

Forge Farm Bugle v1 no. 3 Winter

Hello.

The water will be off until March 1st. That means the toilets are out of order. We are doing this so we don't have burst pipes like last year. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Mo is coming for an inspection on March 8th so make sure your plots are actively being cultivated and they are as safe as you can make them. He will be conducting a Health and Safety audit. Generally, our plots continue to improve with many of them being well cultivated by new comers. Keep up the good work.

Two plottolders have been seen dumping plastics and tins of paint in the tip. Please don't do this, I only have to get it all out again. There is a black bin by the meeting hut that you can put such items in and I shall take it to the tip unless you want to take your rubbish home yourself, which would be nice.

We have had Gatecrashers at the site so we will be displaying a notice of vehicle registrations of those who pay us and are allowed in. Please DO NOT ALLOW any other tradesmen in as they are tipping illegally.

The Committee are looking at what to spend our grants on, if you have any ideas on what we should spend them on please tell a Committee member. Their names and plot numbers are on the board and we have a suggestion box. So far our shopping list comprises of a new clubhouse, a shipping container for the shop's goods, a concrete bay system for the leaf and grass tip, a polytunnel and some professional hedgelaying on the top field. You could always join the Committee and play a more active role in developing the site yourself.

Next year we will be having a few social events. One in Spring to make bird boxes, an Easter event, the Summer Show and possibly an Autumn festival and/or Christmas Fair. If you would like to organise one of these please contact a Committee member. We shall try and raise some funds for the Association and foster community spirit.

As stated there is a new suggestion block screwed on to the toilet block. Please don't put any money in there.

There is a large load of cow manure given to us by farmer Rabin on the understanding we gift a small amount to his chosen charity which is St Giles Hospice. You can take three wheelbarrow loads for just £1. He will also be bringing horse manure (see below).

Just a word about the Association fees - the £5.00 you pay at rent collection. Part of the fee goes towards our membership of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) who provide us with legal advice and a body to protect our interests as well as insurance if there is an accident on our individual plots or a communal area. Added to that we can take part in the Kings Seed cut price catalogue and we receive a quarterly magazine, which is in the meeting hut. There is only one plottolder who does not pay this sum and as such they are uninsured.

Soon we shall be receiving manure from a local farmer who keeps horses. His manure is untainted by herbicides and is good stuff. For a £10 fee, which also goes to the St Giles Hospice, he will dump a large amount of horse manure on your plot - or in special cases on the road by your plot - but move it quickly please. Payment is needed for delivery and there is a list on the

notice board by the gate. You can pay any Committee member or someone who will pass your tenner on.

Yet again this year we are trying to add to our security by planting a native, prickly hedge all round our fence line. The Woodland Trust have gifted us 420 trees comprising hawthorn, hazel, silver birch, rowan, wild cherry and dogwood. Added to that we have our own nursery trees, some blackthorn we are transplanting and some other thorny varieties we have bought. All in all a lot of trees which means a lot of weeding and planting so please help out if you can. Every weekend in February and March we shall be having work parties to get the job done, so come along and bring the family from 10am to 2pm Saturdays and Sundays.

We have an accident book on site located in the Green Shed. If you do have an accident that requires medical attention please note it in the book.

If you have any unwanted vegetables or brassicas etc that you don't want remember to feed them to our resident horses whether they are in our top field or just over the fence. Winter is a lean time for them as the grass isn't growing as quickly and they will appreciate a nibble. You can also buy a large bag of carrots from the Hungry Horse on Weeford Road should you feel like indulging them. It's a snip at £2.25. The horses have done a great job grazing the top field but their reward might well be to get kicked off as we could be opening that up as new plots as we are fully occupied, no small thanks to Malcolm, for the first time in decades.

Chocolate Courgette Cake recipe

thanks to Rachel plot 57a and www.riverford.co.uk/recipes

Ingredients

120g softened unsalted butter

125ml sunflower oil

100g caster sugar

200g soft brown sugar

3 eggs, lightly beaten

130ml milk

350g plain flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

4 tablespoons cocoa powder

450g courgettes, peeled and finely grated

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Method

Put the butter, sunflower oil and both sugars in a bowl and beat them together until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs and then the milk.

Sift the dry ingredients together and fold them into the mixture. Stir in the courgettes and vanilla, then spoon the mixture into a 20 x 35cm baking tin lined with baking parchment. Place in an oven preheated to 190°C/Gas Mark 5 and bake for 35–45 minutes, until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cut into squares whilst still warm.

Don't forget we have our own website at <http://forgefarmallotments.weebly.com/>

There's a lot of information on there plus our own rules and regulations so be sure to brush up

on what you can or cannot do on your allotment site; I had a quick glance through the Council's rules and it seems some plotters are still breaching many terms of the agreement they entered into when you pay your rent.

During the coming spring and summer you may be tempted to use a weedkiller, if you do so please be careful with it and try not to use it on a windy day as we have had instances where spray drift has gone onto neighbouring plots.

Forge Farm is a particularly open site and the wind can dry the ground rapidly unless you mulch. Try using grass cuttings or spent compost or manure to mulch around your vegetables to keep water loss to a minimum. Mulching can also prevent many nasty bugs from attacking your crops.

The categories for the Show will be posted soon. Added to last years Giant categories we will be having some quality fruit and vegetables judged.