

**A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS**  
**ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY LEISURE GARDENS LTD**  
**GLENTHORNE AVENUE, CROYDON. CR0 7EZ.**  
[www.awslg.org.uk](http://www.awslg.org.uk)

**SEED POTATOES ON  
ORDER**

**Newsletter**

**DECEMBER 2020**

**First Earlies**

**Foremost, Maris Bard, 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.

**Maris Bard** has a good all-round disease and pest resistance with a reliable high yield of regular, shallow-eyed oval tubers. The flesh is soft creamy-white and waxy and doesn't discolour when boiled. It holds its shape well which is great news when making a potato salad with potato pieces that don't disintegrate.

**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, knobbly 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.

**COMMITTEE NEWS**

**Christmas greetings** from the AWSLG Committee, we recognise that this Christmas will be different for many and difficult for some, our thoughts are with you all and hope you have a safe and peaceful time during this festive period. The Committee will not forget 2020, Covid 19 has limited our plans for the year but we are thankful that the Government rules have allowed our allotments to remain open. We hope that during 2021 we will see a change in the destructive impact of this virus, let's hope we will be able to celebrate the 100 years of AWSLG.

**Christmas 'Drop-By'** We invite you to join us on the Canteen Green on Saturday 12th December any time between 10 am- 2pm for a COVID Safe Christmas event. Mince Pies, Sausage Rolls, Mulled Wine and more. It will be great to see you at a 2 metre distance.

**Canteen and Trading Hut** will be closed from close of business Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December and reopen on Saturday 16th January – we are very thankful to the volunteers who have enabled these to be open.

**AWSLG Polytunnel** from the end of January we recommence, if you have an hour or two each week please volunteer to help us. We are having to commence the season in a Covid safe way so our team will need extra help – Please ask a committee member for more details.

**DONATIONS NEEDED TO HELP OUR  
LOCAL FOOD BANK**

As is now traditional, we shall be making a collection of non-perishable items to help the Shrublands Food Bank at Christmas. Tins and packets with at least 6 months shelf life are welcome, also toiletries and seasonal treats. Please bring your donation to the Trading Centre during opening hours or to the mulled wine Drop-By on Saturday 12th December.

The Food Bank will particularly need help 14-18 December to pack and/or distribute items. If anyone can assist please ring Beverly Warner (0203 441 7887) and she will give further details.

**The Trading Centre will close after the morning session on Sunday 13th December and will remain closed until we reopen at 10.30am on Saturday 16th January 2021.**

## A.W.S.L.G. ALLOTMENT NEWS ADDISCOMBE, WOODSIDE & SHIRLEY

### 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.

#### HAND-CRAFTED BIRD BOXES AND BUG HOUSES

Made by our very own artisan David Lay, these bird boxes and bug houses are ideal for Christmas presents. These ecological insect hotels are trending right now. Throughout our site more and more plot-holders are building structures to maximise and encourage the diversity of our local wildlife.

**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.

**The canteen (normal opening hours 10am to 12 noon) will close after the morning session on Sunday 13th December and will remain closed until we reopen at 10am on Saturday 16th January 2021.**