent grey mould from becoming troublesome.

Observe good, basic hygiene rules by removing all plant debris from your plots to reduce the spread and the overwintering of disease and pests.

Place **mouse controls** near stored vegetables and fruit.

Now is the time to make a manure hotbed by combining a mixture of manure, straw and leaves into a square, empty compost bin. Cover with a layer of **John Innes no 3**. Place a cold frame on top and then you are all set to benefit from the heat generated by the rotting manure as this will aid the germination of crops that can be started in January. prior planting out in February.

FRUIT CARE:

New fruit trees and bushes can still be planted providing the ground is not frozen or waterlogged. If the planting site is not ready when they arrive, then heel in the bare-root ones in a spare piece of ground, and leave containerised ones standing - but water them when needed.

Check tree stakes and **ties** while doing your winter pruning. They may need loosening, replacing, or removing.

Grape vines can also be propagated using eye cuttings. These are shorter than standard hardwood cuttings (having only one bud, or 'eye'), and are used commercially to produce a large number of plants. Only attempt these if you are confident, as longer cuttings have more buds to rely on for rooting.

Divide and plant rhubarb. Clumps can be lifted and prepared for forcing in early spring.

Net crops to reduce pigeon/parakeet damage.

Apply fatty acid-based winter washes to dormant fruit trees in order to control pests, making sure you treat all the nooks and crannies.

Insulate the greenhouse from frost, we have a good quality **bubble wrap** which works very well.

CHRISTMAS BULBS

The polytunnel team have potted up bowls of winter flowering bulbs. These should be available soon at the trading centre, at the AGM and maybe for a late purchase at the mulled wine Christmas event. We have some bulbs left and it is still not too late to plant them provided once planted they are covered until shoots appear. Reduced priced stock left of potted Broad Beans.

Be guided by the weather and only sow, plant or prune if conditions are suitable.

All items written in **bold italic** are available from the Trading Centre. Please support your Allotment Society as it brings in much needed funds for improvements.

HOURS OF OPENING

Saturday

Wednesday

10.30am -12.15pm. Sunday 10.30am - 12.15pm.

2.30pm - 4.00pm April—September only